South Carolina Student Legislature

“Our Freedom, Our Future, Our Responsibility.”

19 November 2025

Delegates of the South Carolina Student Legislature,

It is my distinct pleasure to welcome each and every one of you to the 2025 Fall Session in Columbia. I would like to, as always, thank the Executive Committee for their assistance in planning this session. I would also like to extend my thanks to Clerk Reid and Speaker Murrell Smith, who are graciously allowing us to use their chambers. I trust that you will all enjoy this session, and I respectfully request that you contact me immediately with any concerns or suggestions for improving the session experience.

I would first like to welcome our new delegates. You have had the fortune of joining what is, in my opinion, one of the finest college organizations in the nation. The beauty of this program is that it empowers each and every member with the power and aptitude to speak their mind, skillfully debate issues with which they are passionate, and engage in civil discourse with their fellow countrymen. I implore you to be willing and able to speak – it is acceptable to be nervous, but understand that every returning member was once in your shoes. I hope you will enjoy this organization as much as I have been lucky to over the last few years.

For our returning delegates, welcome back! I can honestly say that it has been a pleasure coming to know each of you as individuals over the last several sessions. I am pleased to see you return, and I hope that you will guide the newer members of your delegation in making the most of their time here. As always, I am here to help you, and I am always open to hearing any suggestions or advice you may have. It is an honor to serve you.

Our nation is now approaching a critical moment – critical because our decisions, attitudes, and actions as Americans will without a doubt have a measurable impact on our lives and our children's. Know that you have a distinct prize which you are obliged to defend. We are the heirs of the first republic truly worthy of the Greeks. It is our duty to preserve and protect it, and I cannot think of a better way to do so than by equipping ourselves with the skills and knowledge to engage with our peers in a civil and political arena.

As you learn from this organization and take these skills into the American political sphere, please remember that your only enemy is the force that seeks to prevent us from uniting as free Americans. Do not hate your fellow countryman, but hear him, and forgive him, even if you cannot agree with him.

“Always remember: others may hate you, but those who hate you don’t win unless you hate them, and then, you destroy yourself.” - 37th President of the United States Richard M. Nixon

Dum spiro spero,

JASON WALKER GREEN
Governor of the South Carolina Student Legislature

South Carolina Student Legislature
Executive Committee
2025

Governor
Walker Green
Clemson University

Lieutenant Governor
Hannah James
University of South Carolina

Speaker of the House
Peter McLean
Clemson University

President of the Senate
Thomas Willis
Presbyterian College

Speaker Pro Tempore
McKenzie DuBose
University of South Carolina

Comptroller General
Derrick Wargo
University of South Carolina

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Chief Justice
Kaleelah El-Amin
University of South Carolina

Attorney General
Eva Hoagland
Clemson University

Secretary of State
Connor Denny
Francis Marion University

Treasurer
Brooke Kelly
University of South Carolina

Chief of Staff
Sarah Moorshead
Clemson University

South Carolina Student Legislature
Delegation Chairs
Fall 2025

Bob Jones University
Josiah Gearhart

Charleston Southern University
Kaitlyn Conner

Clemson University
Eva Hoagland

Francis Marion University
Charity Turner

Presbyterian College
Thomas Willis

University of South Carolina
Derrick Wargo

Former Governors of South Carolina Student Legislature

Year	Governor	School	Misc.Organizational Meeting
1957	Robert McNair	University of South Carolina	
1958	Robert Fogarty	Wofford College	
1959	Jim Creel	Clemson University	
1960	Jim Creel	Clemson University	
1961	William Scharchte	Clemson University	James Truesdale (USC)
1962	James Truesdale	University of South Carolina	
1963	Mike Daniel	University of South Carolina	
1964	Pete Levintis, III	The Citadel	
1965	William Youngblood	University of South Carolina	
1966	William Yarborough	Furman University	
1967	John Ellenburg	Clemson University	
1968	William McDougall	University of South Carolina	
1969	Huck Nelson	Greenville Technical College	Barney Blackwell (USC)
1970	John Linton	Wofford College	
1971	Edward Woodward	The Citadel	
1972	Polly Span	University of South Carolina	
1973	Gerry Hough	Clemson University	Sharon Davis (Winthrop)
1974	Lee Atwater	Newberry College	
1975	James Hitch	University of South Carolina	
1976	Eugenia Bettis	North Greenville College	
1977	Alvin Roog	Newberry College	
1978	Lemuel Gray	Trident Technical College	Davis Watson (FMU)
1979	Steve Columbia	The Citadel	Wan Hipp (USC)
1980	Laura Harris	University of South Carolina	
1981	Joey Hudson	Winthrop University	
1982	Joey Hudson	Winthrop University	
1983	Ricky Wade	University of South Carolina	
1984	Tony Snell	University of South Carolina	
1985	Tony Snell	University of South Carolina	
1986	Steven Neeves	Coastal Carolina University	
1987	Jody Styron	Erskine College	
1988	Tracy Johnson	Columbia College	

1989	Hamilton Nelson	The Citadel	Janie Randall (CC)
1990	Gardner Jackson	Furman University	
1991	Jeff Fowler	Clemson University	
1992	Keith Melton	Clemson University	
1993	Dan Herran	Furman University	
1994	Melinda Diller	Presbyterian College	
1995	Todd Thayer	Clemson University	James Duke (CCU)
1996	Jennifer Graziano	Bob Jones University	
1997	Stuart Cate	The Citadel	
1998	Bryan Menees	University of South Carolina	
1999	Adrian Scott Frederic	Clemson University	
2000	Frederic Marcinak	The Citadel	
2001	Ashley Walters	Columbia College	
2002	Luke Franks	Bob Jones University	
2003	Joseph Opperman	University of South Carolina	
2004	Mandy Kulcsar	Clemson University	
2005	Ed Sutton	The Citadel	
2006	Timothy Silvester	Bob Jones University	
2007	Phillip Paradise	College of Charleston	
2008	Jade Roy	The Citadel	
2009	Will Freeman	College of Charleston	
2010	Chandler Hudson	Clemson University	
2011	Anderson Rouse	Bob Jones University	
2012	Blair Bolen	Clemson University	
2013	W.R. Simpson, III	Francis Marion University	
2014	Matthew Thomas	Bob Jones University	
2015	James McManus	The Citadel	
2016	Cameron Dominy	Charleston Southern University	
2017	Elliott Kelley	Bob Jones University	
2018 (Spring)	Ben Anderson	Coastal Carolina University	
2018 (Fall)	Bradley Shepard	Bob Jones University	
2019 (Spring)	Kiley Bennett	College of Charleston	
2019 (Fall)	Alexander Leasure	Erskine College	
2020	Robert Cathcart III	University of South Carolina	
2021	Felicity Ropp	University of South Carolina	
2022	Ewan Thompson	University of South Carolina	
2023	Harmony Hendrix	Clemson University	

2024	Abigail Bergmann	Bob Jones University
2025	Walker Green	Clemson University

South Carolina Student Legislature
Parliamentary Procedure Guide

Overview

Parliamentary Procedure is used in SCSL because it is a time-tested set of rules that allows everyone to be heard and helps the body make decisions efficiently and without confusion.

How it Works

The Chair (person who is presiding over session at the time) will begin by reading the purpose statement of the bill that is in line to be debated. The following table illustrates the activities that take place when a bill is being debated and the time allotted for each activity. Of course, the time limits of any activity can be limited or extended by motion of the body.

Activity	Description	Time Allotted
Speeches	The bill author approaches the well to present his/her bill	3 minutes
Question & Answer	Members of the body may ask the bill author questions	2 minutes
Pro/Con Debate	Members of the body may give speeches in favor or opposition of the bill	5 minutes
Last Rights	The bill author may reserve his/her last rights to address any questions/issues raised	1 minute

Speeches

After reading the purpose statement of the bill up for debate, the Chair will ask if the bill author is present. If it is your bill, you should respond by saying “I am. May I approach the well?” Once the Chair has given you permission, you may approach the well. If you wish to reserve your last rights (ability to speak right before the vote is called), this is the appropriate time to invoke your right. You may do so by saying “I reserve my last rights.” Then you may begin presenting your bill.

Question & Answer

After the bill author has presented his/her bill, members of the body are free to ask questions of the bill author. Questions should not be argumentative. To obtain the floor, raise your hand and wait to be recognized by the chair. After obtaining the floor, you should stand and state your name, school and one of the three following statements:

"Will the speaker yield to a question?" - When you have a single question
"Will the speaker yield to a possible series?" - When you have an initial question and one (1) to two (2) potential follow up questions
"Will the speaker yield to a series?" - When you have more than one question

A series is a maximum of three (3) questions in a row before the speaker is deemed out of order.

Bill authors have discretion to yield to a full series of questions, a limited number of questions, or none at all, so delegates must wait for the author to yield before beginning their questioning.

Once your question(s) have been answered, please take a seat. After the time period for question and answer has elapsed, we will then move into a time of pro/con debate on the bill. If members of the body still have questions, a member may make a motion to extend the time for question and answer, usually limited by a certain amount of time.

Pro/Con Debate

After question and answer, we move into a period of alternating pro/con debate on the bill, beginning with an affirmative speech. If you wish to give a speech in favor of the bill, you should raise your hand with an open palm and wait to be recognized by the Chair.

Should you wish to give a speech in opposition, you should raise your hand with a closed fist and await recognition from the Chair. After obtaining the floor, please stand and state your name and school and then proceed with your speech in favor/opposition.

There are no time limits on each individual's speech but please be considerate of others who wish to speak on the matter. If need be, a motion may be made to extend the period of pro/con debate, usually limited by a certain amount of time.

Amendments

If, throughout the course of pro/con debate, the need for an amendment to the bill should arise, amendment forms will be available from the Chair. You should quietly, so as not to disrupt the debate, obtain an amendment form, complete it and return it to the Chair. Once you obtain the floor, you should say, "I believe there is an amendment on the floor." The Chair will acknowledge the amendment on the floor and read the amendment. From this point, the amendment process runs the same as a bill presentation - speech by author, question & answer, debate, and the vote. Once the amendment has been voted on, debate on the bill, with or without the amendment, will resume.

The Rules

Point of Privilege - pertains to noise, personal comfort, etc.; may interrupt only if necessary

Point of Parliamentary Inquiry - inquires as to the correct motion to accomplish a desired result or raise a point of order

Point of Information - generally applies to information desired from the speaker

Point of Order – points to an infraction of the rules, or improper decorum in speaking; must be raised immediately after the error is made

Division - calls for a standing vote on a bill/motion; must be made before the Chair makes a ruling and the gavel comes down

Amend – to insert or strike out words or paragraphs or to substitute whole paragraphs or resolutions

Extend Debate - applies only to the immediately pending question; extends until a certain time, for a certain time period, or indefinitely

Limit Debate - closes debate at a certain time or limits to a certain period of time

Postpone to a Certain Time – postpones consideration of a bill/motion; mover must state the time that consideration of the motion will be resumed

Object to Consideration – aims to block consideration of an item entirely; objection must be stated before discussion or another motion is stated

Lay on the Table (Table) - temporarily suspends further consideration/action on pending question; may be made after motion to close debate has carried or is pending

Take from the Table (Un-table) - resumes consideration of item previously laid on the table

Reconsider – if agreed upon, allows the body to reconsider a previous vote; motion can only be made by a member on the originally prevailing side

Table Indefinitely - kills the question/resolution for this session, unless a motion to reconsider is successful

Previous Question - closes debate if successful

Appeal Decision of the Chair – appeals the Chair's ruling to the assembly; motion must be made before other business is resumed and is not debatable if it relates to decorum, violation of rules, or order of business

Suspend the Rules - allows a violation of the assembly's own rules (except Constitution); the object of the suspension must be specified

Unanimous Consent Request – if not objected to, allows body to take almost any course of action or make almost any change to its normal rules and procedures

Parliamentary Motions Guide

Based on Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised
(12th edition)

The Motions below are listed in order of precedence.
Any motion can be introduced if it is higher on the chart than the pending motion.

You Want To:	You Say:	Interrupt?	2nd?	Debate?	Amend?	Vote?
§21 Close meeting	I move to adjourn	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
§20 Take break	I move to recess for	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
§19 Register complain	I rise to a question of privilege	Yes	No	No	No	None
§18 Make follow agenda	I call for the orders of the day	Yes	No	No	No	None
§17 Lay aside temporarily	I move to lay the question on the table	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
§16 Close debate	Move the previous question	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
§15 Limit or extend debate	I move that debate be limited to...	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3
§14 Postpone to a certain time	I move to postpone the motion to...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
§13 Refer to committee	I move to refer the motion to...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
§12 Modify wording of motion	I move to amend the motion by...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
§11 Kill main motion	I move that the motion be postponed indefinitely	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
§10 Bring business before assembly (a main motion)	I move that (or "to")...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

Incidental Motions - no order of precedence. Arise incidentally and decided immediately.

You Want To:	You Say:	Interrupt?	2nd?	Debate?	Amend?	Vote?
§23 Enforce rules	Point of order	Yes	No	No	No	None
§24 Submit matter to assembly	I appeal from the decision of the Chair	Yes	Yes	Varies	No	Majority
§24 Suspend rules	I move to suspend the rules which...	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
§26 Avoid main motion altogether	I object the consideration of the question	Yes	No	No	No	2/3
§27 Divide motion	I move to divide the question	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
§29 Demand rising vote	I call for a division	Yes	No	No	No	None
§33 Parliamentary Law question	Parliamentary inquiry	Yes (if urgent)	No	No	No	None
§33 Request for information	Point of information	Yes (if urgent)	No	No	No	None

Motions That Bring a Question Again Before the Assembly - no order of precedence. Introduce only when nothing else pending.

You Want To:	You Say:	Interrupt?	2nd?	Debate?	Amend?	Vote?
§23 Take matter from table	I move to take from the table...	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
§24 Cancel or change previous action	I move to rescind/amend something previously adopted...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3 or with notice
§24 Reconsider motion	I move to reconsider the vote...	No	Yes	Varies	No	Majority

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53	Melanie Mae Henderson	Clemson	To require cremation as the legally mandated method of final disposition in South Carolina, and for other purposes.
55	Sarah Herzberg	Clemson	To expand the existing plain language requirement so that all official public communications from state and local agencies must be conveyed in clear and understandable language.
56	Eva Hoagland	Clemson	To Require Random Drug Testing for High School Athletes Competing in State Championships in South Carolina.
59	Matthew Langton	Clemson	To amend South Carolina law to allow homeschool students to participate in interscholastic sports at public schools outside their county or district of residence, provided certain eligibility and consent conditions are met.
60	Sarah Moorshead	Clemson	To establish clear standards for medical evaluation and intervention in complex or sensitive cases; and for other purposes.
62	Charley Phy	Clemson	To help foster youth obtain driver's licenses and auto insurance, promoting independence and opportunity.
65	Cameron Rumpp	Clemson	To mandate schools to be transparent about the cost of required textbooks and materials for each class at the time of registration.
67	Fiona Tworkowski	Clemson	To narrow the laws on the constitutional carry gun laws in South Carolina.
70	Aariona Bates	CCU	To prevent the loss of consumer funds by requiring retailers to provide cash redemption for small remaining balances on gift certificates and gift cards.
71	Noah Burgan	CCU	To increase the safety of marginalized communities by establishing a statewide hate crime law.
72	Dylan Donahue	CCU	To increase the safety of marginalized communities by establishing a statewide hate crime law.
73	Camille Fortino	CCU	To decrease the number of accidental deaths by firearms by implementing safe storage requirements.
74	Franceska Guerrero	CCU	To promote dignity, equity, and mental well-being by ensuring free and accessible menstrual products in school and public buildings in South Carolina.
75	Kristen Haigh	CCU	To require all public schools in South Carolina to implement a mental health education curriculum as part of their health classes.
77	Brian L. Hughes	CCU	To improve the health and safety of citizens by banning the burning of land-clearing debris, establish rules, regulations, and penalties for enforcement.
79	Dance Killough	CCU	To prevent wildfire destruction of state and private property by increasing education and enforcement of safe debris burning practices on private and public lands.

81	Kennedy Kovach	CCU	To reduce rates of teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) by allowing for contraceptives to be distributed in secondary schools to students once a student turns 16 through Condom Accessibility Programs (CAPs).
82	Kallie Lacount	CCU	To decrease recidivism and promote successful reintegration into society by automatically expunging, first time nonviolent offenses, and low-level drug possession after 5 years.
83	Daniel Lala	CCU	To lessen the effects of predatory highway policing by reforming the point accumulation system.
85	Matthew McCall	CCU	To return decision making power to public schools by requiring all Advanced Placement courses offered by The College Board be published in the South Carolina Department of Education Course Coding System.
87	Ahmad Brown	FMU	To expand South Carolina's existing concussion safety laws to include all youth athletic programs, require baseline cognitive testing for contact-sport and establish a statewide database for tracking youth concussions and head injuries.
92	Connor Denny	FMU	To reduce gas prices in South Carolina.
94	Zachary Lingerman	FMU	To enact the "South Carolina Prison Oversight and Accountability Act," to create an independent oversight board for state prisons, not within the South Carolina Department of Corrections.
97	Mary Leslee Moore	FMU	To allow tattoo artists to perform tattoos on the face, neck, or head.
98	Charlotte Sellers	FMU	To reduce the waiting period before juvenile records can be expunged.
99	Charity Turner	FMU	To impose stronger penalties for crimes motivated by one's race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, or gender identity.
100	Lana Clayton	PC	To update policies on avenues for illegal immigrants.
102	Jacob Kerwin	PC	To amend the South Carolina marriage law section 20-3-10, to make the process of divorce faster and easier.
103	Alex Melgar	PC	To raise the fine for impersonating a state or local official, employee, or law enforcement officer.
104	Ladson Porter	PC	To amend SECTION 44-34-100. of the South Carolina laws so that it is lawful for a tattoo artist to tattoo any part of the head, face, or neck of another person.
106	Amelia Rhyne	PC	To amend the South Carolina code of Laws by adding section 59-1-373 requiring that every public school in the State, Grade 6th-12th hire a mental health counselor by the year 2030.

108	Andy Robertson	PC	To amend Section 16-8-290 of the Code of Laws to require that law enforcement agencies notify the relevant parties of the release of a criminal gang member within ten days of the release and establish penalties for failure to comply.
109	Ava Westhart	PC	To amend Title 44, Chapter 96, by adding article 44-96-480 to require large retail food stores to establish food recovery agreements, prohibit the intentional and purposeful destruction of edible food, provide implementing and enforcement authority, protect donors consistent with existing South Carolina and federal law, and create reporting and modest tax incentive provisions.
113	Taylor Mckenzie Wooten	PC	To ensure that all campus police departments at colleges and universities across the State of South Carolina maintain high standards of cultural awareness, ethical conduct, and professional accountability through enhanced training and certification programs.
117	Damien Barber	USC	To encourage the United States Congress to amend Section 301 of The Immigration and Nationality Act.
118	Max Brabham	USC	To improve the safety of citizens on the road.
120	Nailah Brown	USC	To require the implementation of a comprehensive financial literacy curriculum in all public high schools in South Carolina to prepare students for responsible financial decision-making in adulthood.
121	Kaleelah El-Amin	USC	To ensure that citizens across South Carolina have access to a diverse range of literary works that support critical thinking and intellectual growth.
122	Priya Frazier	USC	To provide free feminine hygiene products to public institutions of higher learning in the state of South Carolina.
123	Sophie Fourqurean	USC	To provide electric bicycles and electric scooters near campus buildings for all college students in the state of South Carolina through the University Micromobility Program.
125	Brooke Kelly	USC	To amend South Carolina Tort Law to authorize civil actions against judicial officers when gross negligence or willful misconduct is proven and enact the “Judicial Accountability for Gross Negligence Act”.
128	Chance Kirby	USC	To create a state-run bank.
132	Saran Kouyate	USC	To protect the elderly population in South Carolina from neglectful care practices and to ensure proper resident care by establishing stronger CNA streaming requirements in nursing homes.
133	Maddi Nagel	USC	To raise the minimum age for valid marriage to eighteen years of age.
134	Reagan Quast	USC	To create new public libraries in South Carolina.

135	Doug Ruff	USC	To reform the composition of the Judicial Merit Selection Commission (hereinafter referred to as the JMSC) in order to eliminate the membership of legislators from the commission.
137	Derrick Wargo & Maddi Nagel	USC	To ease restrictions on abortion for women in South Carolina.
142	Ryan Young	USC	A bill to combat sex trafficking by making it easier for victims of sex trafficking to report crimes committed against them.

A Bill
Presented by Hope Combest
Bob Jones University

Purpose: To increase judicial accountability in South Carolina.

Whereas, South Carolina is one of two states with legislative selection of judges; and,

Whereas, the legislative branch is entrusted to create laws; and,

Whereas, the purpose of the judicial branch is to interpret laws and to uphold the rule of law; and,

Whereas, legislative selection weakens the checks and balances and undermines judicial independence; and,

Whereas, legislative lacks public accountability and transparency.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: To amend Article V Section 3 of the Constitution, which shall read:

SECTION 3. ~~Election~~ *Appointment* of members of Supreme Court.

