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# Introduced Bills

**Agriculture and Natural Resources**

**H. 4905 Striped Bass Rep. Hixon**

This bill adds the reference “**hybrid bass**.”

**H. 4906 Wildlife Disease Control Rep. Hixon**

This bill allows the Department of Natural Resources to take action regarding **wildlife disease**.

**H. 4908 Transfer of Ownership of Dargan’s Pond Rep. R. Williams**

This joint resolution authorizes the South Carolina Department of Administration to transfer ownership of **Dargan’s Pond**, a fifty‑acre lake located at the Pee Dee Research and Education Center in Darlington County, from Clemson University to Francis Marion University upon consent of both the transferring and receiving universities.

**Education and Public Works**

**S. 947 Driver Education Training Sen. Grooms**

This bill exempts the Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina from being regulated as a **driving school** by exempting an association formed by a group of electric cooperatives pursuant to the extent that it trains member cooperative employees.

**H. 4903 Adds Spanish to Core Academic Areas Rep. Rivers**

The bill adds **Spanish** as a “core academic area” to go along with mathematics, English/language arts, social studies (history, government, economics, and geography), and science. The bill requires the State Board of Education to establish educational standards for **Spanish** before December 1, 2022, with the requirement to be implemented beginning with the 2023-2024 school year.

**Judiciary**

**H. 4890 Released Inmate IDs Rep. Matthews**

This proposal would require the Department of Corrections [SCDC] and Department of Motor Vehicles [SCDMV] to issue all eligible released inmates a valid special identification card. Any inmates exonerated of any conviction for which they served time in prison would be provided with housing assistance, job training, and mental health services. As a final feature, SCDMV would have to waive any fee for a driver's license, or a special identification card, issued under these circumstances.

**H. 4891 Prospective Employee Database Rep. Matthews**

If enacted, this bill would require the State Law Enforcement Division (SLED) to create a database that would allow employers to obtain criminal background information related to the type of employment being sought by prospective employees.

**H. 4902 J. Michele Childs for US Supreme Court Rep. J. Moore**

A proposed Concurrent Resolution to the President encouraging him to nominate the Honorable J. Michelle Childs to the United States Supreme Court.

**H. 4919 Absentee Ballot and Other Comprehensive Voting Reforms Rep. Lucas**

This bill would establish early voting in South Carolina for the two weeks preceding any general election, and enact various other voting reforms as well. These reforms would include prohibiting candidates from filing more than one intention of candidacy statement for a particular election.

It also would prohibit candidates from being nominated by more than one political party for a single office, or candidates' names appearing on a ballot more than once.

Absentee ballot oaths would be required to have the printed name of the witness, in addition to their signature and address. For anyone qualified to vote by absentee ballot, a new reason to vote absentee would be that a voter is going to be absent from the county for the duration of the early voting period and election day. Being on vacation, or having to work during early voting or on Election Day, would no longer be valid reasons for obtaining an absentee ballot.

Voters’ driver's license numbers, or other unique identifying number associated with a government-issued photo identification, would be added to voter registration cards.

Absentee ballot delivery would require an authorized returnee to produce a current and valid form of government-issued photo identification.

Receipt, tabulation, and reporting of absentee ballots would also allow examination of return-addressed envelopes starting at 7:00 a.m. on the Sunday before Election Day, and tabulating absentee ballots could start at 7:00 a.m. on the calendar day before Election Day. Anyone reporting absentee ballot results before the polls are closed would face criminal penalties.

Any voter who has already voted absentee could cast a provisional ballot on Election Day. This provisional ballot could be counted only if the voter's absentee ballot is not received.

**Labor, Commerce and Industry**

**H. 4889 Alarm System Business False Alarms Rep. Bannister**

This bill revises the South Carolina Alarm System Business Act to provide that an **alarm business** or contractor must not be fined or assessed a civil penalty for **false alarms** which are not attributed to improper installation, defective equipment, or operational error by the alarm business contractor.

**H. 4894 Label Requirements to Disclose Whether Chinese Goods Are Produced with**

**Forced Labor Rep. Haddon**

This bill provides that any good sold in South Carolina that was produced in whole or in part in the People’s Republic of China must have a label to indicate whether or not the good was produced through **forced labor**. The legislation affords the Attorney General authority to pursue restraining orders and injunctions for suspected violations. A violation is a felony offense that is subject to a fine set at the discretion of the court and/or imprisonment for not more than ten years.

