

House Republican Caucus

SCHRC 2022

Week 5 - Advancing Our Conservative Agenda

Overview

Week 5 was a very busy and successful week in the South Carolina House. We worked on the Floor, and spent time in committees and subcommittees on matters regarding election uniformity throughout the state, school choice, and reserve funds.

As we work our way through February, we are approaching one of the busiest weeks of the year: budget week. The budget will be on the Floor for debate the week of March 14th. In addition to the budget subcommittees meeting, we were joined by Governor McMaster and Secretary Hall from SCDOT for our weekly caucus meeting. The Governor spoke on some of his executive budget priorities (many of which are already in the works), including expansion of roads, bridges, interstates and sewer. Secretary Hall then spoke to us about the Department's achievements in the past 10 years, as well as their requests for this year's budgets, much of which prioritized the same infrastructure improvements and expansions as the Governor.

ARPA Funds

With a large amount of Federal funding on its way to South Carolina, House Ways and Means met to discuss how this money will be spent. The committee advanced [H.4408](#). I am looking forward to supporting this bill, which prioritizes improving our infrastructure (as proposed by the Governors and Secretary Hall) including our roads, highways, water, and sewer, as well as helps expand broadband connectivity to rural areas of South Carolina. With this South Carolina will not only be up to speed with her neighbors, but will springboard our State decades ahead.

Election Uniformity Bill Passes the House!

An election uniformity and protection bill was sent back to the House this week, where we amended it to include important reforms to our state election system. I believe that a vote in York County should be cast, processed, and counted the same way as a vote in Charleston County, Anderson County, or any other county in our state. This [bill](#) provides a process to streamline the process and provide necessary oversight. Also included in the amendment are necessary provisions to secure our elections, including outlawing the use of drop boxes, banning County Board of Elections from accepting private money, providing a process for auditing state elections (when deemed necessary), and ensuring that people can ONLY vote in the place that they are registered.

I hope that the Senate will accept our amendment to ensure these protections become law, and I look forward to exploring and working on future legislation that safeguards the democratic process.

A Voice & A Choice in Your Children's Education

My colleagues and I are on the right track to embodying school choice in South Carolina. This week, [legislation](#) advanced out of House Ways and Means that goes to give parents the two things they have been desperately asking for when it comes to their children's education: a voice and a choice. This has become even more evident during pandemic times, as education was one of the areas that felt the brunt.

This bill will provide parents up to \$5,000 a year towards the cost of private school, which would be funded by \$75 million of the state surplus funds. This 3-year pilot program is a necessary first step in incorporating more parental involvement in our education system. I look forward to supporting this bill on the Floor. Read more about this bill [here](#).

'Rainy-Day Funds' on the Rise

As we prepare to take up the state budget next month, committees and subcommittee members have been hard at work. The House Ways and Means committee gave a favorable report to [H. 3346](#) on Thursday, which will gradually increase our state's reserve funds and would take effect upon ratification of an amendment to our State Constitution. This type of conservative planning and budgeting is *fundamental* in ensuring our economy is prepared for adversity or unexpected circumstances (such as a pandemic) down the road.

Military Retirement State Income Tax Elimination: I previously updated you on a bill in Ways and Means that eliminates state income taxes on military retirement. This week, the House Ways and Means committee advanced [this bill](#) and it is headed to the floor. I look forward to voting 'YEA'.

South Carolina Stands With Taiwan

On Tuesday, we were joined by Taiwanese Representative to the U.S., Hsiao Bi-khim. Relationships like this are so important for the proliferation of democracy worldwide, and I appreciate her making the trek to visit us here in South Carolina. The House is proud to support Taiwan in opposing the communist regime of China and building democracy in Taiwan.

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OUTLAWING DROP BOXES

Voted to outlaw 'drop box' voting. Absentee ballots will only be accepted by mail or by hand - without exception.



FILING FEES FOR EVERY CANDIDATE

Every candidate seeking nomination must pay a candidate filing fee. Additionally, political parties are allowed to charge a candidate up to \$100 as a party certification fee.

VOTE WHERE YOU ARE REGISTERED

Individuals can *only* vote in the last place they registered to vote, ensuring voters can't move around to affect election results in another area.



NO PRIVATE MONEY

Private entities can no longer fund County Board of Elections offices, protecting SC elections from the influence of out-of-state, big-money groups.



PROTESTING PRIMARIES

Shortens the primary protest process, allowing the hearing to go directly to the State Party Committee for determination.



AUDITING ELECTIONS

Voted to ensure elections can be audited if necessary. The conduct and results of the audit will be available to ensure complete transparency.



ACCOUNTABILITY

The State Election Commission **MUST** report any violation of state election laws to the SC Attorney General or other law enforcement agency.