The members of the Supreme Court shall be ~~elected by a joint public vote of the General Assembly~~ *appointed by the Governor from a list of candidates submitted by the Judicial Merit Selection Commission. The Governor shall have 60 days to make an appointment upon receiving the list of candidates from the Judicial Merit Selection Commission. Upon appointment, the appointee shall be confirmed by the General Assembly* for a term of ten years and shall continue in office until their successors shall be ~~elected and qualified~~ *appointed and confirmed* and shall be classified so that the term of one of them shall expire every two years. ~~In any contested election, the vote of each member of the General Assembly present and voting shall be recorded~~. *If an appointee is not confirmed, the Governor shall have 30 additional days to appoint a new appointee from the list of candidates who shall then be confirmed by the General Assembly. If the Governor fails to make an appointment within the allotted time, the General Assembly shall elect a member from the list of candidates by a joint public vote.*

Section II: To amend Article V Section 8 of the Constitution, which shall read:

SECTION 8. Election of members of Court of Appeals.

The members of the Court of Appeals shall be ~~elected by a joint public vote of the General Assembly~~ *appointed by the Governor from a list of candidates submitted by the Judicial Merit Selection Commission* for a term of six years and shall continue in office until their successors shall be ~~elected and qualify~~ *appointed and confirmed. Upon completing one year of service, the appointed member shall face a retention election by the public during the subsequent general election.* ~~In any contested election, the vote of each member of the General Assembly present and voting shall be recorded~~. Provided, that for the first election of members of the Court of Appeals, the General Assembly shall by law provide for staggered terms.

Section III: To amend Article V Section 27 of the Constitution, which shall read:

SECTION 27. Judicial Merit Selection Commission.

In addition to the qualifications for circuit court and court of appeals judges and Supreme Court justices contained in this article, the General Assembly by law shall establish a Judicial Merit Selection Commission to consider the qualifications and fitness of candidates for all judicial positions on these courts and on other courts of this State which are filled by ~~election of the General Assembly~~ *appointment of the Governor*. ~~The General Assembly must elect the judges and justices~~ *The Governor must appoint the justices and judges* from among the nominees of the commission to fill a vacancy on these courts. No person may be elected to these judicial positions unless he or she has been found qualified by the commission. Before a sitting member of the General Assembly may submit an application with the commission for his nomination to a judicial office, and before the commission may accept or consider such an application, the member of the General Assembly must first resign his office and have been out of office for a period established by law. Before a member of the commission may submit an application with the commission for his nomination to a judicial office, and before the commission may accept or consider such an application, the member of the commission must not have been a member of the commission for a period to be established by law.

Section IV: This bill will go into effect upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Avery Kendall
Bob Jones University

Purpose: To reduce consumption and sale of nicotine products in South Carolina.

Whereas, Nicotine is a highly addictive chemical, with adolescent users experiencing permanent effects from the first use; and,

Whereas, Nicotine damages brain development, especially in those under the age of 26; and,

Whereas, Nicotine increases cardiovascular risk among other health concerns; and,

Whereas, Social acceptance of nicotine use is increasing, with the number of youths in the U.S. using nicotine pouches having doubled to 480,000 since 2021; and,

Whereas, The age a person first starts using nicotine products is trending younger; and

Whereas, Fewer than 1 in 10 adults succeeds in quitting their addiction.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: For the purpose of this bill, the following terms are defined as follows:

(1) "Nicotine" means the alkaloid produced in a tobacco plant or laboratory.

(2) "Nicotine product" means any item that dispenses nicotine for recreational consumption, including but not limited to all components of e-cigarettes, lozenges (also defined as "alternative nicotine products"), or nicotine pouches; with the exception of prescribed nicotine products for the purpose of ending the use of nicotine.

Section II: To amend the South Carolina Code of Laws by adding Section 12-21-630 Nicotine surtax, imposition, crediting of revenues; definition of "nicotine"; which shall read:

(A) There is imposed a surtax on nicotine products subject to the tax imposed pursuant to Section 12-21-620(1) in an amount equal to four and a half cents per nicotine pouch, and four and a half cents per lozenge, and four and a half cents per milliliter of e-liquid and ten percent of final retail cost of purchased vape products (including but not limited to disposable vapes, vape pens, and refill cartridges).

(B) There is imposed a surtax on nicotine products subject to the tax imposed pursuant to Section 12-21-620(1) in an amount equal to five cents per piece in the unit of any nicotine products unspecified by subsection (A).

(C) This surtax does not apply to nicotine products prescribed by medical professionals for the purpose of quitting the use of nicotine.

(D) Notwithstanding another provision of law providing for the crediting of the revenues of license or other taxes, the revenue of the surtax imposed pursuant to this section must be credited as follows:

(1) five million dollars annually to the Medical University of South Carolina Hollings Cancer Center to be used for tobacco-related cancer research;

(2) five million dollars annually to the Nicotine Addiction Awareness Initiative according to Section 44-128-25;

(3) the remaining annual revenue shall be given to the Smoking Prevention and Cessation Trust Fund created pursuant to Section 11-11-230(A);

(E) For all purposes of reporting, payment, collection, and enforcement, the surtax imposed by this section is deemed to be imposed pursuant to Section 12-21-620;

(F) For purposes of this section, the following terms are defined as follows:

(1) "Nicotine" means the alkaloid produced in a tobacco plant or laboratory.

(2) "Nicotine product" means any item that dispenses nicotine for recreational consumption, including but not limited to all components of e-cigarettes, lozenges (also defined as "alternative nicotine products"), or nicotine pouches; with the exception of prescribed nicotine products for the purpose of ending the use of nicotine.

Section III: To amend the South Carolina Code of Laws by adding Section 44-128-25, which shall read:

(A) The Department of Health and Environmental Control shall develop and implement a Nicotine Addiction Awareness Initiative for the purpose of preventing and reducing nicotine addiction and use by minors;

(B) This Initiative shall be supervised by a committee of five members appointed by the director of the Department of Health and Environmental Control. Members will serve for terms of three years;

(C) The Nicotine Addiction Awareness Initiative must address prevention, cessation, and control of nicotine use by minors and may include but is not limited to:

(1) media campaigns such as videos, billboards, and other forms of signage;

(2) school-based youth programs, including assemblies and educational meetings;

(3) community-based youth programs;

(4) business, community, and school partnerships, to ensure consistent messaging;

(5) programs focusing on the enforcement and administration of state minor related tobacco and nicotine laws, including retailer education;

(6) surveillance and evaluations;

(7) chronic disease and health-related programs.

(D)(1) To assist in carrying out the purposes of the plan, the department may award nicotine addiction awareness grants to local agencies, organizations, and entities based on criteria developed by the committee.

(2) As a condition for the receipt of funds under this chapter, a grantee shall agree to file a report with the advisory commission, as to the following:

(a) amount received as a grant and the expenditures made with the proceeds of the grant;

(b) a description of the program offered and the number of youths who participated in the program; and

(c) specific elements of the program meeting the criteria set forth in the state plan.

(E) The state plan further shall provide for a grant for an annual statewide school-based survey to measure nicotine use and behaviors towards nicotine use by individuals in grades 6-12. This survey shall:

(1) involve a statistically valid sample of the individuals in each grade from sixth through twelfth;

(2) not include any individual who is eighteen years of age or older; and

(3) be made available to the public, along with the resulting date, excluding respondent identities and respondent-identifiable date

Section IV: This bill will go into effect January 1, 2026, upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by JJ Mayes
Bob Jones University

Purpose: To limit out-of-state donations to South Carolina political campaigns.

Whereas, Unlimited money in politics can drown out the voice of voters; and,

Whereas, Reducing out-of-state campaign contributions will empower South Carolina voters; and,

Whereas, Out-of-state campaign contributions can sway state politicians against constituent interests; and,

Whereas, Reducing out-of-state campaign contributions will reduce corruption in state and local government; and,

Whereas, Reducing out-of-state campaign contributions will level the democratic playing field in state and local elections.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: For the purpose of this bill, the following terms are defined as follows:

(1) "Contribution" means a gift, subscription, loan, guarantee upon which collection is made, forgiveness of a loan, an advance, in-kind contribution or expenditure, a deposit of money, or anything of value made to a candidate or committee to influence an election; or payment or compensation for the personal service of another person which is rendered for any purpose to a candidate or committee without charge, whether any of the above are made or offered directly or indirectly.

(2) "Candidate" means: (a) a person who seeks appointment, nomination for election, or election to a statewide or local office, or authorizes or knowingly permits the collection or disbursement of money for the promotion of his candidacy or election; (b) a person who is exploring whether or not to seek election at the state or local level; or (c) a person on whose behalf write-in votes are solicited if the person has knowledge of such solicitation.

(3) "Committee" means an association, a club, an organization, or a group of persons which, to influence the outcome of an elective office, receives contributions or makes expenditures in excess of five hundred dollars in the aggregate during an election cycle.

(4) "Out-of-state organizations or individuals" means an organization whose headquarters is not within the State and persons who do not reside or work in the State.

Section II: Section 8-13-1304 of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

(C) Contributions made by out-of-state organizations or individuals shall not exceed thirty percent (30%) of the aggregate contributions of a candidate committee.

(D) A candidate committee that exceeds the out-of-state contribution limit established in subsection C shall, within ten (10) business days of filing its report, either:

(1) return the excess contributions to the contributors; or

(2) donate the excess contributions to the South Carolina general fund or a registered charitable organization operating within the state.

Section III: This bill will go into effect immediately upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Caleb Rose
Bob Jones University

Purpose: To eliminate property tax for retirees in the state of South Carolina.

Whereas, South Carolina retirees have paid taxes all their lives; and,

Whereas, South Carolina property taxes is an overall average of 0.53%; and,

Whereas, Local governments gain taxes from many other sources; and,

Whereas, Local governments can survive without retirees paying the tax as they already have high deductions.

Therefore, Let it be enacted in the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: To amend Section 12-37-250 to read:

"SECTION 12-37-250. Homestead exemption for taxpayers sixty-five and over or those totally and permanently disabled or legally blind.

(A)(1) The first fifty thousand dollars of the fair market value of the dwelling place of a person is exempt from county, municipal, school, and special assessment real estate property taxes when the person:

(i) has been a resident of this State for at least one year*;* ~~and has reached the age of sixty-five years on or before December thirty-first;~~

(ii) has been classified as totally and permanently disabled by a state or federal agency having the function of classifying persons; or,

(iii) is legally blind as defined in Section 43-25-20, preceding the tax year in which the exemption is claimed and holds complete fee simple title or a life estate to the dwelling place. A person claiming to be totally and permanently disabled, but who has not been classified by one of the agencies, may apply to the state agency of Vocational Rehabilitation. The agency shall make an evaluation of the person using its own standards.

(2) The total fair market value of the dwelling place of a person is exempt from county, municipal, school, and special assessment real estate property taxes when the person:

(i) has been a resident of this State for at least one year and has reached the age of sixty-five years on or before December thirty-first;

(ii) is no longer employed part or full time.

(~~2~~*3*) The exemption includes the dwelling place when jointly owned in complete fee simple or life estate by husband and wife, and either has reached sixty-five years of age, or is totally and permanently disabled, or legally blind pursuant to this section, before January first of the tax year in which the exemption is claimed, and either has been a resident of the State for one year.

(~~3~~4) The exemption must not be granted for the tax year in which it is claimed unless the person or his agent makes written application for the exemption before July sixteenth of that tax year. If the person or his agent makes written application for the exemption after July fifteenth, the exemption must not be granted except for the succeeding tax year for a person qualifying pursuant to this section when the application is made. However, if application is made after July fifteenth of that tax year but before the first penalty date on property taxes for that tax year by a person qualifying pursuant to this section when the application is made, the taxes due for that tax year must be reduced to reflect the exemption provided in this section.

(~~4~~5)(a) The application for the exemption must be made to the auditor of the county and to the governing body of the municipality in which the dwelling place is located upon forms provided by the county and municipality and approved by the department. A failure to apply constitutes a waiver of the exemption for that year. The auditor, as directed by the department, shall notify the municipality of all applications for a homestead exemption within the municipality and the information necessary to calculate the amount of the exemption.

(b) The application required may be:

(i) made in person at the auditor's office;

(ii) by mail, when accompanied by a copy of documentation of age, or disability, or legal blindness; or

(iii) by internet in those instances where the auditor has access to official records documenting the appropriate eligibility standard.

The department shall assist auditors with compliance with the provisions of this subitem and by means of the approval required pursuant to subitem (a) of this item ensure uniform application procedures.

(~~5~~*6*) "Dwelling place" means the permanent home and legal residence of the applicant.

Section II: This bill will go into effect January 1, 2026 upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Victoria Boskey
Charleston Southern University

Purpose: To increase safety on the road by mandating helmets for all motorcyclists.

Whereas, South Carolina is the only state within the South, except for Florida, that does not have a universal helmet law; and,

Whereas, South Carolina is the fourth most dangerous state in the country for motorcyclists. According to the South Carolina Department of Public Safety, Sixty-three percent of rider-involved fatalities were not wearing helmets; and,

Whereas, Helmets save lives by reducing the risk of death and brain injury in crashes. The CDC states that helmets decrease the risk of death by forty-two percent for motorcyclists, and they also reduce head injuries by sixty-nine percent.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: To amend Section 56-5-3660 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to read:

"**SECTION 56-5-3660.** Helmets must be worn by operators and passengers ~~under age twenty-one~~; helmet design; list of approved helmets.

It shall be unlawful for any person ~~under the age of twenty-one~~ to operate or ride upon a two-wheeled motorized vehicle unless he wears a protective helmet of a type approved by the Department of Public Safety. Such a helmet must be equipped with either a neck or chin strap and be reflectorized on both sides thereof. The department is hereby authorized to adopt and amend regulations covering the types of helmets and the specifications therefor and to establish and maintain a list of approved helmets which meet the specifications as established hereunder."

Section II: This bill will go into effect January 1, 2026 upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Ashley Butler
Charleston Southern University

Purpose: To better equip students with the knowledge and tools necessary to defend themselves.

Whereas, According to CNN there have been 64 school shootings in the United States so far this year, as of October 27. Thirty-seven were on college campuses, and 27 were on K-12 school grounds. The incidents left 26 people dead and at least 100 other victims injured; and

Whereas, According to the Department of Justice every 74 seconds someone in the U.S. is sexually assaulted. Every nine minutes, that someone is a child; and,

Whereas, From 2009 to 2013, Child Protective Services agencies substantiated or found strong evidence to indicate that 63,000 children a year were victims of sexual abuse; and,

Whereas, According to the National Library of Medicine the study of self-defense can aid in a child's confidence levels and increases self-esteem; and,

Whereas, According to the National Institute of Justice self-defense training significantly decreases the risk of rape, in some cases by up to 80 percent. In addition, this study also found that in assaults against women most self-protective tactics reduced the risk of injury compared to nonresistance.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: To amend the South Carolina Code of Laws to add Section 59-29-85, which shall read:

"**Section 59-29-85.** *Required subjects; physical education; self-defense; exemptions.*

(A) During the next revision of the South Carolina Academic Standards for Physical Education that occurs on or after January 1, 2026, the State Board of Education, in consultation with the State Department of Education, shall include instruction in self-defense and personal safety as part of the physical education standards for public school students in grades six through twelve.

(B) As used in this section:

(1) For purposes of this subsection, 'personal safety instruction' includes, but is not limited to, awareness and avoidance of potentially dangerous situations.

(2) 'Self-defense instruction' includes, but is not limited to, martial arts, boxing, and other self-defensive techniques appropriate to a student's age and developmental level.

(C) Participation in self-defense instruction shall require written permission from a parent of legal guardian. Students who do not receive permission or who are otherwise exempt shall participate in the standard physical education program offered by the school.

(D) A student may be determined ineligible to participate in self-defense instruction if:

(1) The student has a documented history of violent or aggressive behavior that raises safety concerns, as determined by the school principal in consultation with appropriate staff

(2) The student has a medical or mental health condition that would make participation unsafe, as verified by a licensed healthcare provider

(3) The student is otherwise exempt from participation in physical education under existing law or district policy. Decisions regarding eligibility shall be made in consultation with the student's parent or guardian.

(E) All self-defense instruction shall be provided by individuals who hold valid certification from a nationally or state-recognized self-defense training organization approved by the State Department of Education. The Department shall develop minimum qualification standards for instructors.

(F) Funding for the implementation of this section shall be derived from existing allocations for the physical education programs within each school district. No additional state appropriations are required to carry out the provisions of this section."

Section III: This bill will go into effect August 2026 upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Kaitlyn Conner
Charleston Southern University

Purpose: To ensure clarity and safety amongst drivers.

Whereas, According to traffic data from a study by the Department of Transportation concluded that in 2023, there were 1,047 vehicle-related deaths in the state of South Carolina; and,

Whereas, Making the state of South Carolina in the top five percent in deaths per 100,000 population at 19.5%; and,

Whereas, South Carolina has consistently been in the top 10 for most car fatalities.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: To amend the South Carolina Code of Laws to add Section 56-5-35, which shall read:

"***SECTION 56-5-35.*** *Lane signage regulations for vehicular safety.*

(A) Overhead lane use signs are mandatory for all multilane roads or high accident intersections, as previously identified by SCDOT.

(B) Which are defined as: static signs providing information on mandatory or optional movements for a specific lane.

(C) Funding for signage will come from the SCDOT Budget for state roads.

(D) County roads shall be funded by red light cameras in high accident areas for unsafe driving.

(E) Unsafe driving shall be defined as running red lights and disobeying currently instated traffic laws.

(F) All roadways must be in compliance by January 1st, 2027."

Section II: This bill will go into effect January 1st, 2026 upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Graycee Dorner
Charleston Southern University

Purpose: To change custody law to better protect the best interests of the child.

Whereas, According to Campbell & Madden Law, joint custody improves peer connections for the children it involves; and,

Whereas, According to Campbell & Madden Law, children experiencing joint custody have a lower rate of mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, and PTSD, than those children experiencing sole custody; and,

Whereas, According to the Wall Street Journal, Kentucky's divorce rate fell 25% from the time the new custody law was passed (2018) until 2023; and,

Whereas, According to the CDC, Arkansas' divorce rate fell about 25% from the time the custody law was passed (2021) to 2023.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: To amend Section 63-3-530(A)(42) of the South Carolina Code of Laws to read:

"(42) to order *sole or* joint ~~or divided~~ custody where the court finds it is in the best ~~interests~~ *interest* of the child;"

Section II: To amend Section 63-15-210 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to read:

"**Section 63-15-210.** Definitions.

As used in this article:

(1) "Joint custody" means both parents have equal rights and responsibilities for major decisions concerning the child, including the child's education, medical and dental care, extracurricular activities, and religious training~~; however, a judge may designate one parent to have sole authority to make specific, identified decisions while both parents retain equal rights and responsibilities for all other decisions~~. *Regardless, a judge may designate one parent to have sole authority to make specific, identified decisions concerning the child.*

(2) "Sole custody" means a person, including, but not limited to, a parent who has temporary or permanent custody of a child and, unless otherwise provided for by court order, the rights and responsibilities for major decisions concerning the child, including the child's education, medical and dental care, extracurricular activities, and religious training.

(3) "Parenting time" means the time during which the child is in the care of a parent."

Section III: To amend Section 63-15-220 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to read:

"**Section 63-15-220.** Parenting plans.

~~(A) At all temporary hearings where custody is contested, each parent must prepare, file, and submit to the court a parenting plan, which reflects parental preferences, the allocation of parenting time to be spent with each parent, and major decisions, including, but not limited to, the child's education, medical and dental care, extracurricular activities and religious training. However, the parties may elect to prepare, file, and submit a joint parenting plan. The court shall issue temporary and final custody orders only after considering these parenting plans; however, the failure by a party to submit a parenting plan to the court does not preclude the court from issuing a temporary or final custody order.~~

~~(B) At the final hearing, either party may file and submit an updated parenting plan for the court's consideration.~~

~~(C) The South Carolina Supreme Court shall develop rules and forms for the implementation of the parenting plan.~~

(A) A parenting plan is a document submitted by a party to the family court which identifies the type of custody, the parenting time for each parent with the child, and the manner and terms by which major decisions including, but not limited to, the child's education, medical and dental care, extracurricular activities, and religious training shall be made.

(B) At any hearing where custody, parenting time, or decision making is contested, a party may submit a proposed parenting plan. The court shall consider any submitted parenting plan prior to issuing temporary and final custody orders. Along with considering all other relevant factors including but not limited to:

(1) The wishes of the parents of the child

(2) The interaction and interrelationship of child with their parents, or sibling, or any other person who may significantly affect the child's best interests

(3) The child's adjustment and continuing proximity to his or her home, school, and community

(4) The mental and physical health of all individuals involved

(5) Any and all evidence supporting domestic violence or abuse

(6) The extent to which the child has been cared for, nurtured, and supported by their parents

(7) The wishes of the child shall hold greater weight depending on how old the child is. However, it remains only a consideration of the court."

Section IV: To amend Section 63-15-230 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to read:

"**Section 63-15-230.** Final custody determination; considerations.

(A) The court shall make the final every custody determination in the best interest of the child based upon the evidence presented.

