**Vol. 34 March 28, 2017 No. 12**

**CONTENTS**

**HOUSE WEEK IN REVIEW 02**

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ACTION 06**

**BILLS INTRODUCED IN THE HOUSE THIS WEEK 14**

***NOTE: THESE SUMMARIES ARE PREPARED BY THE STAFF OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND ARE NOT THE EXPRESSION OF THE LEGISLATION'S SPONSOR(S) OR THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. THEY ARE STRICTLY FOR THE INTERNAL USE AND BENEFIT OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND ARE NOT TO BE CONSTRUED BY A COURT OF LAW AS AN EXPRESSION OF LEGISLATIVE INTENT.***

**HOUSE WEEK IN REVIEW**

The House of Representatives approved **S.218**, a bill **PROHIBITING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS** **FROM REQUIRING AN** **EMPLOYEE BENEFIT**, and enrolled the legislation for ratification. The legislation revises labor and employment provisions, by providing that counties, municipalities, and other political subdivisions of this state may not establish, mandate, or otherwise require an employer to offer an employee benefit, such as health benefits, disability benefits, death benefits, group accidental death and dismemberment benefits, paid days off for holidays, paid sick leave, paid vacation leave, paid personal necessity leave, retirement benefits, and profit‑sharing benefits. The legislation does not limit the authority of political subdivisions to establish benefits for their own employees.

The House amended, approved, and sent the Senate **H.3653**, a bill imposing **LIMITATIONS ON NUISANCE SUITS RELATED TO MANUFACTURING AND INDUSTRIAL USES OF REAL PROPERTY**. Addressing situations where urban growth has prompted residential development to expand into previously outlying areas where established industrial facilities have been operating, the legislation imposes limitations on nuisance suits that nearby residents can bring against pre-existing industrial, manufacturing, transportation, and warehousing facilities that are complying with environmental permits and are otherwise operating lawfully. Affording legal protections like those already provided for agricultural operations, the legislation proposes to codify the common law defense of ‘coming to the nuisance’ as a means of promoting economic development.

The House amended, approved, and sent the Senate [**H.3427**](http://www.scstatehouse.gov/billsearch.php?billnumbers=3427&session=122&summary=B), a bill enacting the **"SOUTH CAROLINA COMPUTER SCIENCE EDUCATION INITIATIVE"** to expand access for all students to computer science learning experiences that support literacy, math, problem‑solving, and technological skills, and advance productivity in every discipline, industry, and profession. The legislation charges the State Board of Education with developing grade appropriate standards for computer science and computational thinking and computer coding for grades 9‑12 and adopting these standards by August 1, 2018. No later than the 2019‑2020 School Year, each public high school and public charter high school must offer at least one rigorous, standards‑based computer science course. Beginning in the 2018‑2019 School Year, the Department of Education is required to: employ a full-time coordinator for the Computer Science Education Initiative; support K‑12 academic and computer science teachers in designing interdisciplinary, project‑based instruction and assignments that engage students in applying literacy, math, and computational thinking skills to solve problems; design career pathways that connect students to postsecondary education in high‑demand career fields identified by the Department of Commerce, such as cybersecurity, information systems, informatics, computer engineering, and software development; offer professional development and teacher endorsements to new teachers that will teach computer science who complete a two to four‑week, full‑day summer institute; develop criteria for postsecondary computer science teacher preparation programs; provide information and materials which identify emerging career opportunities in computer science and related fields to parents, students, teachers, and guidance counselors; and, assist districts in developing partnerships with business, industry, higher education, and communities to provide afterschool and extracurricular activities that engage students in computer science. To provide for effective instruction, the Department of Education is charged with developing guidelines for the educational and degree requirements appropriate for computer science teachers. The Commission on Higher Education shall determine what financial incentives might be needed by institutions of higher education to design programs to prepare and credential computer science teachers. To improve science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education in South Carolina, the Governor’s Office, beginning in fiscal year 2018‑2019, is charged with establishing criteria and a process for designating a STEM community or STEM region, which involves collaboration among educators, administrators, business leaders, students, parents, governmental officials, and business and industry groups.

The House amended, approved, and sent the Senate **H.3352**, a bill providing **ENHANCEMENTS TO THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT** provisions which guarantee citizens’ access to government proceedings and public documents. The legislation adjusts time frames for responding to FOIA requests to require more prompt compliance from public bodies, but additional time is allowed for compiling older documents. The fees that government bodies may charge for complying with FOIA requests are revised to better ensure that they do not become prohibitive. Under the revisions, fees may not exceed the actual cost of the search, retrieval, and redaction of records and fee calculations must utilize the hourly salary of the lowest paid employee qualified to perform the request. Public bodies must develop fee schedules to be posted online. Copying fees may not exceed prevailing commercial rates and public bodies may require a deposit, not to exceed twenty‑five percent of the total cost for reproduction of the records, before beginning work on the request. The legislation accommodates the electronic transmission of requested records. Enforcement provisions for the Freedom of Information Act are revised in an effort to make them more effective. The rarely-utilized misdemeanor penalty for FOIA violations is eliminated and unfulfilled FOIA requests may instead be pursued through civil actions. The Office of Freedom of Information Act Review is created within the Administrative Law Court under the supervision of the Chief Administrative Law Judge to decide disputes regarding FOIA requests. The review office is offered as a new resource that citizens may use to obtain the access to public documents promised by the Freedom of Information Act without bearing the legal costs involved in compelling a government body to fulfill its FOIA responsibilities through a court challenge.