**H. 4909 Prohibition on Discriminating against Potential Organ Transplant Recipients Based on**

**COVID-19 Vaccination Status Rep. Trantham**

This bill provides that a hospital is prohibited from establishing or implementing any policy that makes a person ineligible to be an **organ transplant recipient**, or has the effect of removing a person from an organ transplant list, based upon the person’s **COVID-19 vaccination status**. An insurance company is prohibited from establishing or implementing any policy that denies coverage for an organ transplant recipient based upon the person’s COVID-19 vaccination status.

**H. 4920 Vehicles Towed at the Direction of Law Enforcement Officers Rep. Sandifer**

This bill revises provisions relating to the storage and disposition of **vehicles towed at the direction of law enforcement officers** to provide that notification to the owner and lienholder of towed vehicles must be made by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, or certified mail with electronic tracking. The legislation provides that a towing company, storage facility, garage, or repair shop may apply to certain vendors to obtain real-time access to title and lienholder information before towed vehicles are sold.

**Ways and Means**

**H. 4892 Student Loan Forgiveness for Public School Teachers Rep. Cobb-Hunter**

This bill establishes student loan forgiveness provisions for those attending South Carolina’s public or private colleges and universities that allow loan recipients to have up to one hundred percent of the amount of their loans, plus the interest, canceled if they become certified and teach in a South Carolina public school.

**H. 4917 Prohibiting the Investment of Public Employee Retirement Funds in Scrutinized Companies Rep. Bernstein**

This bill revises provisions on prohibited investments of public employee retirement funds to include criteria for prohibiting the Retirement System Investment Commission from investing in a scrutinized company that boycotts **Israel** or is complicit in **Sudan’s Darfur genocide**.

**H. 4918 Retirees Returning to Covered Employment in the Police Officers Retirement System Rep. Thayer**

This bill provides that, notwithstanding the ten thousand dollar earnings limitation provision, a retired member of the South Carolina Police Officers Retirement System may be hired and return to employment covered by this system and may earn up to fifty thousand dollars without affecting the monthly retirement allowance the member is receiving from this system, so long as at the time of reemployment, the retired member is working in a nonadministrative capacity.

**H. 4921 Compensation of Retirees Returning to Covered Employment in the Police Officers Retirement System Rep. Pope**

This bill provides that, if a participating employer in the Police Officers Retirement System engages a certain member of the system to perform services, then the participant employer shall pay to the system the employer contribution that would be required if the member received the compensation as an active contributing member of the system. The legislation revises provisions relating to retirement benefits after returning to covered employment under the Police Officers Retirement System, so as to remove the ten thousand dollar earnings limitation on an employee returning to employment who has not been engaged to perform services for a participating employer in the system or any other system for at least twelve consecutive months subsequent to retirement.

**H. 4922 Compensation of Retirees Returning to Covered Employment in the Retirement System Rep. Pope**

This bill provides that, if a participating employer in the South Carolina Retirement System, engages a certain member of the system to perform services, then the participant employer shall pay to the system the employer contribution that would be required if the member received the compensation as an active contributing member of the system. The legislation revises provisions relating to retirement benefits after returning to covered employment under the South Carolina Retirement System, so as to remove the ten thousand dollar earnings limitation on an employee returning to employment who has not been engaged to perform services for a participating employer in the system or any other system for at least twelve consecutive months subsequent to retirement.

# House Committees

**Education**

The Committee on Education and Public Works met and passed the following bills:

**H. 4766** merges the Education and Economic Development Act Coordinating Council (EEDA CC) with the **Coordinating Council for Workforce Development** (CCWD). Currently, the Secretary of the Department of Commerce, the State Superintendent of Education, the Executive Director of the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education, and the Executive Director of the Commission on Higher Education or their designees serve on the CCWD. The bill removes reference to designees and requires the principals to serve. The State Superintendent of Education is directed to appoint a school district superintendent, a school counselor, and a career and technology education director to the merged council.  The Chairs of the House Education and Public Works Committee and Senate Education Committee each have one appointment to the CCWD in the same manner as their appointment to the EEDA CC. The Governor must appoint two representatives from the business community who have professional expertise in economic development and workforce issues.  Language requiring the President of the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce to make an appointment is removed. CCWD is given the additional requirement of facilitating and coordinating a unified statewide workforce plan. CCWD must also take on the EEDA CC role of ensuring that the EEDA is properly implemented. Language limiting CCWD’s focus to persons age twenty-one and over is removed. The bill does not specifically repeal the EEDA CC, so, to remedy this, the committee recommends an amendment repealing the EEDA CC.