(B) ~~The court may award joint custody to both parents or sole custody to either parent.~~ *The only type of custody which may be ordered by the family court is either sole custody or joint custody. However, there shall be a presumption that joint custody is in the child's best interest unless otherwise proved by the parties in such matter.*

(C) ~~If custody is contested or if either parent seeks an award of joint custody, the court shall consider all custody options, including, but not limited to, joint custody, and, in its final order, the court shall state its determination as to custody and shall state its reasoning for that decision.~~ *Every custody order shall:*

(1) determine and specify the schedule of parenting time for each parent with the child; and

(2) in the event of joint custody, provide for how major decisions, including, but not limited to, the child's education, medical and dental care, extracurricular activities, and religious training regarding the child shall be made.

~~(D) Notwithstanding the custody determination, the court may allocate parenting time in the best interest of the child.~~"

Section V: This bill will go into effect January 1, 2026 upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Okon Francis
Charleston Southern University

Purpose: To add a tiered system to veteran tax exemption on real property.

Whereas, Members of the armed forces sacrificed their health and livelihoods in defense of the nation's security presupposed freedoms; and,

Whereas, It is in the state's leading interest to ensure equitable treatment of, and financial treatment for all veterans who have incurred service-connected injuries; and

Whereas, Current South Carolina law (S.C. Code § 12-37-220(B)(1)(f)(i)(A)) grants a full property tax exemption only to veterans who have acquired a one hundred percent permanent and total disability status, excluding partial disabilities who still experience hardship sometimes equal to the former; and

Whereas, Other states, including but not limited to Texas, Florida, and Virginia, have implemented a tiered property tax system based on disability rating, recognizing service-connected impairment; and,

Whereas, Adopting such change in South Carolina shall alleviate financial strain on veterans with disabilities not warranting the one hundred percent permanent and total status, allowing for the state's continued commitment to honoring the nation's military service.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: To amend Section 12-37-220(B)(1)(f)(i)(A) of the South Carolina Code of Laws to read:

(A) a veteran of the Armed Forces of the United States who is ~~permanently and totally disabled as a result of a service-connected disability and who files with the Department of Revenue a certificate signed by the county service officer certifying this disability~~ classified by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as having a service-connected disability rating of thirty percent or greater. A veteran rated one hundred percent disabled shall continue to receive a full exemption on the dwelling house and up to one acre of land. Veterans rated below one hundred percent shall receive a partial exemption according to the following schedule: ninety to ninety-nine percent – ninety percent exemption; seventy to eighty-nine percent – seventy-five percent exemption; fifty to sixty-nine percent – fifty percent exemption; thirty to forty-nine percent – twenty-five percent exemption.

Section II: This bill will go into effect October 1, 2027 upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Ava Ladd
Charleston Southern University

Purpose: To allow more freedoms for parents and children in the school system.

Whereas, William Blackstone states that “personal liberty consists in the power of locomotion, of changing situation, or removing one's person to whatsoever place one's own inclination may direct; without imprisonment or restraint, unless by due course of law;” and,

Whereas, The 5th Amendment states that a person may not be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law; and,

Whereas, Children have to attend school, or legal consequences with draconian punishments will ensue; and,

Whereas, Students who receive education from their parents rather than public schools score 15-30 percentile higher on standardized tests.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: To amend Section 59-65-90 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to read:

“SECTION 59-65-90. Rules and regulations.

The State Board of Education shall establish regulations defining lawful and unlawful absences beyond those specifically named in this article and additional regulations as are necessary for the orderly enrollment of pupils so as to provide for uniform dates of entrance. These regulations shall require: (1) that school officials shall immediately intervene to encourage the student's future attendance when ~~the~~ *a* student *with a gpa below 2.7 or below a 3 on a 1-4 grading scale* has ~~three consecutive unlawful absences or~~ a total of ~~five~~ *ten* unlawful absences and (2) that the district board of trustees or its designee shall promptly approve or disapprove any student absence in excess of ten days. As used in this section, "intervene" means to identify the reasons for the child's continued absence and to develop a plan in conjunction with the student and his parent or guardian to improve his future attendance.

Provided, ~~H~~*h*owever, ~~T~~*t*hat nothing within this section shall interfere with the Board's authority to at any time refer a child to a truancy prevention program or to the court pursuant to Section 59-65-50.”

Section II: This bill will go into effect August 1, 2026, upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Seth Nolan
Charleston Southern University

Purpose: To regulate the use of checkpoints or roadblocks in the state of South Carolina.

Whereas, Currently, there is a lack of legislation regulating the use of police checkpoints; and,

Whereas, Checkpoints constitute a significant invasion of privacy and thus call for legislation to regulate them; and,

Whereas, The use of checkpoints should be balanced against the privacy interests of citizens and be narrowly tailored to avoid significant intrusion on drivers; and,

Whereas, Limiting checkpoints to holidays allows for minimal intrusion of privacy while maintaining public safety during periods with a high volume of impaired driving.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: For the purposes of this bill:

1) 'Checkpoint' or 'Roadblock' means any operation or location where law enforcement officers stop vehicles on roadways according to a predetermined pattern, without reasonable suspicion, for the purpose of detecting violations of law or inspecting driver's licenses.

Section II: To add Section 56-5-6570 to the South Carolina Code of Laws, which shall read:

*"**SECTION 56-5-6570**.*

(A) No law enforcement agency or officer shall establish a checkpoint within the State of South Carolina.

(B) Any evidence obtained in violation of (A) shall be inadmissible in a South Carolina court of law.

(C) These prohibitions shall not apply during a state of emergency formally declared by the Governor of South Carolina."

Section III: This bill will go into effect January 1, 2026 upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Symone Simmons
Charleston Southern University

Purpose: To encourage student participation and engagement with civic opportunities.

Whereas, Working as a poll manager or poll manager assistant would help students understand the voting process better; and,

Whereas, Students would be able to apply some of the knowledge they gained in government classes and retain it better; and,

Whereas, This would help familiarize students with all the different types of elections; and,

Whereas, This would prepare students for their first time voting; and,

Whereas, This would help improve the long-running poll worker shortage that, according to the United States Election Assistance Commission, has worsened since 2018.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: To amend Section 59-1-462 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to read:

"**SECTION 59-1-462.** Excused school absences for career and technical student organization experiences.

Each school district shall adopt a policy that authorizes a student to be excused from school absences, not to exceed ten school days per school year, to participate in a Career and Technical Student Organization experience in which student participation and learning outcomes are directed by a certified teacher for assessment of competencies. Participation in such Career and Technical Student Organization experience may include, but is not limited to, scheduled events of state-level Future Farmers of America (FFA) organizations, the national FFA organization, and 4-H programs as part of organized competitions or exhibitions. The student and his parent or legal guardian are responsible for obtaining and completing assignments missed while the student participates in any such Career and Technical Student Organization experiences.

Any pupil of any public school who serves as a member of a district board of election on the day of any election, and attends required instructional sessions related to such membership, shall have his or her absence for those reasons recorded as excused absences on that pupil's attendance record or on that of any group or class of which the pupil is a member upon the presentation of such documentation as the superintendent or administrative principal, as the case may be, deems necessary to prove the pupil served as a member of a district board on the day of an election or attended required instructional sessions."

Section II: This bill will go into effect August 1, 2026 upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Evan Wilson
Charleston Southern University

Purpose: To make general election day a legal holiday, ensuring state employees and students have the time to vote; and for other purposes.

Whereas, Over 38% of voting is done in person on Election Day in South Carolina; and,

Whereas, Research shows that 1 in 3 young registered voters who did not vote could not vote because they lacked time or information; and,

Whereas, Naming Election Day a legal holiday promotes state-wide voting and builds good will towards the election process; and,

Whereas, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Montana, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Virginia, and West Virginia recognize general election day as a legal holiday or require employee time off for voting purposes.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: To amend Section 53-5-10 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to add subsection (C), which shall read:

"*(C) General election day--Election Day is a legal holiday in addition to the holidays provided in subsection (A)."*

Section II: To amend Section 53-5-10 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to read:

"**SECTION 53-5-10.** Legal holidays enumerated; holiday schedules of public colleges and universities, *and state employees*.

(A) The first day of January--New Year's Day, the third Monday of January--Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, the third Monday in February--George Washington's birthday/President's Day, the tenth day of May--Confederate Memorial Day, the last Monday of May--National Memorial Day, the fourth day of July--Independence Day, the first Monday in September--Labor Day, the eleventh day of November--Veterans Day, National Thanksgiving Day and the day after, and the twenty-fourth, twenty-fifth, and twenty-sixth days of December in each year are legal holidays.

(B) The holiday schedules of public colleges and universities, including technical colleges, shall not be in violation of this section so long as the number of holidays provided for in this section are not exceeded."

Section IV: To amend Section 59-1-370 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to read:

"**SECTION 59-1-370.** Closing of educational institutions on general election day.

(A) All State-supported colleges and universities, technical education centers and public schools shall be closed general election day in November of each even-numbered year. This day shall not be considered as one of the regular school days for the year for public schools.

(B) The Tuesday after the first Monday in November of each even-numbered year, general election day, is to be designated as "Election Day." No State-supported colleges and universities, technical education centers and public schools shall hold classes, events, or examinations on this day. Students and faculty shall be reasonably free to use the day to vote or serve as poll workers."

Section V: This bill will go into effect May 1, 2026 upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Collin Adkins
Clemson University

Purpose: To require the patching and paving of roadways within 60 business days of an initial report, in addition to creating the funds necessary to execute it.

Whereas, The state received a ranking of 27th in Rural Interstate Condition under the "Safety and Condition" Categories; and,

Whereas, The state received the ranking of 2nd in Spending and Cost-Effectiveness, and received a ranking of 43rd when it comes to Roadway Fatality Rates. Proving that our state needs to focus on creating safer roadways for its citizens; and,

Whereas, As of June of 2025 there is only funding for 80% of the currently planned roadway repairs; and,

Whereas, The state of South Carolina saw a steep increase in funding due to Act 40 (2017), this bill would seek to have a similar increase in the funding to provide for currently planned and margin for the roadways that have fallen into disrepair.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: To amend Section 12-28-310 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

"(D) On ~~July 1, 2017~~ *July 1, 2026*, and each July first thereafter until after ~~July 1, 2022~~ *July 1, 2029*, the department shall permanently increase the amount of the user fee imposed pursuant to subsection (A) by two cents, for a total of ~~twelve~~ *eight* cents. All of the funds raised by the increase in the motor fuel user fee imposed by this subsection must be credited to the Infrastructure Maintenance Trust Fund."

Section II: To amend Section 57-5-80 of the 1976 Code is amended at the end to read:

"*All Roadways, regardless of jurisdiction, shall be held to the same standards as the State Primary Highways, as defined in Section 57-5-10."*

Section III: To add a Section at the end of Section 57 that reads:

"Failure to comply with Section 57-5-80 within 60 business days of reported noncompliance shall result in a Noncompliance Fee equal to 3% of the responsible parties' paycheck until compliance has been satisfied. Any fees imposed due to noncompliance shall be credited directly to the Infrastructure Maintenance Trust Fund."

Section IV: This act shall take effect January 1st, 2026 after passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the governor.

A Bill
Presented by Grayson Alexander
Clemson University

Purpose: To authorize trained and licensed school staff members to carry firearms on public school campuses in South Carolina.

Whereas, School shootings have increased at an alarming rate in the United States, raising safety concerns for students and faculty and is the number one cause of death of children in our state; and,

Whereas, Current security measures, such as school resource officers are not sufficient to provide immediate response in every classroom and hallway; and,

Whereas, Allowing trained staff to carry firearms would make it much easier to defend themselves and students in the event of an active shooter, potentially saving lives and stopping the threat; and,

Whereas, This policy would be voluntary, applying only to school staff who undergo rigorous background checks, psychological evaluations, and firearms training; and,

Whereas, Several states, including Texas, Florida, and Ohio, have enacted laws permitting armed faculty in schools; and,

Whereas, The safety of students is the highest priority of the state's educational institutions.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: To amend Section 59-63-35 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to read:

Section 59-63-910 of the South Carolina Code of Laws is amended by adding:

"Section 59-63-910. Safety and security drills; guidelines.

(A) All public schools, including charter schools whose instruction is not primarily delivered online, shall conduct fire, active shooter/intruder, and severe weather/earthquake drills. Within each school year, schools must conduct at least two fire drills, two active shooter/intruder drills, and two severe weather/earthquake drills, with at least one of each drill conducted each semester.

(B) Before August 1, 2018, the State Department of Education and the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division shall develop guidelines for the conduct of

active shooter/intruder training required in this section, and developmentally appropriate training materials. The department and the State Law Enforcement Division must consult with school-employed mental health professionals and the State Fire Marshal in creating and updating the guidelines. These guidelines must be included in annual teacher collegial development required by Section 59-1425(A).

(C) A school district may adopt a policy to permit designated staff members to carry concealed firearms on school property under the following conditions:

1. The staff member must complete a minimum of eighty (80) hours of firearms safety and active-shooter response training approved by the State Law Enforcement Division (SLED).

2. The staff member must undergo and pass an annual psychological evaluation administered by a licensed mental health professional.

3. The staff member must undergo and pass a background check conducted by SLED in addition to that required for employment as a teacher or staff member.

(D) Firearms carried under this section must always remain concealed and may only be used in defense of students or staff in the event of an immediate threat of death or serious bodily injury.

(E) Participation in this program shall be voluntary for school staff members and districts, and no staff member shall be compelled to carry a firearm as a condition of employment.

(F) A liability protection fund is hereby created within the State Treasurer's Office to provide legal defense and financial coverage for participating staff acting in good faith under this section.

(G) The State Department of Education shall promulgate regulations to carry out the provisions of this section, in consultation with SLED."

Section II: Districts implementing this policy shall provide annual reports to the South Carolina Department of Education regarding the number of staff participants and training compliance.

Section III: This act shall take effect July 1, 2026, upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Ellisen Berry
Clemson University

Purpose: To require South Carolina law enforcement agencies to return seized property when criminal charges are not filed within sixty days after the date of seizure.

Whereas, South Carolina's current civil asset forfeiture laws allow agencies to retain property for extended periods even when no criminal charges are brought; and,

Whereas, This practice has led to instances where innocent individuals are deprived of their property without prompt judicial review, thus infringing on their due process; and,

Whereas, A sixty-day deadline for filing charges promotes accountability, transparency, and fairness in the seizure process while maintaining legitimate law enforcement interests; and,

Whereas, Similar reforms have been enacted in other states without compromising public safety; now, therefore,

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: To amend the South Carolina Code of Laws by adding Section 44-53-595 to read:

"Section 44-53-595. *Return of Seized Property Absent Criminal Charges.*

(A) For purposes of this section, "seized property" means any property, money, or other asset seized for the purpose of forfeiture under Sections 44-53-520 through 44-53-580, and does not include property retained solely as evidence in an active criminal investigation or prosecution.

(B) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, including Sections 44-53-520 through 44-53-580, property, money, or other assets seized by a law enforcement agency pursuant to this chapter or any other law authorizing civil or criminal forfeiture shall be subject to the requirements of this section. In the event of a conflict, this section shall control. The agency shall initiate related criminal charges within sixty days of the date of seizure.

(C) If no criminal charge has been filed with a court of competent jurisdiction within that sixty-day period, the law enforcement agency shall return the

seized property in its entirety to the owner or person from whom it was taken, within five business days after the sixty-day period expires.

(D) Within ten days after the date of seizure, the seizing agency shall provide written notice to the person from whom the property was seized stating:

1. *the date of seizure;*
2. *a description of the property seized;*
3. *the deadline for filing criminal charges;*
4. *the right to prompt return of the property if no charges are filed within sixty days; and*
5. *contact information for the agency officer responsible for the case.*

(E) The prosecuting attorney may, upon a showing of good cause and by order of a circuit court, extend the sixty-day period for up to an additional sixty days. The court must make written findings explaining the necessity of the extension.

(F) If the agency or prosecuting attorney fails to comply with this section:

1. *an owner entitled to return of property under this section may file a petition for immediate release in the circuit court, and the court shall order return of the property within five business days unless the agency demonstrates compliance; and*
2. *the owner may recover reasonable attorney's fees and costs incurred in securing the return; and*
3. *Any willful or negligent continued retention of the property beyond the permitted period constitutes an unlawful seizure under state law.*

(G) Nothing in this section shall be construed to require the return of property that constitutes contraband or is otherwise illegal to possess.

(H) Each law enforcement agency shall report annually to the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) the number of seizures made, the number of cases in which property was returned under this section, and the aggregate value of property returned. SLED shall publish the report on its public website."

Section II: This bill will go into effect upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by William Griffith
Clemson University

Purpose: To promote and regulate environmentally sustainable, athlete-safe fields by requiring natural grass surfaces for sports and facilities in the state, and for other purposes.

Whereas, Playing on artificial turf fields increases the chances of an athlete tearing their ACL, suffering concussions, or ankle sprains (National Center for Health Research); and,

Whereas, The NFL has acknowledged these consequences, but chooses to ignore them; and,

Whereas, Preventing injuries for younger athletes may allow them to play at higher levels, increasing the competition; and,

Whereas, The state of Ohio has the legislation to

Whereas, Natural grass fields help the ecosystem by allowing the environment to function naturally rather than relying on plastics.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled, the following:

Section I: This Act shall be known and cited as the "South Carolina Fields Regulation Act."

Section II: For this Act, the following definitions apply:

1. "Sports facility" – any stadium, field, or recreational area used for organized sporting events, including but not limited to football, soccer, baseball, softball, and lacrosse.
2. "Artificial turf" – any synthetic material designed to mimic natural grass, including but not limited to rubber, plastic, or nylon infill surfaces.
3. "Natural grass" – a live, growing grass surface maintained according to accepted horticultural practices.
4. "Major renovation" – replacement of fifty percent or more of a facility's playing surface.

Section III: This Act applies to:

1. Any new construction of a sports facility in South Carolina after the effective date of this Act.
2. Any major renovation of an existing sports facility that involves the replacement of a playing surface.
3. Any organized professional, collegiate, or school sport team.

Section IV: These are the requirements for the applied entities:

1. All applicable sports facilities shall utilize natural grass as the playing surface.
2. Facility owners shall maintain the grass according to accepted horticultural and safety standards to ensure a playable surface.
3. The Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism, in consultation with the Department of Agriculture, shall issue guidance for proper sports field maintenance.

Section V: The following Amendments shall be made:

1. ***SECTION 46-21-1030.*** *Certifications in athletics.*

   The South Carolina Department of Agriculture shall expand its Seed Certification Services to include standards for sports field turfgrass, including durability, safety, and maintenance requirements of the field.

2. ***SECTION 46-33-110.*** *Definitions of sports fields.*

   A sports facility shall be defined as any stadium, field, or recreational area used for organized sporting events, including but not limited to football, soccer, baseball, softball, and lacrosse.

   Artificial turf shall be defined as any synthetic material designed to mimic natural grass, including but not limited to rubber, plastic, or nylon infill surfaces.

   Natural grass shall be defined as a live, growing grass surface maintained according to accepted horticultural practices.

   A major renovation shall be defined as a replacement of fifty percent or more of a facility's playing surface.

3. ***SECTION 48-1-360.*** *Environmental impact assessments in sports fields.*

Any project involving the installation of a playing surface must include an environmental impact review if artificial turf is proposed, to assess runoff, heat, and microplastic release. Only in a few cases should there be exceptions, such as indoor stadiums.

4. ***SECTION 59-23-210.*** *Construction, improvement, and renovation of public schools; compliance with the South Carolina Facilities Planning and Construction Guide; committee members and submission of plans.*

(A) All construction, improvement, and renovation of public school buildings and property on or after the effective date of this section shall comply with the latest applicable standards and specifications set forth in the South Carolina School Facilities Planning and Construction Guide as published by the South Carolina Department of Education.

This guide must be reviewed and updated on an annual basis by a committee appointed by the South Carolina Department of Education. The committee shall consist of a minimum of two architects and one engineer who are all registered in South Carolina and experienced in K-12 design, one K-12 school administrator, one representative of the K-12 construction industry, the State Fire Marshal or his designee, a representative of the Traffic Engineering Division of the South Carolina Department of Transportation, and two representatives of the South Carolina Department of Education. In addition, the Chairman of the House of Representatives Education and Public Works Committee or his designee and the Chairman of the Senate Education Committee or his designee shall also serve as members of the committee, ex officio.

(B) All construction, improvement, and renovation of public school buildings and property on or after the effective date of this section must have plans and specifications submitted to the State Superintendent of Education or the superintendent's designee. Approval of the plans and specifications by the State Superintendent of Education or the superintendent's designee must be received before public bidding before the construction can begin. Plans and specifications must be coordinated with county officials such as traffic engineers and zoning administrators.

(B) Improvements and plans for school sports fields must be 90% natural grass, maintained well by the school to the standard of the South Carolina Department of Agriculture Seed Certification Services.

Section VI: Funding and Incentives include:

1. The South Carolina State Treasurer is authorized to create a Sports Field Grass Fund which will be funded by taking a small percentage (<10%) of the current funding to provide grants and loans to public schools, organizations, or universities transitioning from artificial turf to natural grass.
2. These loans will be low-interest with up to 10 year payment plans.
3. The South Carolina High School League (SCHSL) will only choose natural grass fields for sporting events such as the South Carolina High School Football Championship and other such sports.