The House approved and sent the Senate **H.3666**, a bill making provisions for **DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS STABILIZATION UNIT FACILITIES** where individuals entering hospital emergency rooms suffering from mental illness or substance abuse issues may be transferred to begin receiving appropriate care. This bill makes provisions for a crisis stabilization unit facility operated or authorized by the Department of Mental Health which provides a short‑term residential program offering psychiatric stabilization services, detoxification services, and brief, intensive crisis services twenty‑four hours a day, seven days a week. The legislation exempts a crisis stabilization unit facility from the Certificate of Need process and requires a crisis stabilization unit facility to obtain a license from the Department of Health and Environmental Control.

The House approved and sent the Senate **H.3116**, a bill increasing the age limit in **SAFE HAVENS FOR ABANDONED BABIES** provisions that designate locations, such as hospitals, police stations, and fire stations, where someone may leave an infant under certain circumstances without criminal penalty. The legislation provides that the safe haven provisions apply to infants who are up to one year old rather than the current standard of no more than sixty days old.

The House approved and sent the Senate **H.3318**, a bill **TRANSFERRING THE ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT UNIT** from the Department of Public Safety to the State Law Enforcement Division.

The House approved and sent the Senate **H.3742**, a bill providing authorization for the employment of **OFFENDER SUPERVISION SPECIALISTS** at the Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services to oversee the supervision of standard and low‑risk offenders. The department shall promulgate regulations for the qualifications of these offender supervision specialists and procedures for classifying offenders as standard and low‑risk offenders based on criminal risk factors.

The House approved and sent the Senate **H.3538**, the **“PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES RIGHT TO PARENT ACT”**. The legislation establishes provisions that parental rights cannot be terminated solely on the basis of a parent’s disability. In keeping with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Fourteenth Amendment, the legislation requires that reasonable efforts must be made, that are individualized and based upon a parent’s or legal guardian’s specific disability, to avoid removal of a child from the home of a parent or legal guardian with a disability, including referrals for access to adaptive parenting equipment, referrals for instruction on adaptive parenting techniques, and reasonable accommodations with regard to accessing services that are otherwise made available to a parent or legal guardian who does not have a disability

The House amended, approved, and sent the Senate **H.3132**, a bill revising the licensure and oversight of **HOSPICE PROGRAMS** which offer medically supervised palliative and supportive care for terminally ill patients and their families. The legislation revises hospice program licensure and regulation with the Department of Health and Environmental Control to establish new provisions governing the operation of multiple locations in addition to a hospice program’s primary office and the expansion of a hospice program beyond its licensed geographic service area into additional counties.

The House amended, approved, and sent the Senate **H.3879**, a bill **INCREASING BURIAL EXPENSES PAYABLE UNDER WORKERS’ COMPENSATION** laws for accidental workplace deaths by setting the maximum amount payable to families at ten thousand dollars, rather than the current maximum of twenty-five hundred dollars for such funeral expenses.

The House approved and sent the Senate **H.3927**, a bill providing that **BONDS ISSUED BY THE JOBS-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY** (JEDA) to provide funds for its programs must be approved by the Coordinating Council for Economic Development rather than the State Fiscal Accountability Authority. The bill also eliminates provisions requiring approval of interest rates on bonds JEDA issues for its programs and on behalf of local government projects.

The House amended, approved, and sent the Senate **H.3647**, a bill that revises provisions for vacation time sharing plans to establish new requirements that govern **RESALE VACATION TIMESHARE SERVICES** in order to put in place certain consumer protections that apply when interests in vacation time share arrangements are resold. The legislation also provides that vacation time sharing interests are subject to the protections afforded deployed military personnel under the Service Members Civil Relief Act.

The House amended, approved, and sent the Senate **H.3034**, a bill revising eligibility criteria for **IN-STATE HIGHER EDUCATION TUITION RATES FOR VETERANS AND THEIR DEPENDENTS** to bring state law into conformity with federal G.I. Bill provisions for scholarship assistance.

The House concurred in Senate amendments to **S.198** and enrolled the bill for ratification. The legislation revises provisions for **MINORS OBTAINING BEGINNER'S PERMITS OR DRIVERS' LICENSES UNDER THE AUTHORIZATION OF RESPONSIBLE ADULTS** who are willing to assume the obligation imposed for the licenses or permits. The legislation provides for a more expansive list of adults who are authorized to sign the application for a beginner's permit or driver's license of an unemancipated minor. The legislation includes provisions for sponsoring minors in obtaining beginner’s permits and driver’s licenses when the Department of Social Services has guardianship or legal custody. The disclosure of information by DSS to the Department of Motor Vehicles in order to provide approval is not to be considered an unlawful dissemination of confidential information.

The House approved **S.250**, the **ANNUAL TAX CONFORMITY BILL**, and enrolled the legislation for ratification. The legislation makes provisions for updating references to the federal Internal Revenue Code in state tax law.

The House amended, approved, and sent the Senate **H.3463**, a bill allowing for the **RETENTION OF AN AGRICULTURAL PROPERTY TAX ASSESSMENT RATE**. The legislation provides that if property was assessed as agricultural property or as farm machinery, buildings, and equipment in 2016, the property must continue to be assessed with the same assessment ratio unless a change of use occurs.

