**NO. 56**

**JOURNAL**

**OF THE**

**SENATE**

**OF THE**

**STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA**

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**REGULAR SESSION BEGINNING TUESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2017**

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**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12, 2017**

Wednesday, April 12, 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. **(This is a Statewide Session day established under the provisions of Senate Rule 1B. Members not having scheduled committee or subcommittee meetings may be in their home districts without effect on their session attendance record.)**

**ADDENDUM TO THE JOURNAL**

The following remarks by Senator SCOTT were ordered printed in the Journal of March 15, 2017:

**Remarks by Senator SCOTT**

Thank you Mr. PRESIDENT, members of the Senate. Since the Great Recession, state funding of public colleges and universities has fallen. From 2007 - 2008 and in 2016 and 2017, state funding of higher education has dropped nearly $300 million. In 2007 - 2008, higher education represented 13% of the general fund appropriations. In 2016 and 2017, only 8% of the general fund dollars were spent on higher education. What does that mean? Since October 2016, the Southern Region of the Educational Board known as SREB released a profile on higher education affordability in South Carolina. Tuition and fees at both public four-year colleges and public two-year institutions in South Carolina has been growing much more rapidly than either inflation or the family income. From 2006 - 2014, tuition at public four-year institutions has increased by 62% according to SREB.

Our goal was to create affordable college education for all South Carolinians. But we've seen such rapid growth in the cost of education ‑-I’m not so sure right now, as we look at some of the smaller institutions whether they can ever catch up again unless we begin to do some very creative things and make sure funding is actually there. During the same period, the CPI was 22% or nearly a third of the rate of the increase for tuition for the South Carolina four-year university. Meanwhile, South Carolina families’ income decreased 8% at the same period according to the Southern Region of Education. According to SREB data, South Carolina spends three times more regionally and seven times more nationally per student on merit scholarships than other non-need based aid. Meanwhile, the State spends 6% less regionally and 7% less nationally per student on the base financial need. So really and truly, what is the real need for the Commission on Higher Education? Where does it fit in trying to fix this puzzle? The Commission of Higher Education, in my opinion, has gotten a bad hit. Why? Because we went to sleep at the switch. A lot of things changed. We have continued to under fund them. Why? Simply because we have not kept pace and understood all of the changes that have occurred since the recession. No fault of one particular person. I'm not here this morning to point the finger at anybody. I accept the same responsibility as everybody. Our concern is how do we get it right? As we look at the possibility of a bond and whether or not the State will even have a Bond Bill, the question is who besides this General Assembly needs to have the real review, real oversight of the best way to spend our dollars? We continue to see some of the larger institutions continue to add programs, change programs, create in many cases hardships on other smaller schools -- who that's been their bread and butter for survival. Nobody has been watching the door. The net result is that we continue to grow larger institutions and shrink smaller institutions. We need to get higher education back into the loop and look at what is going on. Who makes that decision? Each time when I first begin to talk about diversity, I thought it was all about African-American only. It's not! We live in a very diverse community. We brought many international companies in here and with them, families and children and other folks from other countries have come here. Our challenge is how do we close the communication gap? How do we continue to be at the forefront, especially with our research institutions? That's what diversity is. Faculty, staff, research -- some of the best minds we can bring into South Carolina. And, of course, minority students both African-American and other minority students. What's the best way to spend these dollars? We recognize based on the early numbers that I gave you, we're never going to go back. What is the best way for us to continue to fund our colleges and universities? What about our dual enrollment program? What about our young children now who are both at high school and college at the same time. Who is going to help us to make sure we get all of these things right?

I say to you -- and I’m hoping as we work through this particular budget, Mr. Chairman, we begin to look at some provisos that bring these colleges and universities, presidents and leadership together to talk about how we can change and look at the best practice for our Commission on Higher Education. Let's not under fund it but fund it with something that's going to make a difference as we try to improve our colleges and universities, as we continue to grow jobs and young people and the best minds in South Carolina. Thank you very much.

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 11:03 A.M., on motion of Senator CROMER, the Senate adjourned to meet tomorrow at 11:00 A.M., under the provisions of Rule 1B.

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