Section VII: The policy will be enforced by:

1. The Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism shall enforce this Act.
2. Violations may result in:
    a. Civil fines up to $5,000 per violation per season.
    b. Loss of eligibility to host state-sanctioned competitions until the requirements are met.
    c. Removal of grant funding to the discretion of the South Carolina Department of Agriculture and the South Carolina State Treasurer.

Section VIII: If any provision of this bill or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of this bill, or the application of the bill, shall remain in full force and effect.

Section IX: This Act shall take effect August 1st, 2026, with the Commission required to establish licensing procedures within six months upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Jackson Kent Heaberlin
Clemson University

Purpose: To enable concealed carry on college campuses for students in possession of a Concealed Weapons Permit.

Whereas, Mass shootings at college campuses have become an increasing problem in The United States; and,

Whereas, Polls have reflected that 1 in 4 women experience sexual assault during their times within their undergraduate education; and,

Whereas, Firearms remain the only effective measure to provide physical equality between men and women in a situation of sudden and immediate danger to your natural rights as prescribed by our nations constitution; and,

Whereas, There has been a linear decrease in violent crime as gun ownership has increased amongst American citizens; and,

Whereas, 94% of all mass shootings occur in zones with firearm carrying restrictions; and,

Whereas, Concealed weapons permit holders account for only 0.3% of all criminal convictions.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: Section 16-23-420(A) of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

(A) It is unlawful for a person to possess a firearm ~~of any kind~~ on any premises or property owned, operated, or controlled by a private or public school, college, university, technical college, other ~~post-secondary~~ postsecondary institution, or in any publicly owned building, without the express permission of the authorities in charge of the premises or property. The provisions ~~of~~ contained in this subsection related to any premises or property owned, operated, or controlled by a private or public school, ~~college, university, technical college, or other post-secondary institution,~~ do not apply to when the firearm remains inside an attended or locked motor vehicle and is secured in a closed glove compartment, closed console, closed trunk, or in a closed container secured by an integral fastener and transported in the luggage compartment of the vehicle.The provisions contained in this subsection related to any premises or property owned, operated, or

controlled by a college, university, technical college, or other postsecondary institution do not apply to a person who is authorized to carry a concealed weapon pursuant to Article 4, Chapter 31, Title 23.

Section II: Section 16-23-20(A) of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

(A) It is unlawful, whether or not the person has a concealed weapon permit, for anyone to carry about the person any handgun, whether concealed or not, unless otherwise specifically authorized by law into a:

(1) law enforcement, correctional, or detention facility;

(2) courthouse, courtroom, or other publicly owned building, whether owned by the State, a county, a municipality, or other political subdivision, where court is held and during the time that court is in session;

(3) polling place on election days;

(4) office of or business meeting of the governing body of a county, public school district, municipality, or special purpose district;

(5) school ~~or college~~ athletic event not related to firearms;

(6) daycare facility or preschool facility;

(7) place where the carrying of firearms is prohibited by federal law;

(8) church or other established religious sanctuary unless express permission is given by the appropriate church official or governing body;

(9) hospital, medical clinic, doctor's office, or any other facility where medical services or procedures are performed, unless expressly authorized by the appropriate entity;

(10) residence or dwelling place of another person without the express permission of the owner or person in legal control or possession of the residence or dwelling place, as appropriate; or

(11) place clearly marked with a sign prohibiting the carrying of a concealable weapon on the premises in compliance with Section 23-31-235. A person who violates a provision of this item, whether the violation is willful or not, only may be charged with a violation of Section 16-11-620 and must not be charged with or penalized for a violation of this subsection.

Section III: This act takes effect upon passage by the General Assembly and signature by the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Melanie Mae Henderson
Clemson University

Purpose: To require cremation as the legally mandated method of final disposition in South Carolina, and for other purposes.

Whereas: South Carolina faces increasing challenges with limited land availability for traditional burials; and,

Whereas: Cremation is a more cost-effective alternative for families compared to traditional burial services; and,

Whereas: The environmental impact of traditional burials — including land use, embalming chemicals, and resource consumption — poses long-term ecological concerns; And,

Whereas: Cremation offers a more sustainable, space-saving, and efficient solution for final disposition; and,

Whereas: Many states and countries have seen a steady increase in cremation rates, reflecting societal trends and preferences; and,

Whereas: Establishing cremation as the standard practice in South Carolina will promote environmental sustainability, reduce costs, and create consistency across funeral Practices.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: ***Section 32-8-320*** *of the South Carolina Code of Laws shall be amended to require that all human remains be cremated following death, unless a religious exemption applies.*

This law shall not apply to human remains interred on private property prior to the effective date of this act. Most slave plantations and historical burial sites exist on private land, which shall not be subject to this legislation. The State shall not claim or repurpose any private land for cremation or burial purposes. We are not taking private land.

Section II: *Religious exemptions shall be granted to individuals or families who can demonstrate that their faith requires traditional burial. Such exemptions must be*

filed with the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) within forty-eight (48) hours of death.

Section III: *All funeral homes and mortuary services operating within South Carolina must Either:*
a) provide cremation services directly; or
b) establish a partnership with a licensed crematory.

Section IV: *Families shall retain the right to choose the final disposition of cremated remains, including placement in an urn, scattering in permitted locations, or interment in designated memorial sites.*

Section V: *To reduce financial burden, the state shall establish a Cremation Assistance Fund to provide subsidies for low-income families to cover the cost of cremation. Funding shall be drawn from reallocations within the Department of Health and Environmental Control's budget and from annual appropriations by the General Assembly.*

Section VI: *Any funeral service provider that fails to comply with this law shall be subject to fines up to five thousand dollars ($5,000) per violation and possible revocation of license by the State Board of Funeral Service."*

Section VII: This bill shall take effect on January 1, 2027, upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Sarah Herzberg
Clemson University

Purpose: To expand the existing plain language requirement so that all official public communications from state and local agencies must be conveyed in clear and understandable language.

Whereas, plain language in government communication promotes transparency, understanding, and accountability; and,

Whereas, many residents may have limited knowledge of legal, technical, and bureaucratic vernacular, and overly complex government language can create barriers to information access; and,

Whereas, extending the plain language requirement beyond emergencies will help ensure that all South Carolinians can understand public notices, forms, and other government documents without confusion; and

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: To amend Section 23-3-70 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to read:

"SECTION 23-3-70. Use of plain language in public communications.

Notwithstanding another provision of law, each local and state emergency, fire, and law enforcement agency shall either:

(1) adopt plain language communications as outlined by the Department of Homeland Security as its agency's standard; or

(2) implement and submit for review by the State Law Enforcement Division a plan for the use of plain language communication ~~during periods of a declared emergency~~ *for all forms of communication between all state agencies, counties, and municipalities and the public*."

Section II: This bill will go into effect ninety (90) days after passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Eva Hoagland
Clemson University

Purpose: To Require Random Drug Testing for High School Athletes Competing in State Championships in South Carolina.

Whereas, For U.S. students in grades 8, 10, and 12, the annual prevalence of steroid use was about 3.3% in 2024; and,

Whereas, The widespread availability of steroids and supplements online poses a danger for teens who do not fully understand the risks; and,

Whereas, High school athletes face immense pressure to perform well in competitions, and,

Whereas, A 2024 study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association found that steroid users had a hazard ratio (HR) for death that was 2.81 times higher than a control group; and,

Whereas, Steroids create unfair competition and harm both those using and those not using them.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: To amend Title 59 of the South Carolina Code of Laws by adding Chapter 64 to read:

*"**SECTION 59-64-1.** Title and Purpose.*

The purpose of this Act is to protect the health, safety, and integrity of student athletics by implementing random drug testing for high school athletes competing in state championship events.

SECTION 59-64-10. Definitions.

(A) As used in this section:

(1) "Athlete" means any student enrolled in a public or private high school, or an accredited homeschool in South Carolina, who participates in an athletic team or individual sport and competes in a South Carolina High School League (SCHSL) sanctioned state championship.

(2) "Drug testing" means testing for performance-enhancing substances, controlled substances as defined in Title 44, Chapter 53 of the South Carolina Code, and any other substances prohibited by the South Carolina High School League or the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS).

(3) "Random selection" means that athletes are chosen through a lottery or impartial method that gives each competitor an equal chance of being selected for testing.
(4) "State championship" means any athletic competition recognized by the SCHSL as the culminating event for a sport in a given season.

SECTION 59-64-20. Random Drug Testing Requirement.
(A) Athletes participating in a state championship event may be subject to random drug testing before or during competition.
(B) The South Carolina Department of Education, in coordination with the SCHSL, shall establish policies and procedures for random selection, including but not limited to:

1. *The number or percentage of athletes to be tested at each event;*
2. *Approved methods for ensuring impartial selection;*
3. *Timing of testing, which may occur at any point before or during the event;*
4. *Confidentiality and protection of student privacy;*
5. *Procedures for positive test results, appeals, and retesting.*

SECTION 59-64-30. Consequences of Positive Test Results.
(A) Any athlete who tests positive for a prohibited substance shall be disqualified from competition in that championship.
(B) The athlete's team may also face forfeiture of any team results, subject to SCHSL policies.
(C) Athletes who test positive shall be referred to counseling and rehabilitation programs as determined by the school district.

SECTION 59-64-40. Funding.
The cost of random testing shall be jointly funded by the South Carolina Department of Education and the South Carolina High School League. No student shall be required to pay fees for participation in this program.

SECTION 59-64-50. Implementation.
(A) The Department of Education shall promulgate regulations to implement this Act no later than six months after its passage.
(B) The provisions of this Act shall apply to all state championship competitions beginning with the 2026–2027 school year.

SECTION 59-64-60. Severability.
If any section or provision of this Act is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other sections or provisions that can be given effect without the invalid portion.

Section II: This bill will go into effect in the 2027-2028 school year upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Matthew Langton
Clemson University

Purpose: To amend South Carolina law to allow homeschool students to participate in interscholastic sports at public schools outside their county or district of residence, provided certain eligibility and consent conditions are met.

Whereas, Current South Carolina Code 59-63-100 restricts homeschool students to participating only in interscholastic activities within the attendance boundaries of their resident public school; and,

Whereas, Expanding eligibility to nearby schools across county or district lines would promote inclusivity, student development, and athletic opportunity without imposing significant costs on school districts; and,

Whereas, Neighboring states such as Florida, Tennessee, and Utah have enacted similar laws allowing homeschool students to play for adjacent schools, providing a proven model for equitable access;

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: To amend Section 59-63-100 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to read:

"(3) A student participating in interscholastic activities:

(a) ~~- resides within the attendance boundaries of the school for which the student participates~~ *may participate in the public school located within his or her residential attendance zone; or, with the written consent of both superintendents, may participate in a public school located in an adjacent attendance zone or county if the desired sport or activity is not offered by the school or district of residence, or if roster space permits*;
(b) in the case of a Governor's school student, resides or attends a Governor's school within the attendance boundaries of the school for which the student participates."

(G) Nothing in this section shall prohibit a home school student from participating in interscholastic activities of a public school located outside the student's school district or county of residence, provided that:

(1) the superintendents of both school districts approve the participation in writing;
(2) the student meets all eligibility, conduct, and academic standards applicable to other participants; and
(3) no resident student is displaced from participation as a result."

Section III: This bill shall take effect upon approval by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Sarah Moorshead
Clemson University

Purpose: To establish clear standards for medical evaluation and intervention in complex or sensitive cases; and for other purposes.

Whereas, Currently, a woman can only receive an abortion in South Carolina for fetal genetic conditions if the fetus will not be viable immediately upon birth; and,

Whereas, There are many genetic conditions that may not immediately cause death, but do result in an extreme lack of quality of life and shortened lifespan; and,

Whereas, Testing for these genetic conditions is only accurate starting at about 10 weeks gestation, which is after the current SC abortion ban; and,

Whereas, Dealing with extreme genetic disorders can greatly impact the physical and psychological well-being of others in the fetus' family, leading to cases of depression and anxiety, among other issues; and,

Whereas, The average human only begins to form life-lasting memories around three years of age, but can experience medical trauma associated with diseases and treatments that can impact their development as early as infancy.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: To amend Section 44-41-610 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to add subsection (15), which shall read:

(15) "Fatal genetic anomaly" means that, in reasonable medical judgement, the unborn child has a profound and irremediable genetic anomaly that, with or without the provision of life-preserving treatment, would be incompatible with maintaining both a good quality of life and prolonged life beyond an average of three years of age for the anomaly.

Section II: To amend Section 44-41-660 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to read:

SECTION 44-41-660. Exception for fatal fetal anomaly *and fatal genetic anomaly*; written notations in medical records.

(A) It is not a violation of Section 44-41-630 if an abortion is performed or induced on a pregnant woman due to the existence of a fatal fetal anomaly *or a fatal genetic anomaly*. Section 44-41-630 does not apply to a physician who performs or induces an abortion if the physician or person determines according

to standard medical practice that there exists a fatal fetal anomaly *or a fatal genetic anomaly*.

(B)(1) A person who performs or induces an abortion based upon the existence of a fatal fetal anomaly *or a fatal genetic anomaly* shall make written notations in the pregnant woman's medical records of:

(a) the presence of a fatal fetal anomaly *or fatal genetic anomaly*;

(b) the nature of the fatal fetal anomaly *or fatal genetic anomaly*;

(c) the medical rationale for making the determination that with or without the provision of life-preserving treatment life after birth would be *eventually* unsustainable *and with poor quality of life*.

(2) For at least seven years from the date the notations are made in the woman's medical records, the owner of the pregnant woman's medical records shall maintain a record of the notations.

(C) A person who violates this section is guilty of a felony and, upon conviction, must be fined up to ten thousand dollars, imprisoned for not more than two years, or both.

(D) An entity with ownership of the pregnant woman's medical records that violates item (2) must be fined up to fifty thousand dollars.

Section III: This bill will go into effect January 1st, 2026 upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Charley Phy
Clemson University

Purpose: To help foster youth obtain driver's licenses and auto insurance, promoting independence and opportunity.

Whereas, This state acknowledges that driving is an age-appropriate activity and a key milestone for youth in foster care, contributing to their development, independence, and ability to access opportunities; and,

Whereas, Yet, associated costs present barriers; and,

Whereas, Foster youth often face unique financial challenges that prevent them from accessing driver's education, licenses, and auto insurance, unlike their peers who may rely on parental support; and,

Whereas, The lack of reliable transportation limits foster youths' ability to obtain and maintain employment, attend school, and participate in age-appropriate social and community activities; and,

Whereas, South Carolina currently has over 3,300 youth in foster care, with approximately 700-800 of them in the transition age group of 15–21; and,

Whereas, Florida's Keys to Independence program, established in statute (Fla. Stat. § 409.1454), has demonstrated the effectiveness of covering licensing and insurance costs for foster youth, improving access to work and education opportunities; and,

Whereas, This legislation would reduce long-term barriers to independence for foster youth, while ensuring fairness and opportunity through a modest, sustainable funding structure.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: Add the following to Title 63, Chapter 7, Article 8 of the South Carolina Code of Laws:

"§63-7-2770. Foster Youth Driver's License and Insurance Assistance Program.

(A) The Department of Social Services shall establish and administer a program to reimburse or directly cover the costs of:
1. Driver's education courses and associated fees;
2. Learner's permit and driver's license application and testing fees; and
3. Initial auto insurance premiums for foster youth ages fifteen through twenty-one, or for youth within two years of aging out of foster care.

(B) Eligibility shall extend to all youth in out-of-home foster care placements, youth continuing in care past age eighteen, and youth who have reached permanency or aged out of care within the last two years.

(C) DSS may contract with a nonprofit entity to assist in the operation and administration of this program, including eligibility determinations, outreach, and reimbursement processing.

(D) The program shall include contracts or partnerships with driver education providers to guarantee enrollment slots for eligible youth. DSS shall work in coordination with the Department of Motor Vehicles to waive or reimburse all permit and license application fees. For insurance coverage, DSS may reimburse caregivers for documented premium increases or, when necessary, purchase policies directly to ensure continuous coverage for participating youth.

(E) Insurance premium assistance shall cover the youth's initial policy period, not to exceed twelve months, and may be renewed based on available funds. The Department of Social Services shall not be responsible for damages or premium increases resulting from accidents or violations by participating youth."

Section II: To amend §56-1-110 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to add:

"**SECTION 56-1-110.** Any foster parent, guardian, or custodian who signs a driver's license application on behalf of a foster youth covered by the program created in §63-7-2770 shall not be held liable for damages arising from the youth's operation of a motor vehicle, provided that the youth is insured through the Department of Social Services program."

Section III: To add §56-3-1235 to the South Carolina Code of Laws:

"§56-3-1235. Foster Youth Independence Fund; Hybrid Funding Model.

(A) The Department of Social Services shall administer the Foster Youth Driver's License and Insurance Assistance Program created in §63-7-2770 through a hybrid funding model.

(B) Federal funds available through the Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood shall serve as the primary funding source for the program.

(C) In addition, a surcharge of two dollars ($2.00) shall be imposed on the issuance and renewal of vanity license plates.

(D) Revenue collected under this section shall be deposited into the Foster Youth Independence Fund, established within DSS under §63-7-2770, and used exclusively for the purposes of that section."

Section IV: This act shall take effect July 1, 2026, upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Cameron Rumpp
Clemson University

Purpose: To mandate schools to be transparent about the cost of required textbooks and materials for each class at the time of registration.

Whereas, The rising cost of higher education places a significant financial burden on students and their families; and,

Whereas, The price of required textbooks and course materials has increased significantly in recent years, often exceeding several hundred dollars per course; and,

Whereas, Providing cost information at the time of registration allows students to make informed decisions about course selection and financial planning; and,

Whereas, Hidden and unexpected textbook costs disproportionately harm low-income, working, and first-generation college students, furthering inequities in higher education.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: Chapter 31, Title 59 of the Code of Laws is amended by adding:

Section II: To add SECTION 59-31-55 reading:

SECTION 59-31-55. *Transparency of Textbook and Course Material Costs at Registration*

(1) For purposes of this section, "course materials" shall include all required textbooks, digital access codes, lab manuals, software, and any other instructional content students must purchase or otherwise access in order to participate in a course at an institution of higher education.

(2) Beginning with the first registration period following the effective date of this section, each public institution of higher education in South Carolina shall ensure that for every course listed in its registration system, the estimated cost of all required course materials is clearly and prominently disclosed to students prior to finalizing registration.

(3) If the exact cost of a required textbook or course material is not available at the time of registration, the institution must:

(a) Provide the best available estimate of the cost, and
(b) update the student with the actual cost once it is determined.

(4) Each institution shall designate an office or administrator responsible for collecting, verifying, and publishing accurate course material cost information and ensuring compliance with this section.

(5) The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education shall publish guidelines to assist institutions with implementation and may periodically audit institutions to ensure compliance with this section.

(6) Failure by an institution to comply with this section may result in administrative review and penalties as determined by the Commission on Higher Education.

Section III: This bill shall go into effect after 30 days after passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Fiona Tworkowski
Clemson University

Purpose: To narrow the laws on the constitutional carry gun laws in South Carolina.

Whereas, The United States is facing a growing number of gun violence issues, thus creating extended freedoms for gun use is not the answer; and,

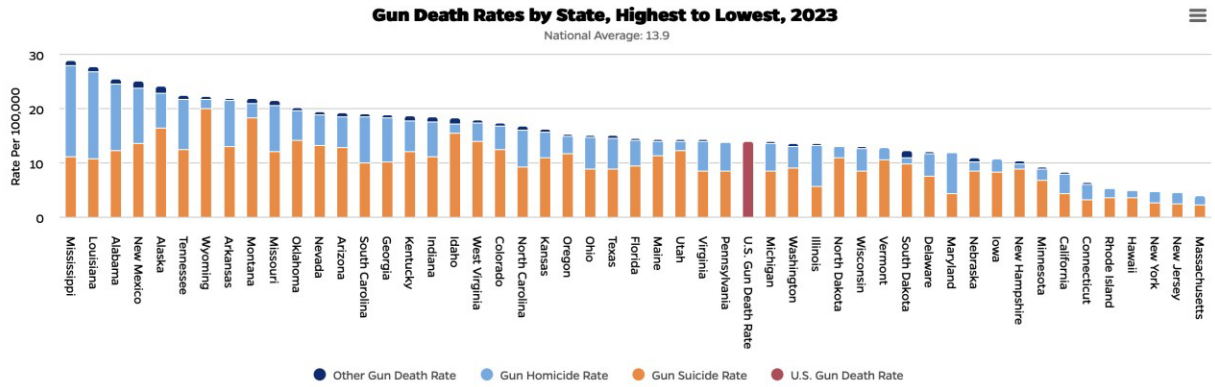
Whereas, One will maintain their Second Amendment rights to bear arms and maintain many of the freedoms provided in the pre-established Act, but experience minor restrictions regarding some of the sections in the Constitution Carry Act; and,

Whereas, In 2023, it could be said that someone died by a gun every eleven minutes, and the CDC or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention showed 46,728 deaths in the United States, and 27,300 died from firearm suicide, which is the highest recorded per year in American history. Studies have concluded that deaths from guns have exceeded the previous leading causes like overdoses, cancer, and car crashes. Although these studies take place in 2023, there are no conclusive studies yet for 2024 and 2025, but the number of gun violence issues is expected to grow; and,

Whereas, In the United States, there are 430 deaths due to unintentional gun discharge. "Unintentional" classifies deaths with no leading cause of homicide or previous concerns surrounding suicide. The numbers of accidental deaths by guns consistently hold a 2.4 times higher rate of unintentional deaths by guns than the United States national average. This is correlated to the permissive gun laws and the higher number of guns available to the general public. (The Trace/ CDC)

Whereas, Firearms remain the leading cause of death for people 1-17 years of age.