The House approved and sent the Senate **H.3652**, a bill relating to **ACCEPTABLE MATERIALS FOR WATER PIPES IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT** **PROCUREMENT PROJECTS** utilizing state funds. The legislationprovides that all piping materials that comply with sound engineering practices and meet project requirements as determined by an engineer, employed or retained by a governmental body or any political subdivision, must be allowed to participate in the bidding process when a governmental agency is procuring piping materials for a water supply, wastewater, stormwater, or storm drainage project for which state funds are used. The legislation does not prohibit governmental agencies’ officials or engineers from choosing a material at their discretion for such projects. The provisions of the legislation do not apply if a supplier has pipe or piping materials suitable for a project purpose in stock or in inventory.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ACTION**

AGRICULTURE, NATURAL RESOURCES AND

**ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**

The full Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs committee met on Thursday, March 23, 2017, and reported out the following bills.

The full committee gave a favorable report to **S.181**, a bill which provides **recycling companies** with the same protection given to companies under the Hazardous Waste Cleanup Act.

**H.3601**, legislation which creates a **BEAR HUNTING SEASON** in Game Zone 4 (Horry County), was given a favorable with an amendment recommendation. Currently, Game Zone 4 uses a lottery system for bear tags; this bill creates the season from October 17 through October 23.

**H.3559**, legislation relating to the cultivation of **industrial hemp**, was given a favorable with an amendment recommendation by the committee. The bill creates the South Carolina Industrial Hemp Program, a three-year pilot program, which recognizes industrial hemp as an agricultural crop, subject to regulations by the Department of Agriculture. Industrial hemp is defined as the plant Cannabis sativa L. and any part of such plant, whether growing or not, with a delta‑9 tetrahydrocannabinol concentration of not more than 0.3 percent on a dried weight basis.

Research Universities may conduct research on industrial hemp as an agriculture commodity and shall work in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture to identify solutions for applications, applicants and new market opportunities for industrial hemp growers.

The Department of Agriculture shall issue fifteen permits under this program. Each permit is allowed to grow industrial hemp on up to 20 acres of land. To grow industrial hemp, a person must be registered with the Department as a grower. Applicants, at a minimum, must submit any and all information requested, including but not limited to state and national background fingerprint criminal checks. The legislation also outlines in the application process that before the Department issues a permit, an applicant must have proof of a buyer for the product. The Department may charge fees to administer this pilot program, not to exceed two hundred and fifty dollars annually per applicant.

The legislation also outlines that no person who has been convicted of any felony, or any person convicted of any drug related misdemeanor or violation in the previous ten years from the date of the application, shall be eligible to obtain a permit.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a person engaged in cultivating, processing, selling, transporting, possessing, or otherwise distributing industrial hemp, or selling industrial hemp products from industrial hemp, is not subject to any civil or criminal actions under South Carolina law for engaging in these activities. Nothing in this provision limits or precludes the importation or exportation of industrial hemp or industrial hemp products.

The full committee gave a favorable with an amendment recommendation to **H.4003**, a bill enacting the **“SOUTH CAROLINA PRODUCE SAFETY ACT”.** The legislation allows and gives authority to the Department of Agriculture to oversee the new safety standards program applicable to certain farm produce. The program ensures that large farmers are handling and packaging produce in accordance with these national food safety standards. This legislation affects farms with an average annual monetary value of produce sold during the previous three‑year period of more than twenty‑five thousand dollars on a continuing basis. There is no impact to the state as the program is federally funded. As a result, the program would discontinue if Federal funds were to terminate.

**JUDICIARY**

The House Judiciary Committee met Tuesday, March 21, 2017, and passed out thirteen bills.

The full committee gave a favorable recommendation, with amendments, to **H.3548** **PROHIBITION OF DISMEMBERMENT ABORTIONS**that would enact the “South Carolina Unborn Child Protection from Dismemberment Abortion Act.” It prohibits dismemberment abortions. Violations are felony offenses with up to $10,000 in fines and up to two years in prison. Any medical professional accused of violating this provision may request a hearing before the South Carolina Board of Medical Examiners.

They also gave a favorable recommendation, with amendments, to **H.3930 CONSTITUTIONAL HANDGUN CARRYING.** Prohibits anyone from carrying a handgun certain places without the permission of its owner, or a person in control of the premises. Revises sections relating to unlawful and lawful handgun possession, including on public school property. Also revises the issuance of concealable weapon permits [CWP’s]. CWP’s would not be required in order for residents to carry weapons, whether concealed or openly, in South Carolina. Carrying handguns with an unlawful intent would remain illegal. Out-of-state visitors to South Carolina, who have a valid concealed weapons permit from their state, could carry in South Carolina as well, so long as they do so in compliance with our state laws.

It voted for a favorable recommendation of **H.3804 FIFTH WHEEL TOWING RESTRICTIONS.** Pick-up trucks, with features commonly referred to as ‘fifth wheels,’ would be limited to towing one trailing vehicle. Their maximum combined overall length is set at 75 feet.

The full committee gave a favorable recommendation, with amendments, to **H.3019** **CORONER QUALIFICATIONS.** Anyone elected coroner must meet minimum education and experience requirements, complete necessary training, and then would be deemed qualified to serve as coroner. Requires a medical examiner to be on staff if a particular, elected coroner has not met minimum standards precedent to serving as coroner.

