

NO. 33

JOURNAL
OF THE
SENATE
OF THE
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA



REGULAR SESSION BEGINNING TUESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2017

FRIDAY, MARCH 3, 2017

Friday, March 3, 2017
(Local Session)

Indicates Matter Stricken

Indicates New Matter

The Senate assembled at 11:00 A.M., the hour to which it stood adjourned, and was called to order by the ACTING PRESIDENT, Senator SETZLER.

ADDENDUM TO THE JOURNAL

The following remarks by Senator HUTTO were ordered printed in the Journal of February 28, 2017:

Remarks by Senator HUTTO

Over the weekend, I had the opportunity to review some of the actions of the House from last week and in particular, I want to make sure that you know what happened last week with the Ways and Means Higher Education Budget.

Our State has 33 public universities and technical colleges. The appropriations from the General Assembly to higher education have been in a free fall. Our budget lines for recurring college general fund operating appropriations have continually diminished over the last decade. Higher education funding is more than \$380 million BELOW 2007 pre-recession levels. This General Assembly's failure to properly fund higher education in this State has led to higher tuition and decreased accessibility to middle income families.

Because of these declining appropriations, our colleges and universities have had to make adjustments. As a result, South Carolina has the 5th highest two-year college tuition rates and the highest four-year tuition rates in the Southeast.

From 2006 to 2014, tuition and fees at the state's public four-year institutions have increased 62%. That's nearly 3 times the rate of inflation -- which was 22% during this period. Meanwhile, family income in the State has fallen 8%.

Reduced state funding means tuition has had to increase to make up the difference. This increase in tuition has priced a college education out of reach for some South Carolina families -- specifically those families that need our help the most.

This year for the first time in a while I am hearing about the possibility of a higher education bond bill. A bond bill is long overdue and much needed, but that does not address the fundamental failure to properly

FRIDAY, MARCH 3, 2017

fund higher education. So I want to make sure that we all understand -- the bond bill that's been discussed will not lower tuition -- a bond bill will address college campuses' maintenance needs as well as outdated or inadequate buildings -- not the cost of educating children.

News reports have said that there will be possible strings attached to a House bond bill making it so that bond money will be given only to colleges that pledge to NOT raise tuition. We cannot be the cause for the universities raising tuition and then turn around and attempt to micro-manage colleges and bully them into not raising tuition.

In honor of Clemson day, I'll add a perspective for all of you Clemson fans out there, when the Tigers won their first National Football Championship back in 1981 the State sent Clemson \$5,581 per pupil. Today, adjusted for inflation and enrollment growth, that figure is just \$2,500.

Despite almost \$600 million available in new state funds, Ways and Means continued this path in their budget -- no new operating funds for technical colleges -- no new operating funds for four-year colleges.

We should be increasing college accessibility and affordability by considering funding a technical college education for all of our residents --- not taking away our children's future.

This is an issue that I know that you members of the Finance Committee will tackle in the coming weeks, but on a day when we say that we honor higher education, let's focus on doing what is right and let's fund higher education in this State. It is an investment in our future. Students with a four-year degree can expect to earn twice as much over a lifetime than those in the workforce with a high school education. Funding higher education means higher paying jobs, economic growth and a better South Carolina for us all. Thank you.

CO-SPONSORS ADDED

The following co-sponsors were added to the respective Bills:

S. 86 Sen. Campsen
S. 199 Sen. Grooms
S. 456 Sen. Shealy

FRIDAY, MARCH 3, 2017

MOTION ADOPTED

On motion of Senators PEELER and MARTIN, with unanimous consent, the Senate stood adjourned out of respect to the memory of Mr. Paul T. Bell, Sr. of Union, S.C. Mr. Bell was the father of our beloved retired Sergeant-At-Arms staff member, Tommy Bell. Paul retired from the United States Postal Service and was a Veteran of the U.S. Air Force during the Korean Conflict. Mr. Bell was a past chair of the Union County Recreation Commission and past commander of American Legion Post 22. He was a member of Tabernacle Baptist Church and Union Masonic Lodge #75. Mr. Bell was a loving husband, devoted father and doting grandfather who will be dearly missed.

ADJOURNMENT

At 11:04 A.M., on motion of Senator JACKSON, the Senate adjourned to meet next Tuesday, March 7, 2017, at 2:00 P.M.

* * *