Whereas, Studies show that more gun violence homicides, suicide, and other death by guns levels are higher in the South or West Mountains because the laws are more relaxed regarding the gun laws. Shown in the statistics below, provided by Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Center for Gun Violence Solutions:



"Other gun death rate" includes legal intervention, unintentional, and undetermined.

Whereas, It is evident from the graph that there are our higher gun death rates in more Southern states, which can be correlated to the discretion of more relaxed laws. More specifically, South Carolina, which, compared to other areas, can be considered "relaxed" in their gun law, has a higher gun death rate than the US national average by 5.06 rate per 100,000 people. South Carolina holds a rate of 18.96 versus the United States average, which stands at a rate of 13.9; and,

Whereas, It is essential to recognize that the Second Amendment rights are upheld and it remains that one has the right to open carry within the conduct of the unchanged bill sections it just narrows in on to eliminate potential gun violence situations; and,

Whereas, The Constitutional Carry Act, A111, R121, H3594, signed March 7, 2024, is a long and precise document containing Sections 1 through 27. However, I would like to focus on three sections in particular: Section 3, Section 6, and Section 11. More specifically, to mend the loose phrasing of said Sections.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled, the following:

Section I: Section III: Section 16-23-20 of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

Section 16-23-20.

(D) Notwithstanding any provision in this section, a person who is not otherwise prohibited by law from carrying a firearm may lawfully store a firearm anywhere in a vehicle only when *the guns owner is occupying the vehicle*, ~~whether occupied or unoccupied~~.

Section II: SECTION 6. Section 16-23-420 of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

Section 16-23-420.

(A) It is unlawful for a person to possess a firearm of any kind on any premises or property owned, operated, or controlled by a private or public school, college, university, technical college, other post-secondary institution, or in any publicly owned building, without the express permission of *the state's lawful authority*. ~~the authorities in charge of the premises or property~~. The provisions of this subsection related to any premises or property owned, operated, or controlled by a private or public school, college, university, technical college, or other postsecondary institution, do not apply to when the firearm remains inside an attended or locked motor vehicle and is secured in a closed glove compartment, closed console, closed trunk, or in closed container secured by an integral fastener and transported in the luggage compartment of the vehicle.

Section III: SECTION 11. Section 23-31-232(A) of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

(A)(2) A school district *must* ~~may~~ request that a church utilizing school property for its services disclose and notify the school district if persons are, or may be, carrying concealed weapons on the school property.

Section IV: This bill will go into effect after 31 days upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Aariona Bates
Coastal Carolina University

Purpose: To prevent the loss of consumer funds by requiring retailers to provide cash redemption for small remaining balances on gift certificates and gift cards.

Whereas, Consumers each year lose billions of dollars from unused or partially used gift cards. 47% of people currently have at least one unused gift card, voucher or store credit according to creditcard.com. The average unused amount is $175 per person, up from $116 last year. For the entire U.S adult population, that estimates up to $21 billion dollars unspent nationwide, and;

Whereas, Making sure gift cards are fully redeemed helps keep that money flowing through the economy and not having unused funds just sitting in a business's accounts, and;

Whereas, Several states including California, Colorado, New Jersey, Montana, and Washington have enacted laws requiring merchants to provide cash reimbursement for gift card balances below a certain threshold, and;

Whereas, Requiring cash redemption of small balances provides consumers with protection benefits, ensuring that you recover all the money that you originally or someone else paid for the card, which ultimately reduces the true cost amount.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: Amend the South Carolina Code of Laws by adding Section 39-1-56 to read:

Business Gift Card Responsibilities

A. A person that is in business offering goods or services for sale or retail who issues or sells a gift certificate or gift card as described in Section 39-1-55 shall, upon request of the holder, redeem the remaining value of the certificate or card in cash if the balance is less than five dollars. There shall not be a fee imposed upon those wanting to redeem the remaining balance on their gift certificate or card.

B. Redemption in Part A above does not apply to gift certificates that were awarded as part of a loyalty program, contest, awards, or promotional program.

Section II: This bill will go into effect on January 1, 2026 upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Noah Burgan
Coastal Carolina University

Purpose: To increase the safety of marginalized communities by establishing a statewide hate crime law.

Whereas, Many of South Carolina's municipalities, such as Charleston, Columbia, and Myrtle Beach, have passed hate crime ordinances; however, South Carolina lacks statewide hate crime legislation; and,

Whereas, According to the U.S. Department of Justice, South Carolina and Wyoming are the only two states that do not have any of the bias categories that are present in federal hate crime laws included in their own state laws; and,

Whereas, It has been just ten years since the mass shooting at Mother Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, which resulted in the killing of nine Black worshippers who were attending a Bible study. The shooter was a white supremacist motivated by racist ideology and South Carolina failed to enact hate crime legislation following the deadly shooting; and,

Whereas, Although hate crime laws do not confront the underlying causes of bias-motivated crimes, they are necessary to make clear that crimes motivated by bias are not tolerated. Furthermore, hate crime laws are essential to the collection of data on hate crimes, which ultimately allows for the focus to shift to hate crime prevention.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: Amend Section 16-5-10 to read:

It is unlawful for ~~two~~ *one* or more persons to ~~band~~ *commit* or conspire *to commit* ~~together or go in disguise upon the public highway or upon the premises of another~~ *any offense* with the intent to injure, oppress, or violate the person or property of a ~~citizen~~ *person* because of ~~his~~ *their skin color, ethnicity, nationality, religion, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, age,* political opinion or ~~his~~ *their* expression or exercise of the same or attempt by any means, measures, or acts to hinder, prevent, or obstruct a ~~citizen~~ *person* in the free exercise and enjoyment of any right or privilege secured to ~~him~~ *them* by the Constitution and laws of the United States or by the Constitution and laws of this State.

Section II: This bill will go into effect on January 1, 2026 upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Dylan Donahue
Coastal Carolina University

Purpose: To increase maritime safety by allowing private individuals or companies to take possession of unclaimed stranded vessels.

Whereas, Stranded vessels currently come into the possession of the state if unclaimed; and,

Whereas, It often takes years before the funds to remove large vessels are appropriated by the state; and,

Whereas, Stranded vessels present a hazard to boaters and swimmers, and there are approximately 80 to 100 stranded vessels in South Carolina Waterways at any given time; and,

Whereas, Florida allows individuals to claim salvage after a period of 30 days, a policy which has helped clear navigable waterways and fostered a growing salvage industry.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: Amend section 54-7-10 to read:

If any ship, vessel, goods or effects shall be stranded or cast on shore and no person appears to claim the goods which shall be so saved *within 30 days*, ~~the local magistrate~~ *any person may* take them into his custody by registering the claimed item with the Department of Natural Resources ~~or possession and, as soon as may be, give notice and a schedule in writing of the different articles to the county treasurer, keeping a copy thereof, and deliver safely all such goods and effects to such treasurer or his order who shall be responsible for them and who shall give public notice thereof in a newspaper of general circulation in the county for at least sixty days, if no claim should be made~~.

Section II: This bill will go into effect on January 1, 2026 upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Camille Fortino
Coastal Carolina University

Purpose: To decrease the number of accidental deaths by firearms by implementing safe storage requirements.

Whereas, The state of South Carolina is currently one of only 24 states that have not adopted a safe storage gun policy; and,

Whereas, According to the South Carolina State Child Fatality Advisory Committee, from 2010 to 2018 out of the 238 sudden or unexplained child deaths they reported on, 28% of those deaths were the result of an unsecured firearm in the home; and,

Whereas, According to Everytownresearch.org, Virginia has implemented a safe storage law and now ranks #15 for gun law strength in the country compared to South Carolina which ranks #31; and,

Whereas, According to Fox Carolina's news site, in October 2021, a four year old boy named Kingston Barksdale was fatally shot by a friend in an accident that occurred because of an unsecured gun in the home in Greenville, SC. This was just one of 15 unintentional shootings by children in South Carolina during that year, according to everytownresearch.org.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: Add Section 23-31-530 to read:

All firearms must be stored locked away within a safe or with a gun lock and unloaded when anyone prohibited by law from possessing a firearm, or any minor is present in the gun owner's home. In the event of an incident involving the gun owner's firearm being used by or in the presence of anyone prohibited from possessing a firearm or a minor within the gun owner's home in which the firearm was not properly stored, the gun owner will be penalized with a fine of up $2,000 or up to 1 year of jail time.

Section II: This bill will go into effect January 1st, 2026 after passage by the General Assembly and signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Franceska Guerrero
Coastal Carolina University

Purpose: To promote dignity, equity, and mental well-being by ensuring free and accessible menstrual products in school and public buildings in South Carolina.

Whereas, Access to menstrual products is a basic necessity, and the lack of access can lead to missed school days and emotional distress; and,

Whereas, Menstrual cycles are unpredictable and may occur unexpectedly, causing discomfort and embarrassment in individuals who do not have immediate access to necessary products; and,

Whereas, Ensuring women have the right access to menstrual products, supports gender equity by removing barriers that disproportionately affect women; and,

Whereas, Viv, a menstrual product online store and menstrual product activist, reported that over the last eight years, 62 menstrual equity laws have passed representing real progress for the menstrual equity movement. 28 states, including North Carolina, have passed bills that requires menstrual products in public schools and public bathrooms; and,

Whereas, The state of South Carolina has an opportunity to follow this example and to support women health and dignity.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: Amend Section 10-01-106 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to read:

Public schools and public restrooms in government-owned or operated building shall provide free menstrual products, including pads and tampons, in every female and gender-neutral restroom in each building. No individual shall be charged for accessing these products.

Section II: This bill will go into effect July 1, 2026.

A Bill
Presented by Kristen Haigh
Coastal Carolina University

Purpose: To require all public schools in South Carolina to implement a mental health education curriculum as part of their health classes.

Whereas, Mental health conditions affect one in five teenagers nationwide (National Institute of Mental Health, 2023); and,

Whereas, Early education about mental health can reduce stigma, increase awareness, and promote early intervention. Integrating mental health education into high school health courses will prepare students to recognize and manage emotional well-being more effectively, thereby reducing risks of depression, self-harm, and suicide among youth; and,

Whereas, Many South Carolina students currently lack access to mental health resources or knowledge about coping strategies. *South Carolina consistently ranks among the lowest states in the nation for access to mental health care and among the highest for rates of youth depression and suicide*; and,

Whereas, South Carolina consistently ranks among the lower-performing states in access to mental health services and adolescent well-being indicators compared to other states. *Ignoring this issue costs the state millions annually in lost productivity, school absenteeism, juvenile justice involvement, and emergency medical care; and,*

Whereas, Other states such as New York and Virginia have implemented mental health education laws that have increased student awareness and reduced stigma, demonstrating that such programs are both practical and effective.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled, the following:

Section I: Amend Section 59-32-35 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to read:

Comprehensive Mental Health Education Act.

The South Carolina Department of Education shall require all public high schools to include a minimum of four instructional hours on mental health education within existing health curricula.

Pursuant to Section 59-32-30 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, each local school board shall implement a program of comprehensive health education, which includes instruction in mental and emotional health for grades K–8 and at least one unit of health education for grades 9–12. Local school boards may use

instructional units provided by the State Board of Education or develop their own materials, and instruction may be given as part of an existing course or as a special course. The curriculum shall include age-appropriate instruction on mental health awareness, common mental illnesses, healthy coping mechanisms, and information on how to seek professional help. The Department of Education shall collaborate with licensed mental health professionals and organizations to develop standardized lesson materials and provide teacher training materials.

Section II: This bill will go into effect July 1st, 2026, upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Brian L. Hughes
Coastal Carolina University

Purpose: To improve the health and safety of citizens by banning the burning of land-clearing debris, establish rules, regulations, and penalties for enforcement.

Whereas, The health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of South Carolina are paramount responsibilities of the State; and

Whereas, The open burning of timber, and land-clearing debris by developers produces harmful smoke and airborne particles that aggravate respiratory conditions, threaten public health, and disproportionately affect children, the elderly, and individuals with chronic illnesses; and

Whereas, Smoke from burning debris creates hazardous roadway conditions by impairing visibility, thereby endangering motorists, first responders, and pedestrians; and

Whereas Modern alternatives to burning, including off-site transport, mulching, chipping, composting, or recycling, provide safe, sustainable, and environmentally responsible methods of disposing of land-clearing debris, it is in the best interest of the people of South Carolina to prohibit such burning practices and promote safe air quality and roadway visibility.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled, the following:

Section I: Amend the South Carolina Code of Laws by adding Section 48-35-15 to read:

Prohibition of open burning.

(A) No developer shall burn timber or debris cleared from development sites in an open-air setting.

(B) Controlled burns conducted for agricultural, state or prescribed forest management purposes are exempt from this prohibition, provided they comply with existing state law and regulations.

(C) South Carolina Department of Environmental Services (SCDES), under the South Carolina Pollution Control Act, shall enforce the provisions of this act and promulgate regulations to implement it.

(D) A developer who violates the provisions of this act is subject to:

1. *A civil penalty not exceeding five thousand dollars ($5,000) per violation per day.*
2. *An order to cease all operations on the site until compliance is achieved.*
3. *Reimbursement of any costs incurred by the State or local government in responding to smoke-related roadways or health hazards.*

(E) No developer shall burn timber or debris cleared from development sites in an open-air setting.

(F) Controlled burns conducted for agricultural, state or prescribed forest management purposes are exempt from this prohibition, provided they comply with existing state law and regulations.

(G) South Carolina Department of Environmental Services (SCDES), under the South Carolina Pollution Control Act, shall enforce the provisions of this act and promulgate regulations to implement it.

(H) A developer who violates the provisions of this act is subject to:

1. A civil penalty not exceeding five thousand dollars ($5,000) per violation per day.

2. An order to cease all operations on the site until compliance is achieved.

3. Reimbursement of any costs incurred by the State or local government in responding to smoke-related roadways or health hazards.

Section II: For the purposes of this bill:

A) "Open burning" shall be defined as: the combustion of debris, logs, or timber in an outdoor environment without the use of an incinerator

B) "Land-clearing debris" shall be defined as: logs, stumps, brush, and other organic, vegetative material generated from clearing land for residential, commercial, or industrial use.

C) "Disposal" shall be defined as: the removal, recycling, or repurposing of land-clearing debris through methods other than open burning.

Section III: This bill will go into effect January 1st, 2026, upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Dance Killough
Coastal Carolina University

Purpose: To prevent wildfire destruction of state and private property by increasing education and enforcement of safe debris burning practices on private and public lands.

Whereas, According to the South Carolina State Forestry Commission 35% - 45% of South Carolina's wildfires fall into the category of debris burning being the starting cause of the burn. In cases that the Foresty Commission handles in the state; and,

Whereas, Surrounding states report the same issue as their top wildfire cause. Georgia reports 50% of their wildfires are caused by debris burning, North Carolina has banned trash from their debris burns and limited burns to yard waste to control air quality and by permit only; and,

Whereas, Horry County, the state of South Carolina, and the United States federal government spent millions on the Carolina Forest Fire in 2025, leaving significant public funding questions; and,

Whereas, The accused person of the March 2025 fire in Carolina Forest came away with an agreement to do community service and to do training that should have been done before creating a fire that cost millions in damage. No financial responsibility was given for their negligence.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: Amend Section 48-35-10 to read:

"Starting *a* fire *to burn trash, debris, or brush* in woodlands, grasslands, and other places *shall be* unlawful unless certain precautions are taken.

It shall be unlawful for any owner or lessee of land or any employee of such owner or lessee or other person to start, or cause to be started, a fire in any woodlands, brushlands, grasslands, ditch banks, or hedgerows or in any debris, leaves or other flammable material adjacent thereto, except under the following conditions:

(a) annual training has been taken by persons tending fire

(b) Specific property permits are acquired from the local State Forester or associated staff designated with power.

~~(a)~~ *(c)* Proper notification shall be given to the State Forester, or his duly authorized representative or other persons designated by the State Forester. The notice shall contain all information required by the State Forester or his representative.

~~(b)~~ *(d)* Such persons shall have cleared around the area to be burned and have immediately available sufficient equipment and personnel to adequately secure the fire and prevent its spread.

~~(c)~~ *(e)* The person starting the burning shall supervise carefully the fire started and have it under control prior to leaving the area."

Section II: Amend SECTION 48-35-60 to read:

" Penalties.

Any person violating the provisions of this chapter may be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, may be fined not more than ~~two hundred dollars~~ *$2,500* or imprisoned for not more than ~~thirty days~~ *six months* for a first offense. For any second or subsequent offense, a fine of not less than ~~five hundred dollars~~ *$5,000* or imprisonment for not more than ~~sixty days~~ *three years*, or both may be imposed in the discretion of the court. "Subsequent offense", as used in this section, shall mean an offense committed within ten years of a previous offense."

Section III: This bill will go into effect January 1st, 2026, upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Kennedy Kovach
Coastal Carolina University

Purpose: To reduce rates of teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) by allowing for contraceptives to be distributed in secondary schools to students once a student turns 16 through Condom Accessibility Programs (CAPs).

Whereas, The correct use of condoms can prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV, and unintended pregnancy. The age of consent in South Carolina is 16 years old; therefore, that is the age at which a student can acquire a condom; and,

Whereas, According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), South Carolina is ranked 6th in the nation for reported cases of Chlamydia, and according to the *World Population Review,* South Carolina is ranked 4th nationally for highest rates of gonorrhea and syphilis; and,

Whereas, The CDC recognizes that 52% of sexually active high school students did not use a condom the last time they were sexually active. Government programs, including Title X, the CDC, and health departments, fund CAPs. CAPs offer free condoms in locations such as school nurse's offices, school-based health centers, or health resource rooms; and,

Whereas, South Carolina's Comprehensive Health Education Act states that after sixth grade, sexually transmitted infections are to be taught alongside reproductive health and pregnancy prevention; and,

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled, the following:

Section I: Amend SECTION 59-1-405 to read:

"Distribution of contraceptives on school grounds prohibited.

No contraceptive device or contraceptive medication may be distributed in or on the school grounds of any public elementary ~~or secondary~~ school. No *elementary* school may contract with any contraceptive provider for their distribution in or on the school grounds. *Students must be 16 years of age to receive contraceptives from the school nurse's office, school-based health centers, or health resource rooms."*

Section II: For the purposes of this bill:
A) 'elementary' shall be defined as: Grades kindergarten through 5th grade.

Section III: This bill will go into effect July 1st, 2026 after passage by the General Assembly and signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Kallie Lacount
Coastal Carolina University

Purpose: To decrease recidivism and promote successful reintegration into society by automatically expunging, first time nonviolent offenses, and low-level drug possession after 5 years.

Whereas, Current South Carolina law does not provide automatic expungement, which can be financially and administratively burdensome on the court system; and,

Whereas, Automatic expungement after 5 years will aid in rehabilitation and reduce the chances of a second offence; and,

Whereas, 12 states have enacted clean slate law including Virginia, and 19 more have some type of automatic records clearing; and,

Whereas, According to The Clean Slate Initiative website, one in three Americans have an arrest or conviction record, and 94% of employers, 90% of landlords and 72% of colleges and universities use background checks to screen out applicants with records, making them disadvantaged.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: Amend the South Carolina Code of Laws by adding Section 17-22-915 to read:

"Automatic Expungement of Certain Offenses.
(A) Notwithstanding any other provisions of the law, the records of any persons convicted of a first-time nonviolent offense or low-level drug possession charge shall be automatically expunged after 5 years, provided that person has not been convicted of any other charges within that period.

(B) The South Carolina Judicial Department, shall establish procedures to make sure expungement is carried out without the necessity of a petition from an individual."

Section II: This bill will go into effect on January 1, 2026 upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Daniel Lala
Coastal Carolina University

Purpose: To lessen the effects of predatory highway policing by reforming the point accumulation system.

Whereas, U.S. car insurance rates increased more than 20% over the course of 2024 (consumeraffairs.org). The accumulation of even two points can increase insurance premiums by approximately $200-$400 a month (autoinsurance.org); and,

Whereas, Many people rely on their driver's license for work (delivery drivers, tradespeople, commuters). A lenient system helps prevent individuals from losing employment over relatively minor issues; and,

Whereas, More lenient polices would also lead to a more favorable public opinion on highway police; and,

Whereas, A reformed system would emphasize rehabilitation by focusing on traffic safety courses.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: Amend Section 56-1-720 to read:

"There is established a point system for the evaluation of the operating record of persons to whom a license to operate motor vehicles has been granted and for the determination of the continuing qualifications of these persons for the privileges granted by the license to operate motor vehicles. The system shall have as its basic element a graduated scale of points assigning relative values to the various violations in accordance with the following schedule:

Driving too fast for conditions, or speeding:	
No more than 10 m.p.h. above the posted limits	~~2~~ *1*
More than 10 m.p.h but less than 15 m.p.h above the posted limits	*2*
More than ~~10~~ *15* m.p.h. but less than 25 m.p.h. above the posted limits	4
25 m.p.h. or above the posted limits	6"

.