They also voted for a favorable recommendation to **H.3116** **ABANDONED BABY SAFE HAVENS** which would allow leaving an infant not more than one year old [current law only covers infants up to 60 days old] at a safe haven, free of any criminal implications after doing so.

The full committee gave a favorable recommendation, with amendments, to **H.3125** **SCDSS SC SAFE FAMILIES ACT.** This proposed comprehensive legislation, allows, among other things, temporary placement of children with relatives or other persons pursuant to a DSS-generated safety plan. Lists requirements for safety, treatment, and placement plans. Establishes the responsibilities each DSS county director, and specifies them, not the caseworker, to be the clients of each county DSS legal counsel.

They gave a favorable recommendation to **H.3538 PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES RIGHT TO PARENT ACT.** Anyone with disabilities could not be denied access to SCDSS, and any related agency, services under this proposed bill. SCDSS would further be charged with protecting the parenting rights of anyone with a disability. Services must include adaptive parenting equipment for appropriate cases. Parental rights could not be terminated based solely on a parent’s disability.

The full committee gave a favorable recommendation, with amendments, to **H.3137** **MICRO-DISTILLERY TASTINGS.** Increases the amount of alcoholic liquors that can be dispensed at licensed distillery premises to any one person in any one day. The maximum distribution allowed per individual per day would now be three ounces. Would permit retail sales at these licensed premises and the use of non-alcoholic mixers, but only during tastings.

They also gave a favorable recommendation, with amendments, to **H.3885 LEWIS BLACKMAN HOSPITAL PATIENT SAFETY ACT UPDATES*.*** New definitions for ‘health care practitioner’ and ‘health care facility’ would be added by this law. It also would require health care practitioners to display identification badges while treating patients. These badges must contain practitioners’ names, titles, and levels of training.

The full committee gave a favorable recommendation, with amendments, to **H.3055** **STOP THE SCHOOL HOUSE TO JAILHOUSE PIPELINE STUDY COMMITTEE.** Would create a Restorative Justice Study Committee to review state juvenile justice laws. They will then make recommendations concerning proposed changes to facilitate and encourage diversion of juveniles from the juvenile justice system to restorative justice practices. Their report deadline is March 1, 2018.

They favorably recommended **H.3215** **IMPERSONATING A LAWYER.** Creates the offense of impersonating a lawyer, and provides graduated penalties, from misdemeanors for initial violations to felonies for subsequent violations.

The full committee gave a favorable recommendation, with amendments, to **H.3685 PRIMARIES AND SPECIAL ELECTIONS DATES*.*** Proposes changes to the primary, runoff primary, and special election dates in order to comply with the requirements of the South Carolina Uniform Military and Overseas Voters Act.

Last, they favorably reported out **H.3150** **MUNICIPAL GENERAL ELECTIONS*.*** Removes municipality authority to forego conducting general elections when only one person has filed for an elected office, and no one has officially declared they will run as a write-in candidate.

**LABOR, COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY**

The House Labor, Commerce and Industry Committee met on Thursday, March 23, and reported out three bills.

The committee gave a favorable report on **H.3968**, a bill providing for **ENHANCED SCREENING FOR THOSE SEEKING PROFESSIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING AND CERTIFICATION**. This bill makes revisions to add to the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation’s broad authority to revoke professional and occupational authorization enhanced authority to deny initial authorization so the department can deny the authorization to engage in a profession or occupation for any reason that it can revoke such authorization.

The committee gave a report of favorable with amendments on **H.3041**, a bill **ENHANCING CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK REQUIREMENTS FOR REAL ESTATE LICENSURE**. The legislation expands criminal background check requirements for Real Estate Commission licensure, by requiring fingerprint-based screening and require these background checks not only for initial licensures but also for licensure renewals under a six-year cycle that requires screening with every third renewal.

The committee gave a report of favorable with amendments on **H.3038**, a bill making provisions for the **LICENSURE AND REGULATION OF LOCKSMITHS**. The legislation creates the Board of Locksmiths and provides for its composition, function, and duties. The legislation requires applicants for licensure to satisfy certain criteria, complete testing requirements, and submit to state and national criminal background records checks.

**MEDICAL, MILITARY, PUBLIC AND MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS**

The full Medical, Military, Public and Municipal Affairs met on Tuesday, March 21, 2017, and reported out the following bills.

**H.3064**, legislation dealing with **contraceptive DRUGS**, was given a favorable with an amendment recommendation by the full committee. The legislation allows a practitioner to prescribe up to a three-year supply of any drug approved by the US FDA that is used to prevent pregnancy including, but not limited to, hormonal drugs administered orally, transdermally, and intravaginally.

The committee gave a favorable recommendation to **H.3428**, legislation dealing with the **“DO NOT RESUSCITATE ORDERS (DNR)”**. The bill revises the statute to allow a parent or legal guardian to request a do not resuscitate order for emergency services for a child under 18 years old who has a terminal condition. The bill also allows the parent or legal guardian of a patient under 18 years old to revoke the DNR order by destroying the document, by an oral statement or by removing the DNR bracelet.

**H.3809**, a bill relating to the **DISPENSING OF CONTRACEPTIVE DRUGS**, was given a favorable report by the committee. Beginning next year, this bill will require private health insurance policies that provide contraceptive drug coverage and Medicaid to provide reimbursement for dispensing a 12-month refill of all FDA approved contraceptive drugs after the insured has completed the initial supply of these drugs. The patient may request a smaller supply to be dispensed at one time and the prescriber may direct a smaller supply to be dispensed. Insured patients must be allowed to receive the drugs on-site at a health care provider’s office, if available. Dispensing practices for these contraceptive drugs must follow all clinical guidelines for appropriate prescribing and dispensing.