[**H. 4570**](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/billsearch.php?billnumbers=4570&session=124&summary=B) relates to the issuance of **special license plates to service members** associated with various military components or designations, so as to provide for a military license plate clean-up. The bill allows the DMV to issue US Space Force license plates for private passenger motor vehicles or motorcycles to active or prior service members. The bill reinserts the provision that disabled veterans are exempt from the regular motor vehicle registration fee. This provision was erroneously struck last year. The bill adds the Meritorious Service Medal to the list of special license plates for active or prior service members. It also reinserts the Support Our Troops special license plate that was erroneously struck last year. The bill repeals the Members of Foreign Consulates special license plate since the US State Department has requested that all states repeal the plate due to misuse of the plate in other states. And finally, the bill clarifies that this act will take effect on May 6, 2022.

**H. 4797** revises language regarding the issuance of the special commemorative "**Public Education: A Great Investment**" license plate by specifying that the funds from the plates must be used to provide classroom technology to the public schools, instead of restricting the funds solely to providing computers. This language is more encompassing and updates the statute to reflect the changes in technology that have occurred over the last several years in the classroom.

# House Floor Actions

The House, with an amendment, adopted and ordered sent to the Senate **H. 3100** relating to **unlawfully passing a stopped school bus**. All school buses must be equipped with extended school bus stop arms. The State Superintendent of Education has the discretion to overrule the decision of a local school district regarding the placement of a student school bus stop. The exercise of this discretion is limited to school bus stops that the Superintendent determines to be dangerous. Also, the month of August of each year is declared 'School Bus Safety Month' in South Carolina.

Having been recalled from the Education Committee the previous week, the House adopted and sent to the Senate **H. 4576**, a bill that declares the third Tuesday in February of each year as "**Historically Black Colleges and Universities Day**."

The House amended, gave third reading and sent to the Senate **H. 4177**, a bill that **establishes a waterfowl advisory committee.** Due to a decline in the state’s waterfowl due to destructive storms and financial management issues, the waterfowl advisory committee is created to help direct the manager of the waterfowl program within the Department of Natural Resources. This committee would to assist in the management of waterfowl habitats, assist in the development, protection, and propagation of waterfowl, assisting in prioritizing the expenditures of monies. Also, the bill increases the cost of migratory waterfowl permits (duck stamps) from five to fifteen dollars for five years. The additional revenue from duck stamps will be used to repair the state’s impoundments that have not been addressed over the years. It is noted that none of these funds will be used for operating the program. The committee shall make a report of its findings, activities, and long term plans to the General Assembly by December thirty-first of each year.

The House amended, approved, and sent the Senate **H. 4831**, a joint resolution that directs the Department of Commerce to conduct an **Offshore Wind Energy Supply Chain Industries Economic Development Study** to evaluate the state’s business advantages, economic climate, workforce readiness, and any other relevant state assets to create a roadmap for South Carolina to effectively compete in attracting offshore wind energy supply chain industries to the state.The Department of Commerce is directed to coordinate with the Office of Regulatory Staff, Clemson University, or other pertinent state agencies, and must submit the reports, roadmap, and any legislative recommendations to the Speaker of the House, Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, Chairman of the House Labor, Commerce and Industry Committee, the President of the Senate, Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, and Chairman of the Senate Labor, Commerce and Industry Committee one year from the date of funding by the General Assembly.

The House gave third reading and sent to the Senate **H. 3889**, a bill **restricting the use of airboats during duck season**. This bill reflects current law; however, it changes use of airboat restriction during waterfowl season or duck season.

The House approved and sent the Senate **H. 4832**, a bill providing for numerous **insurance law revisions**, clarifications, and updates, including provisions for aligning state law with recommendations of the National Association of Insurance Commissioners and authorizing South Carolina’s withdrawal from the Interstate Insurance Product Regulation Compact.

The House gave third readingand returned to the Senate with amendments, **S. 203** relating to the **removal of school district trustees** and filling vacancies. School district trustees who wilfully commit or engage in an act of malfeasance, misfeasance, chronic unexcused absenteeism, conflicts of interest, criminal misconduct in office, or persistent neglect of duty in office, or are adjudicated medically incompetent or medically incapacitated, are subject to removal by the Governor upon any of the foregoing causes being made to appear to the satisfaction of the Governor. Before removing any such officer, the Governor shall inform him in writing of the specific charges brought against him and give him an opportunity on reasonable notice to be heard.

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