Section II: Amend Section 56-1-770 to read:

"(C) No person's points may be reduced more than ~~one time~~ *two times* in any three-year period, pursuant to the provisions contained in this section."

Section III: Amend Section 56-1-750 to read:

"In computing the total number of points charged to any person after a particular violation, those accrued as a result of violations which have occurred during the twelve months' period including and immediately preceding the last violation shall be counted at their full value, those accrued from twelve to ~~twenty-four~~ *sixteen* months preceding the last violation shall be counted at one half their established value and those resulting from violations which occurred more than ~~twenty-four~~ *sixteen* months prior to the last violation shall not be counted."

Section IV: This bill will go into effect January 1st, 2026, upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Matthew McCall
Coastal Carolina University

Purpose: To return decision making power to public schools by requiring all Advanced Placement courses offered by The College Board be published in the South Carolina Department of Education Course Coding System.

Whereas, The College Board's Equity and Access Policy states that all willing and academically prepared students should be given the opportunity to participate in Advanced Placement (AP) courses, and that schools should make every and all effort to ensure that AP classes reflect the diversity of their student population. The South Carolina Department of Education directly undermined this initiative by restricting what courses South Carolina high schools are allowed to offer; and,

Whereas, The College Board has consistently reported that AP exam performance is the strongest predictor for how rising college students will perform in their two first years of college, signifying the importance of broad access to any and all courses offered by The College Board; and,

Whereas, According to The College Board, AP students who score a 3 or higher can save on average $1000 to $3000 in college tuition per course by earning AP credit. By limiting the available AP classes high schools can offer the South Carolina Department of Education is directly increasing costs for South Carolinian's college education; and,

Whereas, According to U.S. News & World Report, South Carolina high schools rank 34th in college readiness and 43rd in overall education. These readiness reports include AP and IB performance in high school. South Carolina Students are on average less ready for further education than our sister states, North Carolina ranks 3rd; and,

Whereas, Sister states such as North Carolina, Virginia, and Georgia, who all consistently outperform South Carolina college readiness, AP participation, and overall education ranking all allow local discretion over AP offerings leaving it up to student demand and teacher readiness. This demonstrates that a local flexibility may correlate with stronger student outcomes in higher education.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: To add Section 59-18-130 to the South Carolina Code of Law to read:

"(A) The S.C. State Department of Education shall maintain and publish in the SCDE Course Coding System for Student Information an official course code for every Advanced Placement course approved by College Board

(B) Each course recognized under this section must be assigned Advanced Placement GPA weighting in accordance to the Uniform Grading policy and shall be eligible for state funding for teacher training, instructional materials, and student exam fees.

(C) School districts and charter schools are not required by this section to offer every Advanced Placement course for which a state course code exists. Each district and charter school shall retain full discretion to determine which Advanced Placement courses to offer, consistent with staffing, scheduling, and community demands."

Section II: For the purposes of this bill:
A)'Charter School' shall be defined as it is in Section 59-40-40 (1)

(1) A "Charter school" means a public, nonreligious, nonhome-based, nonprofit, corporation forming a school that operates by sponsoring of a public school district, the South Carolina Public Charter School District, or a public or independent institution of higher learning, but is accountable to the board of trustees, or in the case of technical colleges, the area commission, of the sponsor which grants its charter. Nothing in this chapter prohibits charter schools from offering virtual service pursuant to state law and subsequent regulations defining virtual schools.

Section III: To add Section 59-101-700 to read:

"(A) *All Advanced Placement courses approved by The College Board and listed by the S.C. State Department of Education in accordance to Section 59-18-130 shall be considered state-approved courses for the purpose of:*

(1) "Awarding high school credit; and"
(2) "Satisfying graduation requirements established by the State Board of Education; and"
(3) "Determining eligibility for state funded academic programs, including, but not limited to, lottery tuition assistance, teacher training programs, and instructional materials funding."

(B) *School districts or charter schools are not required by this section to offer every Advanced Placement course for which a state course code exists. Each district and charter school shall retain full discretion to determine which Advanced Placement courses to offer, consistent with staffing, scheduling, and community demands."*

Section IV: This bill will go into effect July 1st, 2026 after passage by the General Assembly and signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Ahmad Brown
Francis Marion University

Purpose: To expand South Carolina's existing concussion safety laws to include all youth athletic programs, require baseline cognitive testing for contact-sport and establish a statewide database for tracking youth concussions and head injuries.

Whereas, South Carolina's current concussion law protects only student athletes participating in public-school athletics; and,

Whereas, The majority of youth athletes in the state play in city, private, or nonprofit leagues that lack concussion standards; and,

Whereas, Baseline cognitive testing and data tracking are proven tools for early detection, proper treatment, and long-term prevention of head injuries;

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I : To amend Section 59-63-75 to the South Carolina Code of Laws to expand applicability beyond public-school athletics.

"**56-63-75** ~~Concussion protocol for student athletes.~~ *Concussion in youth athletics; guidelines and procedures and education.*

(A) The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, in consultation with the State Department of Education, shall post on its website nationally recognized guidelines and procedures regarding the identification and management of suspected concussions in ~~student athletes~~ *all youth athletes participating in organized athletic activities within the State.* The Department of Health and Environmental Control also shall post on its website model policies that incorporate best practices guidelines for the identification, management, and return to play decisions for concussions reflective of current scientific and medical literature developed by resources from or members of sports medicine community organizations including, but not limited to, the Brain Injury Association of South Carolina, the South Carolina Medical Association, the South Carolina Athletic Trainer's Association, the National Federation of High Schools, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the

American Academy of Pediatrics. Guidelines developed pursuant to this section apply to South Carolina High School League-sanctioned events.

(B) ~~A local school district shall develop guidelines and procedures based on the model guidelines and procedures referenced in subsection (A).~~ *A local school district and each organized youth athletic program, including those operated by municipalities, private schools, nonprofit organizations, and club leagues, shall develop guidelines and procedures based on the model guidelines and procedures referenced in subsection (A).*

(C) Each year prior to participation in athletics, ~~each school district~~ *every school district and youth* athletic *program* shall provide to all coaches, volunteers, ~~student athletes,~~ *league administrators, youth athletes,* and their parents or legal guardian, an information sheet on concussions which informs of the nature and risk of concussion and brain injury, including the risks associated with continuing to play after a concussion or brain injury. The parent or legal guardian's receipt of the information sheet must be documented in writing or by electronic means before the ~~student athlete~~ *youth athlete* is permitted to participate in an athletic competition or practice.

(D) (1) If a coach, athletic trainer, official, or physician suspects that ~~a student athlete,~~ *youth athlete* under the control of the coach, athletic trainer, official, or physician, has sustained a concussion or brain injury in a practice or in an athletic competition, the ~~student athlete~~ *youth athlete* shall be removed from practice or competition at that time.

(2) A ~~student athlete~~ *youth athlete* has been removed from play may return to play if, as a result of evaluating the ~~student athlete~~ *youth athlete* on site, the athletic trainer, physician, physician assistant pursuant to scope of practice guidelines, or nurse practitioner pursuant to a written protocol determines in his best professional judgment that the ~~student athlete~~ *youth athlete* does not have any signs or symptoms of a concussion or brain injury.

(3) A ~~student athlete~~ *youth athlete* who has been removed from play and evaluated and who is suspected of having a concussion or brain injury may not return to play until the ~~student athlete~~ *youth athlete* has received written medical clearance by a physician.

(4) In addition to posting information regarding the recognition and management of concussions in ~~student athletes,~~ *youth athlete* the Department of Health and Environmental Control, in consultation with health care provider organizations, shall post on its website continuing education opportunities in concussion evaluation and management available to providers making such medical determinations. Such information must be posted by the department upon receipt from a participating health care organization.

(5) The athletic trainer, physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner who evaluates the ~~student athlete~~ *youth athlete* during practice or an athletic competition and authorizes the ~~student athlete~~ *youth athlete* to return to play is not liable for civil damages resulting from an act or omission in rendering this decision, other than acts or omissions constituting gross negligence or willful, wanton misconduct. This immunity applies to an athletic trainer, physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner serving as a volunteer.

(E) For purposes of this section:

1.“Physician” is defined in the same manner as provided in section 40-47-20.”

2.~~“Student athlete” includes cheerleaders.~~ *"Youth athlete" means any individual under the age of 18 participating in an organized athletic activity, including but not limited to public-school, private-school, municipal, nonprofit, or club sports programs. This term includes cheerleaders.*

Section II: Baseline Cognitive Testing.

(F) *Prior to the start of each athletic season, every student athlete and youth athlete participating in a contact sport shall complete a standardized baseline cognitive test administered under the supervision of a certified coach, athletic director, or licensed healthcare professional. The results shall be retained by the school or league for one athletic year and used solely for post-injury medical comparison. The Department of Health and Environmental Control, in consultation with the South Carolina Medical Association and the South Carolina Athletic Trainers' Association, shall establish approved testing standards and may coordinate with hospitals, universities, and healthcare providers to facilitate access to testing programs.*

Section III: Funding and Implementation.

(A) *The Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) shall be responsible for the administration and oversight of this act. Implementation shall occur using existing departmental resources wherever possible, supplemented by partnerships with healthcare and educational institutions.*

(B) *To assist youth leagues and recreation departments in complying with baseline testing requirements, there is hereby created within DHEC the "Youth Athlete Baseline Testing Grant Program." This program shall issue competitive mini-grants to local leagues, recreation departments, and nonprofit athletic organizations to subsidize the cost of baseline testing for athletes under the age of eighteen.*

(C) *Funding for the Youth Athlete Baseline Testing Grant Program shall be derived from:*

1. *Existing appropriations within DHEC's public-health and safety-education budget;*
2. *Federal grants available through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and other national injury-prevention programs;*
3. *Private contributions, hospital sponsorships, or university partnerships designated for youth-sports safety; and*
4. *Any additional funds voluntarily appropriated by the General Assembly.*

(D) *No new tax, fee, or fine shall be created to implement this act. All funds received shall be deposited into a dedicated account within DHEC and used exclusively for baseline testing, administrative costs, and outreach related to youth-concussion safety.*

(E) *DHEC shall publish an annual report to the Governor and General Assembly summarizing the total funds received, number of grants awarded, and number of athletes tested under this program.*

Section IV Enforcement-

The Department of Health and Environmental Control shall monitor compliance with this act. Leagues or organizations that fail to meet the baseline testing requirement may receive a written notice of noncompliance. Repeated failure to comply may result in suspension from state-affiliated competitions or eligibility for state safety grants until compliance is demonstrated.

Section V: This Act shall take effect July 1, 2026, upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor

A Bill
Presented by Connor Denny
Francis Marion University

Purpose: To reduce gas prices in South Carolina.

Whereas, In recent years, the tax on gas in South Carolina has increased heavily; and,

Whereas, This has directly made life harder for every South Carolinian who drives; and,

Whereas, By reducing this tax and increasing the tax on cigarettes, it will directly help the vast majority of South Carolinians; and,

Whereas, It will not affect the quality of the roadways as this higher tax on cigarettes can be used towards infrastructure.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: To amend **Section 12-21-625** of the South Carolina Code of Laws to read as follows:

"**SECTION 12-21-625**.Cigarette surtax; imposition; crediting of revenues; definition of "cigarette".

(A) Effective ~~July 1, 2010~~ *January 1, 2026*, there is imposed a surtax on cigarettes subject to the tax imposed pursuant to Section 12-21-620(1) in an amount equal to ~~two and one-half~~ *five* cents on each cigarette.

(B) Notwithstanding another provision of law providing for the crediting of the revenues of license or other taxes, the revenue of the surtax imposed pursuant to this section must be credited as follows:

(1) five million dollars annually to the Medical University of South Carolina Hollings Cancer Center to be used for tobacco-related cancer research;

(2) five million dollars annually to the Smoking Prevention and Cessation Trust Fund created pursuant to Section 11-11-230(A);

(3) The remaining annual revenue shall be deposited in the South Carolina Medicaid Reserve Fund created pursuant to Section 11-11-230(B)*, or to the South Carolina Maintenance Infrastructure Trust Fund as needed*."

Section II: To amend **Section 12-28-310** of the South Carolina Code of Laws to read as follows:

"**SECTION 12-28-310.** User fees on gasoline and diesel fuel.

(A) Subject to the exemptions provided in this chapter, a user fee of ~~sixteen~~ *thirteen* cents a gallon is imposed on:

(1) all gasoline, gasohol, or blended fuels containing gasoline that are used or consumed for any purpose in this State; and

(2) all diesel fuel, substitute fuels, or alternative fuels, or blended fuels containing diesel fuel that are used or consumed in this State in producing or generating power for propelling motor vehicles.

(B) The user fee levied on motor fuel subject to the user fee pursuant to this chapter is a levy and assessment on the consumer, and the levy and assessment on other persons as specified in this chapter are as agents of the State for the collection of the user fee. This section does not affect the method of collecting the user fee as provided in this chapter. The user fee imposed by this section must be collected and paid at those times, in the manner, and by the persons specified in this chapter.

(C) The license user fee imposed by this section is instead of all sales, use, or other excise tax that may be imposed otherwise by any municipality, county, or other local political subdivision of the State.

(D) On July 1, 2017, and each July first thereafter until after July 1, 2022, the department shall permanently increase the amount of the user fee imposed pursuant to subsection (A) by two cents, for a total of twelve cents. All of the funds raised by the increase in the motor fuel user fee imposed by this subsection must be credited to the Infrastructure Maintenance Trust Fund.

HISTORY: 1995 Act No. 136, SECTION 2; 1996 Act No. 461, SECTION 4A; 2005 Act No. 161, SECTION 25.A, eff June 9, 2005; 2006 Act No. 386, SECTION 18.C, eff July 1, 2006; 2017 Act No. 40 (H.3516), SECTION 2, eff July 1, 2017.

Effect of Amendment

2017 Act No. 40, SECTION 2, added (D), providing that the department shall phase-in an increase of twelve cents on the user fee over six years."

Section III: This bill will go into effect on January 1, 2026, after passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented By Zachary Lingerman
Francis Marion University

Purpose: To enact the "South Carolina Prison Oversight and Accountability Act," to create an independent oversight board for state prisons, not within the South Carolina Department of Corrections.

Whereas, The South Carolina Department of Corrections (SCDC) faces persistent challenges, including understaffing, unsafe prison conditions, contraband smuggling, inadequate medical care, and high recidivism.

Whereas, Public confidence in the corrections system requires independent oversight to ensure safety, transparency, and accountability.

Whereas, Correctional officers, incarcerated individuals, and the public all benefit from a corrections system that emphasizes security, rehabilitation, and responsible governance.

Whereas, The purpose of this act is to create an independent body to monitor and report on prison operations, investigate complaints, and recommend reforms to improve the safety and effectiveness of South Carolina's correctional system.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: To add Chapter 29 - "Prison Oversight and Accountability" to Title 24 into the South Carolina Code of Law to read:

(A) The Board shall consist of nine members, appointed as followed:

1. *Three members shall be appointed by the governor;*
2. *Three members appointed by the General Assembly, with one appointed by the Speaker of the House, one appointed by the President of the Senate, and one jointly appointed by the minority leaders of both chambers;*
3. *Two members appointed by the Chief Justice of the South Carolina Supreme Court; and*
4. *One member who is a formerly incarcerated person or a family member of an incarcerated person, appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate.*

(B) Qualifications. Board membership shall reflect diverse expertise, including corrections, law enforcement, law, medicine, psychology, civil rights, and community advocacy.

(C) Terms

1. *Members shall serve four-year terms, with eligibility for reappointment to one additional term.*
2. *Initial appointments shall be staggered to ensure continuity of the Board.*

(D) Restrictions

1. *No member shall be an employee of the Department of Corrections during his or her term.*
2. *Board members may be removed only for cause, including misconduct or neglect of duty.*

Section II: *The Board shall have the following powers and responsibilities:*

(A) Conduct unannounced inspections of any state correctional facility, including interviews with staff and incarcerated individuals;

(B) Access all records, data, incident reports, and personnel files maintained by the Department of Corrections, except where prohibited by federal law;

(C) Receive, investigate, and resolve complaints from inmates, correctional officers, and the public;

(D) Issue subpoenas to compel the production of documents or testimony necessary to fulfill its duties;

(E) Publish annual reports on prison conditions, staffing, inmate healthcare, rehabilitation programs, and use of force incidents;

(F) Submit policy recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly to improve correctional outcomes, reduce recidivism, and enhance public safety.

Section III:

(A) The Board shall employ an Executive Director and such staff as may be necessary, including investigators, auditors, and legal counsel.

(B) The General Assembly shall appropriate funds annually for the Board's operations as a separate item in the state budget.

(C) The Board shall have independent control over its expenditures and personnel decisions.

Section IV:

(A) All reports and budget reports issued by the Board shall be made publicly available and published on the official state website.

(B) The Department of Corrections shall submit a written response to any Board recommendations within ninety (90) days of receipt.

(C) The Board shall hold at least two (2) public hearings each year to present findings and hear testimony from correctional officers, advocacy organizations, and members of the public.

Section V:

(A) No correctional officer, staff member, inmate, or family member shall face retaliation for providing information or testimony to the Board.

(B) Any retaliation shall be subject to civil penalties and disciplinary action as provided by law.

Section VI: This bill will go into effect on July 1st, 2025 upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Mary Leslee Moore
Francis Marion University

Purpose: To allow tattoo artists to perform tattoos on the face, neck, or head.

Whereas, Face tattoos carry the same health risks as other tattoos and,

Whereas, South Carolina is the only state in the United States that does not allow tattoo artists to perform tattoos on the face, neck, or head and,

Whereas, If we legalize face tattoos we can regulate the sterilization of materials, rather than people getting them in unsafe situations.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: To amend Section 44-34-100 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to read:

(A) It is unlawful for a person to perform or offer to perform tattooing upon a person under the age of eighteen years.

(B) The minor upon whom tattooing is performed, or the parent or legal guardian of that minor, or any other minor is not liable for punishment pursuant to this section.

(C) Tattooing may not be performed upon a person impaired by drugs or alcohol. A person impaired by drugs or alcohol is considered incapable of consenting to tattooing and incapable of understanding tattooing procedures and aftercare suggestions.

(D) Tattooing may not be performed on skin surfaces having a rash, pimples, boils, keloids, sunburn, open lesions, infections, or manifest any evidence of unhealthy conditions.

(E) ~~It is unlawful for a tattoo artist to tattoo any part of the head, face, or neck of another person.~~

(F) A person who violates a provision of this chapter is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be fined up to two thousand five hundred dollars or imprisoned up to one year, or both.

(G) All licensing fees and monetary penalties collected must be remitted to the Department of Health and Environmental Control in a separate and distinct account to be used solely to carry out and enforce the provisions of this chapter.

Section II: This bill will go into effect January 1, 2026 upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Charlotte Sellers
Francis Marion University

Purpose: To reduce the waiting period before juvenile records can be expunged.

Whereas, The current law states that youthful offenders can apply for their records to be expunged fifteen years after conviction. This can put some people well over thirty years old with a juvenile record; and,

Whereas, The implications of a juvenile record at that age can greatly affect education and job opportunities and lower the quality of life.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: Amend section 22-5-920 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to read as follows:

A bill to amend the code of laws of South Carolina by adding section 22-5-920 so as to authorize a defendant after ~~fifteen~~ *ten* years of a conviction as a youthful offender to apply to the circuit court for an order expunging the arrest and conviction of the defendant.

Section II: This bill will go into effect immediately upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Charity Turner
Francis Marion University

Purpose: To impose stronger penalties for crimes motivated by one's race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, or gender identity.

Whereas, The total number of hate crimes reported in SC in 2023 were 115; and,

Whereas, This is up from the 66 hate crimes committed in 2022; and,

Whereas, South Carolina experienced 61.5% of hate crimes committed because of one's race and 20% of hate crimes committed because of one's religion in 2022.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I : To add Section 16-3- 2410 to the South Carolina Code of Laws:

*"**Section 16-3-2410.** To impose stronger penalties for hate crimes.*

(a) Hate crimes by definition are a criminal offense, such as vandalism, arson, or assault, motivated by the offender's bias against a person or group's actual or perceived race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, or gender identity.

(b) Must be determined without a reasonable doubt that the offense was committed against a victim that was intentionally selected, in whole or in part, because of the offender's perception of the victim's race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, or gender identity.

(c) Harsher penalties may be applied when without a reasonable doubt an offense was motivated by one's perceived race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, or gender identity.

(1) Misdemeanors face an increased penalty of an additional one to two years of time served or an additional $1,000 to $2,000 fine on top of their original offense.

(2) Felonies face an increased penalty of an additional five to ten years of time served or an additional $10,000 fine on top of their original offense."

Section II: This Bill will take effect immediately, after passage by the General Assembly and signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Lana Clayton
Presbyterian College

Purpose: To update policies on avenues for illegal immigrants.

Whereas, This bill hopes to provide illegal immigrants with a visa/green card and possible employment or deportation if requirements aren't met; and,

Whereas, There are not enough visas and/or avenues for unemployed immigrants.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: To amend Section 41-8-20 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to add subsection (A), which shall read:

Illegal immigrants will have 90 days to obtain a job and must have proper documentation for why they crossed illegally instead of the proper legal avenues and how they crossed in illegally.