The committee gave a favorable with an amendment report to **H.3417**, legislation authorizing the Board of Barber Examiners to issue **MOBILE BARBERSHOP PERMITS**, establish permit requirements and provide for regulation of mobile barbershops. Mobile barbershop means a self-contained unit in which the practice of barbering is conducted, which may be moved, towed or transported from one location to another. A mobile barbershop includes a portable barber operation. A portable barber operation means equipment used in the practice of barbering that is in a mobile barbershop or transported from a barbershop and used on temporary bases at a location including, but not limited to: a) a client’s home; b) a nursing home; or c) another institution or location as may be authorized by the Board.

**H.3450**, legislation enacting the **“ELECTROLOGY PRACTICE ACT”**, was given a favorable with an amendment report by the committee. Electrolysis is a method of removing individual hairs from the face or body. Electrolysis devices destroy the growth center of the hair with chemical or heat energy or a combination of the two.

The bill establishes a licensure requirement to practice for electrologists and electrology instructors in South Carolina. The bill creates an advisory committee under the Board of Medical Examiners composed of three experienced electrologists, one physician, and one lay member. The advisory committee will make recommendations to the board regarding practice standards, continuing education requirements, disciplinary measures, education programs, fees, and regulations.

The bill allows the exam to be waived for an applicant who is licensed in another state with substantially the same licensure requirements or for an applicant who has passed the American Electrology Association Certified Professional Electrology exam. The bill provides a grandfather clause for electrologists who currently are practicing in SC.

The committee gave a favorable report to **H.3428**, legislation requiring the SC Division of Veterans’ Affairs Director to receive and respond to **complaints regarding** **county veterans’ affairs officers**. The bill also directs the director to forward the complaint along with his recommendation for discipline, including the possible removal of the county veterans’ affairs officer in question, to the appropriate legislative delegation for its consideration and final determination.

**H.3440**, a bill which revises the **qualifications for the visually impaired members of the South Carolina Commission for the Blind**, was given a favorable with an amendment recommendation by the committee. As a result of a recommendation by the Legislative Oversight Committee, the bill outlines that three of the seven members must meet the legal definition of blindness. "Blindness" is defined as that level of central visual acuity, 20/200 or less in the better eye with correcting glasses, or a disqualifying field defect in which the peripheral field has contracted to such an extent that the widest diameter of visual field subtends an angular distance no greater than twenty degrees and which is sufficient to incapacitate him for self‑support, or an eighty per cent loss of visual efficiency resulting from visual impairment in more than one function of the eye, including visual acuity for distance and near, visual fields, ocular, mobility, and other ocular functions and disturbances.

**WAYS AND MEANS**

The Ways and Means Committee met on Tuesday, March 21, and reported out several bills.

The committee gave a report of favorable with amendments on **H.3311**, a bill enacting a comprehensive **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT** **PATHWAYS INITIATIVE**. The legislation revises the membership of the Coordinating Council for Workforce Development within the Department of Commerce, which provides centralized oversight and comprehensive planning for the numerous job training initiatives housed in various state agencies, so that the Education and Economic Development Act experts appointed by the State Superintendent of Education include a school district superintendent, a school counselor, and a career and technology education director. The legislation charges the member agencies of the Coordinating Council for Workforce Development with developing and implementing a statewide Career Pathways Initiative, in alignment with the South Carolina Education and Economic Development Act, to improve employment outcomes and address critical workforce needs. The initiative encompasses a Career Pathways program to facilitate a student’s transition from education to employment and a Pathways to New Opportunities Initiative to provide career services, including education, training, and job search assistance to adults. A Career Pathways Grant Fund is created for the purpose of awarding competitive grants to technical colleges to fund Pathways‑specific expenses, including program administration, career and technical equipment, facilities, instructional materials, transportation, and tuition grants. Funds must be used to establish new pathways or enhance existing pathways that confer the necessary skills and training to prepare students for careers in high‑demand fields in industry sectors with critical workforce needs. The Department of Employment and Workforce, in coordination with the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education and the Department of Commerce, shall develop, coordinate, and implement a Pathways to New Opportunities Initiative, which must leverage existing services and new resources to provide subsidized career training and certification and job placement assistance to adults throughout the state pursuing careers in high‑demand occupations in industry sectors with critical workforce needs. A Workforce Scholarship and Grant Fund is created to provide financial assistance to assist individuals with the costs of attending eligible technical college or professional certification programs such as tuition, fees, textbooks, and school related transportation. The Department of Employment and Workforce, in consultation with the Department of Commerce, must develop and implement a plan to facilitate the job placement of qualifying individuals who have completed the necessary training and certification, to ensure that they are matched with available employment opportunities in industry sectors with critical workforce needs throughout the state.

The committee gave a favorable report on **H.3927**, a bill providing that **BONDS ISSUED BY THE JOBS-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY** (JEDA) to provide funds for its programs must be approved by the Coordinating Council for Economic Development rather than the State Fiscal Accountability Authority. The bill also eliminates provisions requiring approval of interest rates on bonds JEDA issues for its programs and on behalf of local government projects.

The committee gave a favorable report on **S.250**, the **ANNUAL TAX CONFORMITY BILL**. The legislation makes provisions for updating references to the federal Internal Revenue Code in state tax law.

The committee gave a favorable report on **H.3318**, a bill **TRANSFERRING THE ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT UNIT** from the Department of Public Safety to the State Law Enforcement Division.

The committee gave a favorable report on **H.3742**, a bill providing authorization for the employment of **OFFENDER SUPERVISION SPECIALISTS** at the Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services to oversee the supervision of standard and low‑risk offenders. The department shall promulgate regulations for the qualifications of these offender supervision specialists and procedures for classifying offenders as standard and low‑risk offenders based on criminal risk factors.

The committee gave a favorable report on **H.3666**, a bill making provisions for **DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS STABILIZATION UNIT FACILITIES** where individuals entering hospital emergency rooms suffering from mental illness or substance abuse issues may be transferred to begin receiving appropriate care. This bill makes provisions for a crisis stabilization unit facility operated or authorized by the Department of Mental Health which provides a short‑term residential program offering psychiatric stabilization services, detoxification services, and brief, intensive crisis services twenty‑four hours a day, seven days a week. The legislation exempts a crisis stabilization unit facility from the Certificate of Need process and requires a crisis stabilization unit facility to obtain a license from the Department of Health and Environmental Control.

The committee gave a report of favorable with amendments on **H.3343**, the **“SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION SCHOOL FACILITIES ACT”**. The legislation makes provisions for state financial assistance to school districts, through such means as the issuance of state general obligation bonds and the awarding of grants, that must be used for permanent school instructional facilities, health and safety upgrades, technology access inside the school, and fixed building assets including the costs for construction, improvement, enlargement, or renovation of school facilities. The legislation does not provide financial assistance for unimproved real property, centralized school district administration facilities, or facilities normally identified with interscholastic sports activities. Under the legislation, the State Department of Education is charged with conducting a comprehensive study of all school districts’ facilities and physical assets and is assigned the responsibility of producing an annual prioritization report, with a total project cost that must not exceed two hundred million dollars, that ranks the qualified school projects. The department’s prioritization report must also provide a recommendation of whether financial assistance for a specific school project should be in the form of grants, loans or a combination of both. The legislation makes provisions for financial assistance to be allocated using the priorities established by the Office of School Facilities of the Department of Education as approved by the State Board of Education. Upon review of the information, the General Assembly may, through budget proviso or joint resolution, set the principal amount of the State School Facilities General Obligation Bonds to be considered. Upon approval of the Joint Bond Review Committee, the project prioritization report, with certification from the State Board of Education, must be submitted to the State Fiscal Accountability Authority in order for bonds to be issued. The legislation makes provisions for the State Board of Education to establish a revolving fund with such monies as may be appropriated by the General Assembly to operate a grant program that provides nonrecurring aid to school districts for facility maintenance expenses to include fire alarm systems, fire sprinkler or suppression systems, roof and heating and air conditioning repairs or replacements.

The committee gave a favorable report on **H.3463**, a bill allowing for the **RETENTION OF AN AGRICULTURAL PROPERTY TAX ASSESSMENT RATE**. The legislation provides that if property was assessed as agricultural property or as farm machinery, buildings, and equipment in 2016, the property must continue to be assessed with the same assessment ratio unless a change of use occurs.

**BILLS INTRODUCED IN THE**

**HOUSE THIS WEEK**

**EDUCATION AND PUBLIC WORKS**

**S.262 *TEXTBOOK COSTS* Sen. Setzler**

This bill provides a textbook policy for public institutions of higher education that is intended to help minimize college textbook costs.

**H.4032 *LIFE SCHOLARSHIP ELIGIBILITY* Rep. McKnight**

This bill relates to criteria for life scholarship eligibility, so as to revise the criteria only to include students in the top thirty percent of their graduating classes, and to make the provisions applicable beginning with freshmen entering four-year institutions in the 2018-2019 school year.

**H.4033 *ENDANGERMENT OF A HIGHWAY WORKER* Rep. Hixon**

This bill relates to speeding in work zones and penalties associated with speeding in work zones, so as to provide a definition for the terms "highway work zone" and "highway worker", to create the offense of "endangerment of a highway worker", and to provide a penalty for this offense. In connection with this subject, the bill also amends the point system established for the evaluation of the driving record of persons operating motor vehicles.

**H.4039 *COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE*  Rep. Govan**

This bill relates to the compulsory attendance requirement in schools, so as to increase from seventeen to eighteen the age of the child at which a parent or guardian no longer has responsibility to cause the child to attend school.

**H.4040 “*SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS ACT”* Rep. Allison**

This bill enacts the "Sign Language Interpreters Act" so as to require a specified level of competence for sign language interpreters used by certain entities of state government, public schools, and hospital systems, to provide sign language interpretation services to members of the public who have certain hearing and speech impairments, and amends the SC Code relating to the appointment of sign language interpreters by the Judicial department for parties or witnesses who have certain hearing impairments.

**JUDICIARY**

**S.114 *ALCOHOL MANUFACTURER NONPROFIT DONATIONS* Sen. Bennett**

Allows alcohol manufacturers and producers to donate their products to qualified nonprofit organizations for fundraising events with either a special or temporary alcohol permit.