Section II: To amend Section 41-8-20 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to add subsection (B), which shall read:

If the persons obtain and maintain all requirements of finding and securing a job, provide a reason that is satisfactory on why they crossed illegally and how they crossed, and are willing to renew their visa/green card every two years until the tenth year, they will be awarded their visa/green card with birth citizenship rights passable to children, and will be able to sponsor three individuals based on circumstances.

Section III: To amend Section 41-8-20 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to add subsection (C), which shall read:

Potential housing shall be provided based on criteria still to be determined by the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce based on efforts to secure employment, funding for this will be allocated in the following years budget.

Section IV: To amend Section 41-8-20 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to strike the following:

~~All private employers who are required by federal law to complete and maintain federal employment eligibility verification forms or documents must register and participate in the E-Verify federal work authorization program, or its successor, to verify the work authorization of every new employee within three business days after employing a new employee. A private employer who does not comply with the requirements of this subsection violates the private employer's licenses.~~

Section IV: This bill will go into effect July 5th, 2026 upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Jacob Kerwin
Presbyterian College

Purpose: To amend the South Carolina marriage law section 20-3-10, to make the process of divorce faster and easier.

Whereas, The divorce process as it exists now is long and lengthy, often spanning years causing many couples to have to start over if they have too much contact with each other; and,

Whereas, The long process causes unnecessary emotional distress to the children of South Carolina; and,

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: To amend section 20-3-10 of the South Carolina laws to read as follows:

"No divorce from the bonds of matrimony shall be granted except upon one or more of the following grounds, to wit:

(1) adultery;

(2) desertion for a period of ~~one year~~ *three months*;

(3) physical cruelty;

(4) habitual drunkenness; provided, that this ground shall be construed to include habitual drunkenness caused by the use of any narcotic drug; or

(5) on the application of either party if and when the husband and wife have lived separate and apart without cohabitation for a period of ~~one year~~ *three months*. A plea of res judicata or of recrimination with respect to any other provision of this section shall not be a bar to either party obtaining a divorce on this ground."

Section II: This bill will go into effect January 1st, 2026 upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Alex Melgar
Presbyterian College

Purpose: To raise the fine for impersonating a state or local official, employee, or law enforcement officer.

Whereas, Impersonating a law enforcement officer or government official can be used to commit fraud, deceive citizens, and undermine public trust in government institutions; and,

Whereas, According to the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) Crime Report, individuals have falsely posed as officers to conduct unlawful stops, issue fake citations, and extort money from residents, thereby undermining public trust in law enforcement,

Whereas, With current tensions between law enforcement and the public already high, impersonating a law enforcement officer or government official only worsens the situation and further erodes trust in legitimate authorities; and,

Whereas, Ensuring stricter consequences for those impersonating officials reinforces the state's commitment to transparency, accountability, and the rule of law.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled, the following:

Section I: To amend Section 16-17-735 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to read in subsection (D):

"(D) It is unlawful for a person falsely to assert authority of law, in an attempt to intimidate or hinder a state or local official or employee or law enforcement officer in the discharge of official duties, by means of threats, harassment, physical abuse, or use of a sham legal process. A person violating this subsection is guilty of a felony and, upon conviction, must be fined not more than ~~ten thousand dollars~~ *fifteen thousand dollars*, or imprisoned not less than one year and not more than three years, or both."

Section IV: This bill will go into effect immediately upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Ladson Porter
Presbyterian College

Purpose: To amend SECTION 44-34-100. of the South Carolina laws so that it is lawful for a tattoo artist to tattoo any part of the head, face, or neck of another person.

Whereas, The First Amendment guarantees freedom of expression, which extends to tattoos, as long as both parties are consenting, the giving of face and neck tattoos is perfectly constitutional by the federal constitution; and,

Whereas, Tattoo artists in South Carolina are losing a potential revenue stream because of this law; and,

Whereas, South Carolina is the only state in the country to have a law such as this.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: To amend Section of the South Carolina Code of Laws to read:

"**SECTION 44-34-100.** Unlawful acts; penalties.

(A) It is unlawful for a person to perform or offer to perform tattooing upon a person under the age of eighteen years.

(B) The minor upon whom tattooing is performed, or the parent or legal guardian of that minor, or any other minor is not liable for punishment pursuant to this section.

(C) Tattooing may not be performed upon a person impaired by drugs or alcohol. A person impaired by drugs or alcohol is considered incapable of consenting to tattooing and incapable of understanding tattooing procedures and aftercare suggestions.

(D) Tattooing may not be performed on skin surfaces having a rash, pimples, boils, keloids, sunburn, open lesions, infections, or manifest any evidence of unhealthy conditions.

(E) ~~It is unlawful for a tattoo artist to tattoo any part of the head, face, or neck of another person.~~

(F) A person who violates a provision of this chapter is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be fined up to two thousand five hundred dollars or imprisoned up to one year, or both.

(G) All licensing fees and monetary penalties collected must be remitted to the Department of Health and Environmental Control in a separate and distinct account to be used solely to carry out and enforce the provisions of this chapter."

Section II: This bill will go into effect January, 1st 2026 upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Amelia Rhyne
Presbyterian College

Purpose: To amend the South Carolina code of Laws by adding section 59-1-373 requiring that every public school in the State, Grade 6th-12th hire a mental health counselor by the year 2030.

Whereas, South Carolina mental health counselor ratio is currently 1:593, nearly 81% higher than the recommended student to counselor ratio set by the The American School Consular Association; and,

Whereas, The current national average is 1:400 but countless states including South Carolina are working to decrease this number; and,

Whereas, South Carolina's long term goal is to have a student to counselor ratio of 1: 325; and,

Whereas, South Carolina School Behavior Health Academy found that students are 21 times more likely to use mental health resources available at school opposed to resources available to the general public; and,

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: To add Section 59-1-373 of The South Carolina Code of Laws which will read as follows;

"***Section 59-1-373*** *Mental Health Counselor requirement among public middle and high schools.*

(A) All public schools within the state, grade 6th-12th will be required to hire a mental health counselor by the year 2030.

(B) School districts will have the choice to either employ counselors directly, contract with private providers, or work with the State Department of Mental Health.

(C) Any school districts unable to afford the hiring of Mental Health Counselors may submit a request for financial aid to the Department of Education. Any request made must include a copy of district finances to prove financial need.

(D) The Department of Education shall reallocate up to 0.5% of its yearly funds each year until 2030 in order to sponsor districts unable to afford counselors."

Section II: To add Section 59-1-374 of The South Carolina Code of Laws to define terms.

"***Section 59-1-374.*** *Mental Health Counselor.*

(1) Mental health Counselor shall be defined as licensed counselor who has specialized training in assessing, diagnosing, and treating mental health issues and is licensed by the state."

Section III: This bill will go into effect Jan 1, 2026 upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Andy Robertson
Presbyterian College

Purpose: To amend Section 16-8-290 of the Code of Laws to require that law enforcement agencies notify the relevant parties of the release of a criminal gang member within ten days of the release and establish penalties for failure to comply.

Whereas, ensuring public safety and community awareness is a fundamental responsibility of law enforcement agencies, particularly regarding the release of individuals associated with criminal gang activity; and,

Whereas, timely notification to relevant parties about the release of a criminal gang member is essential for maintaining security, preventing recidivism, and fostering trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve; and,

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: Section 16-8-290 of the Code of Laws is amended to read:

"**Section 16-8-290.** Notification of police or sheriff of release of criminal gang member from prison.

When a criminal gang member is released from the custody of a jail, prison, or corrections facility, and the criminal gang member was in the custody of the jail, prison, or corrections facility for a violation of the provisions of this article, the jail, prison, or corrections facility must transmit notice of the release of the criminal gang member to the sheriff of the county in which the crime was committed *no later than ten days following the release of the individual.* Notice also must be given to a sheriff that the criminal gang member is being released and has provided an address within the jurisdiction of that sheriff for the county in which the criminal gang member intends to reside *within the same ten-day period.* If the crime was committed in a municipality, or if the criminal gang member will reside in a municipality upon release, that law enforcement agency must transmit the same notice to the chiefs of police of those municipalities *within ten days of the release.*

Failure to comply with the ten-day notification requirement may result in a fine of up to $100 for each violation, to be enforced by the appropriate state agency."

Section II: This act takes effect upon passage by the General Assembly and signature from the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Ava Westhart
Presbyterian College

Purpose: To amend Title 44, Chapter 96, by adding article **44-96-480** to require large retail food stores to establish food recovery agreements, prohibit the intentional and purposeful destruction of edible food, provide implementing and enforcement authority, protect donors consistent with existing South Carolina and federal law, and create reporting and modest tax incentive provisions.

Whereas, Each year, South Carolina supermarkets discard tons of edible food that could instead help feed thousands of residents in need; and aid in stocking food pantries and food banks, and,

Whereas, The French Republic has successfully implemented legislation requiring food processors, distributors, restaurants, and supermarkets to donate unsold, edible food to charitable organizations, significantly reducing waste while feeding vulnerable communities; and,

Whereas, Reducing food waste lowers methane emissions, conserves landfill space, restores lost revenue, aids in providing a constant food source in every community, and supports environmental sustainability; and,

Whereas, Encouraging organized partnerships between retail food stores and charitable food organizations and distributors will promote efficiency, compassion, and responsible environmental stewardship across the state, setting a precedent for others to follow.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: To amend Section 44-96 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to add article 44-96-480 which shall read:

Article 480 - Food Waste Reduction and Food Recovery Act

This article shall be known and may be cited as the 'South Carolina Food Waste Reduction and Food Recovery Act'.

Section II: To amend Section 44-96 of the South Carolina Code of Laws by adding Section 44-96-481:

Section 44-96-481. Definitions.

For purposes of this article:

(A) "Large retail food establishment" or "large supermarket" means any retail food store, grocery, or supermarket with a combined sales and storage area of at least 4000 square feet, or with annual gross food sales exceeding $2 million, as determined by DHEC regulation.

(B) "Edible food" means food that is safe for human consumption according to DHEC food safety standards but remains unsold, unserved, or surplus, and is within the proper period of consumption.

(C) "Food waste" means any food material intended for human consumption that is discarded, lost, or uneaten at the retail, foodservice, or consumer level, including expired products, produce rejected for appearance, or unsold prepared foods.

(D) "Food recovery organization" means a nonprofit 501(c)(3) or charitable entity that collects, stores, and redistributes donated food for human consumption.

(E) "Food reduction" means the process of preventing or minimizing the generation of food waste through improved inventory management, donation, redistribution, composting, or other diversion strategies consistent with DHEC policy.

(F) "Destroy" means to deliberately render edible food unfit or useless for human consumption by means including but not limited to: bleaching, pouring chemicals, compacting, or discarding edible food into waste receptacles without reasonable recovery attempts.

Section III: To amend Section 44-96 of the South Carolina Code of Laws by adding Section 44-96-482:

Section 44-96-482. Required Food Recovery Agreements.

(A) Each large retail food establishment operating in this State shall establish and maintain a written agreement with at least one food recovery organization for the donation and redistribution of edible, unsold food.

(B) If no such organization operates within a reasonable distance, the establishment shall document outreach efforts and notify DHEC.

Section IV: To amend Section 44-96 of the South Carolina Code of Laws by adding Section 44-96-483:

Section 44-96-483. Food Recovery Agreements and Responsibilities.

(A) Each large retail food establishment must enter into at least one written food recovery agreement with a registered food recovery organization or charity for the purpose of donating unsold, edible food.

(B) Each establishment must:

1. *Maintain written documentation of donation activities;*
2. *Provide quarterly reports to DHEC on total food donated and total food discarded;*
3. *Develop and submit a Food Reduction Plan within six months of enactment outlining strategies to reduce food waste within the company;*
4. *Train employees on food donation and safety best practices annually; and*
5. *Display visible signage promoting food recovery efforts and public awareness of the program.*

(C) DHEC shall develop a model food recovery agreement template and maintain a registry of approved partner organizations.

(D) DHEC shall also coordinate with the Department of Revenue to provide an annual tax deduction of up to 15% of the fair market value of donated food, not to exceed $50,000 per establishment.

Section V: To amend Section 44-96 of the South Carolina Code of Laws by adding Section 44-96-484:

Section 44-96-484. Recordkeeping and Reporting.

(A) Each establishment subject to this article shall maintain annual records of donated food volumes and recipient partners.

(B) DHEC shall collect and compile statewide reports on total edible food recovered and publish them annually to evaluate waste reduction progress.

Section VI: To amend Section 44-96 of the South Carolina Code of Laws by adding Section 44-96-485:

Section 44-96-485. Protection of Food Donors.

Food donations made in good faith under this article are protected under Title 15, Chapter 74 (Good Samaritan Food Donation Act), which states "The donor, in

good faith, of distressed food apparently fit for human consumption, to a bona fide charitable or nonprofit organization or food bank or prepared and perishable food program for free distribution, is not subject to criminal penalty or civil damages arising from the condition of the food or the nature or condition of the land entered, unless an injury is caused by gross negligence, recklessness, or intentional misconduct of the donor" and federal law, 42 U.S.C. §1791, limiting civil and criminal liability for food donors acting in good faith.

Section VII: To amend Section 44-96 of the South Carolina Code of Laws by adding Section 44-96-486:

Section 44-96-486. Enforcement and Penalties.

(A) DHEC shall have the authority to monitor compliance through annual inspections and audits of large retail food establishments.

(B) A first violation shall result in a written warning and a requirement to submit a corrective action plan within 30 days.

(C) A second violation shall result in a civil fine of not less than $2,500 and up to $10,000 per day of noncompliance.

(D) A third or subsequent violation within a three-year period shall result in:

1. *A mandatory civil penalty of $25,000 per day of continued violation; and*

2. *Possible suspension or revocation of the establishment's retail food permit under DHEC Regulation 61-25 until compliance is verified.*

(E) Each day a violation continues constitutes a separate offense.

(F) Collected fines shall be deposited into the South Carolina Food Recovery Grant Fund, established to assist small grocers and nonprofits with food donation logistics and refrigeration.

Section VIII: This bill will go into effect January 1, 2028 upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Taylor Mckenzie Wooten
Presbyterian College

Purpose: The purpose of this bill is to ensure that all campus police departments at colleges and universities across the State of South Carolina maintain high standards of cultural awareness, ethical conduct, and professional accountability through enhanced training and certification programs.

Whereas, Colleges and universities are intended to be safe and inclusive environments for students to learn, grow, and engage freely without fear of profiling or harassment; and,

Whereas, Campus police officers are responsible for upholding campus safety and the reputation of their institutions, yet must recognize the emotional, personal, and cultural boundaries of college students to prevent unnecessary escalation or intimidation; and,

Whereas, According to the National Registry of Exonerations (2023), Black Americans are seven times more likely to be wrongfully convicted than white Americans, and 61% of all exonerations in 2023 involved Black defendants, highlighting the impact of racial bias across all levels of law enforcement; and,

Whereas, The Innocence Project (2024) reports that 58% of DNA-based exonerations involve Black individuals, and 36% of wrongful convictions stem from cross-racial misidentifications, demonstrating the urgent need for comprehensive bias and awareness training; and,

Whereas, A 2022 study by the Journal of College Student Development found that 40% of Black and Latinx students felt unsafe or over-policed on college campuses compared to only 12% of white students, reflecting a disparity that weakens student trust in campus safety departments; and,

Whereas, Reports from institutions such as Yale University (2018), North Carolina A&T State University (2021), and the University of Virginia (2023) document instances where students of color were wrongfully stopped, questioned, or searched by campus officers due to implicit bias, further illustrating the harm caused by inadequate training and boundary awareness; and,

Whereas, Research from the U.S. Department of Justice (2023) indicates that 84% of police misconduct cases nationwide involve either racial bias or excessive use of force, suggesting the importance of early intervention through education and ongoing professional development; and,

Whereas, Many South Carolina colleges lack uniform standards requiring campus police to complete racial bias, de-escalation, and student boundary training, resulting in

inconsistent approaches that may endanger students or undermine campus culture; and implementing statewide, standardized education in bias prevention, communication, and student rights will strengthen accountability, protect students, and foster a culture of respect and fairness on college campuses.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: Amendment to the South Carolina Code of Laws.

This Act shall be added to the South Carolina Code of Laws, Title 59 (Education), Chapter 116 (Colleges and Institutions of Higher Learning), as Article 11 — Campus Police Training and Accountability Standards.

§59-116-150. Campus Police Cultural Competency and Accountability Requirements.

(A) All campus police departments operating under Title 59 shall comply with the requirements set forth in this act, including:

Annual cultural competency, bias prevention, and de-escalation training as outlined in Section II of this act;

Mandatory background screening and certification renewal as established in Section III and Section IV; and

Annual submission of training compliance reports to both the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) and the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education.

(B) Failure to comply with these requirements may result in disciplinary action by the Commission on Higher Education, including suspension of campus police accreditation and review of state funding eligibility.

(C) The Commission on Higher Education, in consultation with SLED, shall promulgate regulations necessary to implement and enforce the provisions of this section.

Section II: Training and Education Requirements.

Each college or university employing campus police officers shall:

1. Require annual training on implicit bias, racial and cultural competency, and diversity awareness specific to college environments;

2. Mandate de-escalation and trauma-informed training that prioritizes nonviolent communication, emotional intelligence, and understanding of student behavior;

3. Implement boundary awareness workshops focused on:

    - Respecting personal, emotional, and cultural space in residence halls and student areas;

    - Avoiding escalation during nonviolent or mental health-related situations;

    - Recognizing when to involve student affairs or counseling staff instead of pursuing criminal enforcement; and

4. Require all officers to obtain crisis-intervention certification with renewal every two years.

Section III: Hiring and Background Standards:

All institutions must conduct comprehensive screening for new or transferring officers, including:

- Review of prior disciplinary actions, use-of-force incidents, and civil rights complaints;

- Verification of complete employment history; and

- Clearance from any ongoing investigations related to bias or misconduct.

Section IV: Continuing Education and Accountability.

a. Officers must complete at least twelve (12) continuing education hours annually in equity-centered policing, student engagement, or restorative justice.

b. Annual certification renewals shall be submitted to the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) and the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education.

c. Colleges must provide annual compliance reports detailing officer participation, outcomes, and improvements.

Section V: Enforcement and Penalties.

Failure to comply with this act shall result in:

1. Suspension of the institution's campus police accreditation until corrective action is taken; and

2. Review of institutional funding eligibility by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education for repeated violations.

Section IV: This bill will go into effect January, 1 2026 upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Resolution
Presented by Damien Barber
University of South Carolina

Purpose: To encourage the United States Congress to amend Section 301 of The Immigration and Nationality Act.

Whereas, The biconditional statement in the citizenship clause of the Fourteenth Amendment has been largely ignored, only respecting the requirement of persons to be born on US soil; and,

Whereas, The secondary requirement that those persons also be subject to the jurisdiction of the United States has been inequitably assumed as implied by the mere presence of the person's parents within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States; and,

Whereas, This erroneous application of the citizenship clause is inconsistent with the legislative intent of those responsible for its adoption; and,

Whereas, Instances such as the anchor baby phenomenon, birth tourism, over-reliance on public assistance, as well as the vast majority of family sponsored visas are contributing factors which overwhelm our immigration system.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: Section 301 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 USC §1401) is amended to read:

(A) a person born in the United States~~, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof,~~ *to at least one parent who is a citizen or is lawfully domiciled within the United States at the time of said person's birth;*

Section II: Be it resolved upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Max Brabham
University of South Carolina

Purpose: To improve the safety of citizens on the road.

Whereas, A large amount of traffic violations go unreported in the State of South Carolina; and,

Whereas, Many departments within the State of South Carolina rely on citing tickets for funding continued operation; and,

Whereas, Citizens of the state encounter numerous traffic violations that could endanger their safety that go unreported and unpunished every day.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: To amend subsection (10) of Section 23-6-30 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to read

"*(10) Receive and review citizen reports, including dash camera footage or rear dash camera footage from private individuals, foundations, or agencies, for the purpose of carrying out the programs and objectives of this chapter."*

Section II: To add Section 23-6-540 to the South Carolina Code of Laws, which shall read read:

"***SECTION 23-6-540.*** *Department of citizen footage reports created."*

"(A) There is created a South Carolina Department of citizen footage reports within the Department of Public Safety. The South Carolina Department of citizen footage reports shall have such troopers, officers, agents and employees as the department may deem necessary and proper for the enforcement of the traffic and other related laws. Such officers and troopers shall be commissioned by the Governor upon the recommendation of the Director of the Department of Public Safety. Such commissions may be terminated at the pleasure of the director."

"(B) The department is authorized to receive dash cameras and rear dash cameras from private individuals, foundations, or agencies containing traffic violations submitted via a form that includes the time(s) within the reported footage of traffic violations and type of traffic violation(s). Upon doing so, the dash camera and/or rear dash cameras provided by the private individual, foundation, or agency, are returned to their respective owner. "

"(C) The department is charged with determining the veracity of the

footage reported and the jurisdiction responsible for policing the area in which the footage was captured. All footage will be verified by a sworn officer to lack any evidence of tampering or falsification, contain the necessary information in order to file a uniform traffic ticket such as the listed violation(s) and license plate number(s), and to have been captured within the state of South Carolina. Upon verification of all these factors, the sworn officer will order a ticket to the department of public safety."