**S.116 *ALCOHOL SELLER* *LIABILITY INSURANCE* Sen. Rankin**

Requires anyone who is permitted to sell alcohol on their premises to maintain liability insurance with total coverage of at least one million dollars.

**S.173 *CONTINUING MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS* Sen. Sheheen**

Requires law enforcement officers to complete continuing education credits in mental health, or addictive, disorders. Authorizes the Law Enforcement Training Council to establish and maintain a crisis intervention training center. Also establishes Council duties.

**S.342 *EMERGENCY SURVEYING IMMUNITY* Sen. Williams**

Adds limited immunity, with exceptions, for surveyors who volunteer their services during a state or national emergency.

**S.359 *UNFAIR TRADE PRACTICES BY FUEL RETAILERS* Sen. Cromer**

Removes references to the Department of Consumer Affairs from state code sections related to unfair trade practices by motor fuel retailers.

**H.4013 *HEALTH CARE DECISIONS FOR ADULTS UNABLE TO CONSENT***

**Rep. G. M. Smith**

Would allow anyone who has been given legal authority to make health care decisions for adults unable to decide for themselves.

**H.4019 *ARCHIVING BOAT FLOATATION DEVICE VIOLATIONS***

**Rep. Ballentine**

Provides that state law enforcement could not record an ‘insufficient number of personal flotation devices on a boat’ violation in any state or national criminal archive.

**H.4020 *NOTICE REQUIREMENT FOR CONDEMNED PROPERTY* Rep. Johnson**

After landowners refuse entry on their land to a condemnor who wants to determine its value, by providing advance, written notice of intent to obtain an *ex parte* order, the condemnor would then be able to enter this land after the order is signed.

**H.4027 *ETHICS AND GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY REVISIONS***

**Rep. Lucas**

Revises the definition of “business with which he is associated” in regard to state ethics and government accountability laws. Also revises provisions related to economic interests as well as the information required to be included in statements of economic interests.

**H.4031 *PHYSICIANS REPORTING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE* Rep. Tallon**

Physicians who report domestic violence incidents or assist with domestic violence investigations would be immune from administrative, civil, and criminal liability.

**H.4034 *MORE LIMITED SCFOIA EXEMPTIONS FOR LEGISLATIVE PAPERWORK* Rep. Taylor**

Amends the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act [SCFOIA] to limit current disclosure exemptions applicable to drafts of potential ordinances, legislation, and amendments to legislation. Exempts written, electronic, and correspondence communications sent by the public from disclosure. Neither of these exemptions affect public access to source documents or records.

**H.4036 *LEGISLATIVE AUDIT COUNCIL AGENCY DEFINITIONS* Rep. Murphy**

For the purposes of Legislative Audit Council operations, this bill would amend the definition of “state agencies” to include school districts.

**H.4042 *JUDICIAL ELECTIONS: RECORDINGS & RECUSALS* Rep. Hill**

For judicial elections, the votes of each member of the General Assembly would have to be recorded. Any members who have accepted campaign contributions from any judicial candidate, or a family member of any judicial candidate, must recuse themselves from voting in that judicial election.

**H.4043 *JUDICIAL MERIT SELECTION REPORTS* Rep. Hill**

Requires the Judicial Merit Selection Commission to release a list of all qualified candidates to the General Assembly rather than the current practice of only nominating three candidates.

**H.4044 *CHILDCARE FACILITY STAFFING* Rep. G.M. Smith**

Allows certain individuals under the age of eighteen to be either employed by, or volunteer with, certain childcare facilities. Establishes requirements and procedures for the facilities that choose not to become licensed. Requires certain facilities to carry liability insurance.

**H.4046 *FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT DISCLOSURE FEES* Rep. Hill**

Prohibits public bodies from charging more than the actual cost of printing public records pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act. Allows public bodies to indicate on the provided documents that they are not for commercial use.

**LABOR, COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY**

**S.185 *FUNERAL SERVICE CONSUMER PROTECTIONS* Sen. Shealy**

This bill establishes provisions that target the practice of allowing or permitting an internet service provider, unlicensed person, establishment, or entity to engage in the practice of funeral service, embalming, cremation, or conducting business as a funeral home, funeral establishment, crematory, or mortuary. An advertisement must include the physical address of the funeral home, funeral establishment, mortuary, or crematory where the advertised services will be provided. The board shall promulgate regulations establishing additional requirements for advertisements relating to providing funeral services, including internet advertisements.

**S.428 *COSTS OF PROVIDING DIRECT BROADCAST SATELLITE SERVICE***

**Sen. Reese**

This bill revises provisions relating to items included and excluded from terms “sales” and “gross receipts”, to provide that receipts from the provision of direct broadcast satellite service are attributable to this state in pro rata proportion of the costs of performing the service.

**S.463 *SURPLUS LINES INSURANCE* Sen. Cromer**

This bill includes certain forms of disability insurance in the definition for the term “surplus lines insurance”.

**H.4022 *UTILITY FACILITY CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS* Rep. Finlay**

This bill revises provisions governing base load review orders and project development orders issued for certain utility facility construction projects.

**WAYS AND MEANS**

**S.404 *AGRIBUSINESS OPERATION TAX INCENTIVES* Sen. Campbell**

This bill provides a tax credit to an agribusiness operation or an agricultural packaging operation that increases its purchases of agricultural products which have been certified as South Carolina grown. The legislation revises jobs development credit provisions, so as to make certain qualifying service‑related facilities eligible for the credit.

**S.483 *STORM RECOVERY FUNDS* Sen. Williams**

This joint resolution provides that, from the funds lapsed to the general fund from the South Carolina Farm Aid Fund, the State Treasurer is directed to loan $700,000 to the Town of Nichols to be used for recovery expenses associated with the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew, including the repair or replacement of equipment, vehicles, and physical infrastructure. Following the disbursement of funds to the Town of Nichols, the State Treasurer is directed to disburse the remaining funds lapsed to the general fund from the South Carolina Farm Aid Fund to eligible counties and municipalities to offset storm cleanup expenses associated with the 2014 Winter Storm.

**H.4009 *“MOTORSPORTS ENTERTAINMENT COMPLEX INVESTMENT ACT”***

**Rep. Lucas**

This bill enacts the “Motorsports Entertainment Complex Investment Act” by: exempting certain building materials for a complex from the sales tax; creating the Motorsports Tourism Incentive Fund to award grants or loans to attract and expand tourism and hospitality projects related to events at such complexes; making provisions that a complex is eligible for benefits from the Closing Fund; providing a tax credit of twenty‑five percent of the costs incurred by a taxpayer to install equipment or technology that allows information to be transmitted through a wireless local area network at a complex; revising the applicability of corporation license fee provisions so as to make such provisions inapplicable to a complex; and revising admission license tax provisions, so as to increase the exemption on a complex, remove the time period for the exemption, and provide that the exempted revenue must be used on marketing for events at the complex.

**H.4014 *SOUTH CAROLINA CONSERVATION BANK RESTRUCTURING***

**Rep. Pitts**

This bill places the South Carolina Conservation Bank under the Department of Natural Resources and provides that DNR’s board will serve as the board for the Conservation Bank. The legislation creates the South Carolina Conservation Bank Advisory Board and provides for its powers and duties. The legislation authorizes the Conservation Bank to undertake certain actions to preserve and protect natural resources. The legislation establishes certain conservation criteria, including the protection of Carolina Bays and other isolated wetlands. The legislation prohibits the use of Conservation Bank funds to acquire interests through eminent domain or condemnation and provides that the Conservation Bank may not be used to eliminate or unreasonably restrict hunting, fishing, farming, forestry, timber management, or wildlife habitat management. The legislation eliminates provisions relating to the bank’s funding through a portion of deed recording fees.

**H.4021 *PERISHABLE PREPARED FOOD MANUFACTURING SALES TAX***

***EXEMPTIONS* Rep. Finlay**

This bill establishes sales tax exemptions that apply to certain fuel and electricity used in perishable prepared food manufacturing and certain clothing worn at perishable prepared food manufacturing facilities.

**H.4028 *DEADLINE FOR FILING ANNUAL CORPORATE TAX REPORTS***

**Rep. Simrill**

This bill that a corporation must file its annual report by the date the corporation’s income tax return is due.

**H.4029 *ASSESSING THE PROPERTY OF BUSINESSES* Rep. Simrill**

This bill revises provisions relating to assessing the property of merchants and other related businesses, so as to require the Department of Revenue to follow certain North American Classification System Manual provisions. The legislation eliminates provisions relating to appraising and assessing personal property of businesses under the jurisdiction of the county auditor.

**H.4030 *DEBTOR NAMED ON A WARRANT FOR DISTRAINT* Rep. Simrill**

This bill allows the Department of Revenue to submit certain information to a financial institution regarding a debtor that has been named on a warrant for distraint and requires the financial institution provide certain information to the department.

**H.4035 *HIGH GROWTH SMALL BUSINESS JOB CREATION ACT REVISION***

***AND REAUTHORIZATION* Rep. Henderson**

This bill revises provisions of the High Growth Small Business Job Creation Act so as to: allow individuals not subject to the South Carolina income tax to claim the credit; specify services for which contributions are not eligible for the credit; substitute ‘convertible’ for ‘subordinated’ in the definition of qualified investment; increase the annual aggregate credit from five million dollars to ten million dollars; eliminate the requirement that certain information be contained in a report to the General Assembly and Governor; and, eliminate provisions relating to the tax treatment of certain capital gains or losses. The legislation reauthorizes the High Growth Small Business Job Creation Act for six more years.

**H.4041 *DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION RESTRUCTURING***

**Rep. Chumley**

This bill revises provisions relating to the portion of the motor fuel user fee credited to the Department of Transportation for the department’s use, so as to prohibit the expenditure of the funds on employee compensation, including employee benefits. The legislation prohibits certain motor fuel user fee proceeds from being expended on new road construction projects, and prohibits the expenditure or transfer of such funds to the South Carolina Transportation Infrastructure Bank. The legislation makes provisions for the Governor to appoint the Secretary of Transportation rather than the DOT Commission.

**H.4049 *GRANT PROGRAM FOR ADDITIONAL TEACHERS IN CLASSROOMS***

***WHERE THEY ARE MOST NEEDED* Rep. Brown**

This bill provides that any taxpayer holding a retail sales tax license when filing a monthly, quarterly, or other period sales tax return and remitting a tax due shall on a voluntary basis round the tax due upward to the nearest whole dollar, and provides that the revenue raised by these provisions must be used to fund a new grant program to provide recurring or nonrecurring aid to school districts for additional teacher funding for the compensation of an additional teacher in those classrooms of a school district where two teachers are most needed.

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