"(D) Any Uniform traffic tickets ordered by law enforcement agencies subsequent to ***SECTION 56-7-30*** *shall have no more than 10% provided to the private individual, foundation, or agency that submitted the form. The remainder of the funds will be provided to the General Fund"*

"(E) The funds acquired via this method will be utilized to fund the Department of citizen footage reports."

"(G) The uniform traffic violations that private individuals, foundations, or agencies can report are those included within ***TITLE 56 CHAPTER 5:*** *Uniform Act Regulating Traffic on Highways with the exceptions of* ***SECTION 56-5-2930:*** *Operating motor vehicle while under influence of alcohol or drugs; penalties; enrollment in Alcohol and Drug Safety Action Program; prosecution.* ***SECTION 56-5-2945.*** *Offense of felony driving under the influence; penalties; "great bodily injury" defined.* ***SECTION 56-5-2950.****Implied consent to testing for alcohol or drugs; procedures; inference of DUI.* ***SECTION*** *56-5-1520.General rules as to maximum speed limits; lower speeds may be required.* ***SECTION 56-5-1570.*** *Special speed limitations for certain vehicles and places.*

"(H) At the end of each fiscal year of operation the department will be subject to a program evaluation report. A report compiled by the Department of citizen footage reports at the request of an investigating committee in order to determine fiscal accountability. In the event that the profits gathered by the Department of citizen footage reports are not sufficient to sustain itself, the department is declared defunct.

Section III: This bill will go into effect on Janurary 1st, 2027 upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Nailah Brown
University of South Carolina

Purpose: To require the implementation of a comprehensive financial literacy curriculum in all public high schools in South Carolina to prepare students for responsible financial decision-making in adulthood.

Whereas, Many young adults graduate from high school without basic knowledge of personal finance, such as budgeting, saving, credit management, taxes, and investing; and,

Whereas, Poor financial decisions due to a lack of financial education can lead to long-term economic hardship, including debt, bankruptcy, and limited upward mobility; and,

Whereas, Teaching financial literacy at an early age equips students with lifelong skills, promotes economic responsibility, and can reduce generational cycles of poverty.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: To amend Section 59-29-10 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to add subsection (A), which shall read:

(A) Beginning with the 2026–2027 academic year, all public high schools in South Carolina shall be required to offer a one-semester course in financial literacy as a graduation requirement. The course must the following topics at a minimum: budgeting, savings, checking accounts, credit and debt, loans, interest rates, taxes, insurance, and investment basics.

Section II: To amend Section 59-29-10 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to include the following provision:

"In addition to existing graduation requirements, each student shall complete at least one half-unit course in financial literacy prior to receiving a high school diploma."

Section III: The South Carolina Department of Education shall develop and distribute curriculum guidelines for the financial literacy course no later than July 1, 2026.

The Department shall also provide professional development resources to train educators in effective delivery of this curriculum.

Section IV: This bill will go into effect July 1, 2026, upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Kaleelah El-Amin
University of South Carolina

Purpose: To ensure that citizens across South Carolina have access to a diverse range of literary works that support critical thinking and intellectual growth.

Whereas, Since mid-2024, many books such as *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky and *All Boys Aren't Blue* by George M Johnson have been removed from public school and library shelves; and,

Whereas, Other books such as *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee and many others that have content that are essential to education, social development, and history face potential removal; and,

Whereas, Students and citizens of South Carolina deserve a vast selection of books that are full of different stories that challenge their minds, societal norms, and historic traditions.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: To amend Section 59-31-10 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to read:

"There shall be a library committee composed of the State Superintendent of Education, the director of the division of elementary education, the high school supervisor and four other members to be appointed by the State Superintendent of Education~~, two representing the elementary schools and two representing the high schools~~ *one representing the public elementary schools, one representing the public middle schools, one representing the public high schools, and one representing the public libraries*. All library books provided for under Article 3 of this chapter shall be selected from an approved list to be furnished the State Board of Education by the library committee."

Section II: To amend S.C. Code Regs. § 43-170(C) of the South Carolina Code of Laws to read:

"C) For purposes of this regulation, ''Age and Developmentally Appropriate'' means topics, messages, materials, and teaching methods suitable to particular ages or age groups of children and adolescents, based on developing cognitive, emotional, and behavioral capacity typical for the age or age group.~~ Instructional Material is not ''Age and Developmentally Appropriate'' for any age or age group of children if it includes descriptions or visual depictions of ''sexual conduct,'' as that term is defined by Section 16-15-305(C)(1)"~~

Section III: This bill will go into effect January 1st, 2026 upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Priya Frazier
University of South Carolina

Purpose: To provide free feminine hygiene products to public institutions of higher learning in the state of South Carolina.

Whereas, A University of South Carolina student's average estimated monthly budget is approximately $2,370; and,

Whereas, Free access to period care should be a human right; and,

Whereas, 20% of college students can't afford period products; and,

Whereas, Nearly half (48%) of female college students said they have struggled to access menstrual products due to costs or other barriers.

Whereas, In South Carolina, 1 in 6 women and girls between the ages of 12 and 44 live below the federal poverty line.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: To add Section 59-101-680 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, which shall read:

"**SECTION 59-101-680.** Providing feminine hygiene products in restrooms.

(A) Every public institution of higher learning shall maintain a supply and burden the cost of feminine hygiene products that menstruating students may use free of charge. The supply must be maintained in every academic building where classes are held within the restrooms."

Section II: This bill will go into effect on August 1, 2026, upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Sophie Fourqurean
University of South Carolina

Purpose: To provide electric bicycles and electric scooters near campus buildings for all college students in the state of South Carolina through the University Micromobility Program.

Whereas, Many students are unable to afford parking passes or parking meters located around college campuses; and,

Whereas, In 2023, there were enough parking spaces at the University of South Carolina for only 37.26% of the student population; and,

Whereas, Some students do not have cars as a means of transportation to get to campus, or would not be able to receive a parking pass; and,

Whereas, Most campuses are very spread out, making it difficult for some students to commute in a timely manner by walking; and,

Whereas, Students biking or scootering to class need a reliable and efficient way to do so; and,

Whereas, Electric scooters and bikes are more sustainable and reduce carbon emissions.

Whereas, Similar programs at institutions such as Auburn University have provided a successful program in which students are provided with electric bicycles and scooters.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: To amend Section 57-3-120 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to add subsection (5), which shall read:

"*(5) "Micromobility" means a type of lightweight transportation, such as bicycles or scooters. This includes electric bicycles or scooters used temporarily. Micromobility vehicles are to be recognized as public transportation as paired with the University Micromobility Program."*

Section II: To amend Section 57-3-110 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to read:

"**SECTION 57-3-110.** Powers and duties of the Department of Transportation.

"(7) instruct, assist, and cooperate with the agencies, departments, and bodies politic and legally constituted agencies of the State in street, highway, traffic,

micromobility vehicles, and mass transit matters when requested to do so, and, if requested by such government authorities, supervise or furnish engineering supervision for the construction and improvement of roads and bridges, provided such duties do not impair the attention to be given the highways in the state highway system;"

Section III: To amend Section 57-3-110 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to add subsection (13), which shall read:

"(13) facilitate the development and promotion of micromobility vehicles as public transportation systems through working with the Parking and Transportation Services of the University of South Carolina, Clemson University, Coastal Carolina University, College of Charleston, Charleston Southern University, Presbyterian College, and Francis Marion University, to provide all students access to these vehicles through the University Micromobility Program."

Section III: To amend Section 57-3-40 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to add subsection (E), which shall read:

"(E) The office of Public Transport is required to maintain the efficiency of the University Micromobility Program. This includes partnering with private companies for funding, establishing charging stations, bike and scooter racks, providing safe travel paths, ensuring compliance with current safety and traffic regulations, and developing an application through which students rent these vehicles for $0.25 a minute or for a monthly rate of $5."

Section III: To amend Section 57-3-210 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to read:

"**SECTION 57-3-210.** Contracting with private operators of public transit systems; coordination of funding and resources; annual progress report of department; reporting requirements for entities using public funds for public transportation purposes; exemptions.

(B)(1) The department shall plan and develop mechanisms for increasing coordination of funding streams and resources for public transportation at both the state and local levels to improve access and delivery of transportation services, *including the University Micromobility Program, and* especially in rural areas. The department shall work with each agency that provides funding for transportation, and ensure input in the process from major local providers of transportation services to the public, including current providers of coordinated public service."

Section IV: This bill will go into effect January 1, 2026 upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Brooke Kelly
University of South Carolina

Purpose: To amend South Carolina Tort Law to authorize civil actions against judicial officers when gross negligence or willful misconduct is proven and enact the "Judicial Accountability for Gross Negligence Act".

Whereas, On August 22, 2025, Iryna Zarutska was stabbed to death by a repeat offender while seated on a train in Charlotte, NC; and

Whereas, On September 15, 2025, a driver facing their seventh DUI slammed into the home of a family having dinner in Hampshire, Illinois; and

Whereas, Citizens are entitled to safety and protection from individuals who have demonstrated disregard for others' safety; and

Whereas, Both the above incidents, and others like them, were the result of a repeat offender that could have been prevented; and

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: To amend Section 15-78-20 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, which shall read:

"(b) The General Assembly in this chapter intends to grant the State, its political subdivisions, and employees, while acting within the scope of official duty, immunity from liability and suit for any tort except as waived by this chapter. The General Assembly additionally intends to provide for liability on the part of the State, its political subdivisions, and employees, while acting within the scope of official duty, only to the extent provided herein. All other immunities applicable to a governmental entity, its employees, and agents are expressly preserved. *However, nothing in this subsection shall be construed to grant immunity to magistrates, judges, or government entities for acts or omissions constituting gross negligence or willful misconduct in connection with a decision relating to offender release, parole, probation, or supervision.* The remedy provided by this chapter is the exclusive civil remedy available for any tort committed by a governmental entity, its employees, or its agents except as provided in SECTION 15-78-70(b).

(f) The provisions of this chapter establishing limitations on and exemptions to the liability of the State, its political subdivisions, and employees, while acting within the scope of official duty, must be liberally construed in favor of limiting the liability of the State, *except in cases involving a judicial officer whose acts or omissions constitute gross negligence or willful misconduct in connection with a decision relating to offender release, parole, probation, or supervision, in which case this chapter must be liberally construed in favor of allowing liability."*

Section II: To amend Section 15-78-40 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, which shall read:

"The State, an agency, a political subdivision, and a governmental entity are liable for their torts in the same manner and to the same extent as a private individual under like circumstances, subject to the limitations upon liability and damages, and exemptions from liability and damages, contained herein.
However, the waiver of immunity under this section includes acts or omissions of any magistrate, judge, or other judicial officer constituting gross negligence or willful misconduct in connection with decisions relating to offender release, parole, probation, or supervision, when such acts or omissions result in serious bodily injury or death."

Section III: To amend Section 15-78-60 of the South Carolina Code of Laws which shall read:

"*(41) Notwithstanding any other provisions outlined in this section, including subsection (21), immunity shall not apply to acts or omissions of a magistrate, judge, parole or probation officer, or any other governmental entity or employee that constitutes gross negligence or willful misconduct in connection with the decision of offender release, parole, probation, or supervision, when such acts or omissions cause serious bodily injury or death on or after the effective date of this act."*

Section IV: Be it enacted the following Title 15, Chapter 80 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to read:

"**Section 15-80-10.** Short Title.

This Act may be cited as the "Judicial Accountability for Gross Negligence Act."

Section 15-80-20. Definitions.

1. "judicial officer" refers to an individual who performs judicial functions including; judges, magistrates, masters-in-equity, and special referees, or other persons exercising judicial functions under state law.
2. "governmental entity" refers to an agency, department, or organization within the state, a county, or municipality.
3. "covered defendant" means an individual charged with, or convicted of a crime of violence, whether first offense or prior convictions.
4. "crime of violence" shall be defined as given in § 16-1-60 of the South Carolina Code of Laws.
5. "serious bodily injury" means bodily injury which involves substantial risk of death, permanent disfigurement, or results in protracted loss or impairment of a bodily organ or member.

Section 15-80-30. Authorization of Civil Action.

(a) If a judicial officer or governmental entity issues an order releasing a covered defendant on bail, or fails to detain or revoke supervision of a covered defendant, and that covered defendant causes serious bodily injury or death during such period of release, then the injured person (or immediate family member of that person if deceased), may bring civil action against the judge or governmental entity in an appropriate circuit court.
(b) In such action, judicial immunity or any other governmental immunity shall not be a defense.
(c) The statute of limitations for such action under this section is three years from the date of injury or death.

Section 15-80-40. Scope of Liability.

(a) Liability may be imposed if the plaintiff proves by a preponderance of the evidence that a judicial officer, or governmental entity;
1. Has knowledge of substantial risk that the covered defendant posed a significant danger of committing further violent acts; and
2. Acted with a high degree of fault — gross negligence, willful misconduct, or reckless disregard of a known risk; and
3. Such action or omission was a proximate cause of serious injury or death.

(b) Nothing in this Act shall be construed to impose liability for good-faith, or discretionary decisions in compliance with South Carolina law and court-supervised processes.

Section 15-80-50. Damages, Indemnity, and Procedures.

(a) Actions provided under this chapter are in compliance with the rules of tort liability, except as otherwise specified herein.
(b) The State of South Carolina may indemnify a judicial officer or governmental entity under the "Judicial Accountability for Gross Negligence Act" only when the conduct was proven to be grossly negligent.
(c) The claimant shall provide written notice detailing the judicial officer, or entity involved, facts of the proposed case, and claimed injuries, to the Attorney General and Chief Justice no fewer than 30 days prior to filing suit.

Section 15-80-60. Severability; Relation to South Carolina Tort Claim Act.

(a) If anything in this Act is found to be invalid, all other provisions shall remain effective.
(b) The "Judicial Accountability for Gross Negligence Act" supplements the South Carolina Torts Claims Act and does not affect other causes of action unless expressly stated and amended."

Section V: This bill will go into effect immediately, upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Chance Kirby
University of South Carolina

Purpose: To create a state-run bank.

Whereas, South Carolina currently does not have any direct loan programs outside of farming and housing through the Housing Authority Board; and,

Whereas, North Dakota is the only state in the country to have a state-run bank and makes an average of $30 million profit directly to funds each year; and,

Whereas, With federal student loan slowdowns this is the perfect opportunity to consolidate all loan and loan related programs into one dedicated state bank to gain profit and aid individual and economic development in South Carolina.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: **"*Section 34-45-01*.** *Purpose and establishment of Bank of South Carolina.*

1. For the purpose of encouraging and promoting agriculture, commerce, and industry, the state of South Carolina shall engage in the business of banking, and for that purpose shall maintain a system of banking owned, controlled, and operated by it, under the name of the Bank of South Carolina."

Section II: *"**Section 34-45-02**. Board of Financial Institutions to operate Bank - Business of Bank.*

1. *The Board of Financial Institutions shall operate, manage, and control the Bank of South Carolina, locate and maintain its places of business, of which the principal place must be within the state, and make and enforce orders, rules, regulations, and bylaws for the transaction of its business. The business and financial transactions of the Bank, in addition to other matters specified in this chapter, may include anything that any bank or bank holding company lawfully may do, except as it is restricted by the provisions of this chapter. This provision may not be held in any way to limit or qualify either the powers of the industrial commission granted by or the functions of said Bank as defined in this chapter. The powers of the Board of Financial Institutions and the functions of the Bank must be implemented through actions taken and policies adopted by the industrial commission."*

Section III: *"**Section 34-45-03**. Declaration and finding of public purpose - Bank of South Carolina advisory board of directors.*

1. *To enlist the help of private enterprise and to encourage more active use of the purposes for which the Bank of South Carolina was created, the governor shall appoint an advisory board of directors to the Bank of South Carolina consisting of seven persons, at least two of whom must be officers of banks, the majority*

of the stock of which is owned by South Carolina residents, and at least one of whom must be an officer of a state-chartered or federally chartered financial institution. The governor shall appoint a chairman, vice chairman, and secretary from the advisory board of directors. The term of director is four years. The industrial commission shall define the duties of the advisory board of directors."

Section IV*:* ***"Section 34-45-03****. Board to employ president and employees - Compensation, operation, and maintenance expenditures limited to appropriations, revenue, or capital.*

1. *The Board of Financial Institutions shall appoint a president, and may appoint and employ such subordinate officers, employees, and agents as it may judge expedient and in the interests of the state, and shall define the duties, designate the titles, and fix the compensation of all such persons. The commission may designate the president or other officers or employees as its agent in respect to the functions of the Bank, subject to its supervision, limitation, and control. The total compensation of such appointees and employees, together with other expenditures for the operation and maintenance of the Bank, shall remain within the appropriation, revenues, or capital lawfully available for such purposes."*

Section V: *"**Section 6-09-05**. Removal and discharge of appointees.*

1. *The Board of Financial Institutions may remove and discharge any and all persons appointed in the exercise of the powers granted by this chapter, whether by the board, or by the president of the Bank. All appointments and removals contemplated by this chapter must be made as the commission deems fit to promote the efficiency of the public service."*

Section VI: *"**Section 6-09-15**. Powers. The Bank of South Carolina may:*

1. *Make, purchase, guarantee, or hold loans:*
   a. *To state-chartered or federally chartered lending agencies or institutions or any other financial institutions.*
   b. *To holders of South Carolina certificates of deposit and savings accounts up to ninety percent of the value of the certificates and savings accounts offered as security.*
   c. *To actual farmers who are residents of this state, if the loans are secured by recorded mortgages, giving the Bank of South Carolina a first lien on real estate in South Carolina in amounts not to exceed eighty percent of the value of the security.*
   d. *That are insured or guaranteed in whole or in part by the United States, its agencies, or instrumentalities.*
   e. *Loans made pursuant to this subdivision may provide for interest that remains unpaid at the end of any period specified in the loan to be added to the principal amount of the debt and thereafter accumulate interest.*

f. To individuals or bank holding companies for the purpose of purchasing or refinancing the purchase of bank stock of a bank located in the state.

g. To nonprofit organizations that are exempt from federal taxation under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code [26 U.S.C. 501(c)(3)], the proceeds of the loans to be used for construction, reconstruction, repair, renovation, maintenance, and associated costs on property under the control of the parks and recreation department.

h. Obtained as security pledged for or originated in the restructuring of any other loan properly originated or participated in by the Bank. To instrumentalities of this state. As otherwise provided by this chapter or other statutes.

i. If the Bank is participating in the loan and the Bank deems it is in the best interests of the Bank to do so, it may purchase the remaining portion of the loan from a participating lender that is closed by regulatory action or from the receiver of the participating lender's assets.

j. To an investment company created for completing a trust preferred securities transaction for the benefit of a financial institution located in this state.

2. Purchase participation interests in loans made or held by banks, bank holding companies, state-chartered or federally chartered lending agencies or institutions, any other financial institutions, or any other entity that provides financial services and that meets underwriting standards that are generally accepted by state or federal financial regulatory agencies.

3. Invest its funds:

a. In conformity with policies of the industrial commission.

b. In a public venture capital corporation organized and doing business in this state through the purchase of shares of stock.

c. In South Carolina alternative and venture capital investments and early-stage capital funds, including the South Carolina development fund, incorporated, not to exceed fifteen million dollars, for the purpose of providing funds for investment in South Carolina alternative and venture capital investments, early-stage capital funds, and entrepreneurship awards. The Bank may invest a maximum of two hundred thousand dollars per biennium in South Carolina-based venture capital entities that make investments in companies located outside South Carolina. The Bank may allow for third-party management of the funds invested under this subdivision if the management is provided by the South Carolina development fund, incorporated, or a third party that is located in the state and that has demonstrated fund management experience.

4. Buy and sell federal funds.

5. Lease, assign, sell, exchange, transfer, convey, grant, pledge, or mortgage all real and personal property, title to which has been acquired in any manner.

6. Acquire real or personal property or property rights by purchase, lease, or exercise of the right of eminent domain and may construct, remodel, and repair buildings.

7. *Receive deposits from any source and deposit its funds in any bank or other financial institution.*
8. *Perform all acts and do all things necessary, convenient, advisable, or desirable to carry out the powers expressly granted or necessarily implied in this chapter through or by means of its president, officers, agents, or employees or by contracts with any person, firm, or corporation.*
9. *Purchase mortgage loans on real residential property originated by financial institutions."*

Section VII: This bill will go into effect January 1st 2028 upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the governor.

A Bill
Presented by Saran Kouyate
University of South Carolina

Purpose: To protect the elderly population in South Carolina from neglectful care practices and to ensure proper resident care by establishing stronger CNA streaming requirements in nursing homes.

Whereas, Research shows that lower CNA to resident ratios and higher care hours per resident in nursing home leads to improved resident health, reduced falls, and fewer pressure ulcers; and,

Whereas, States such as Oregon, New York, and California have enacted stronger CNA staffing standards that ensure more hands-on care; and,

Whereas, South Carolina should strengthen its standards to protect the elderly populations in nursing home and support CNAs and other healthcare providers in their caregiving roles.

Therefore: Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: To amend Section 44-7-262 of the South Carolina Code of Laws which shall read:

"SECTION 44-7-262. Minimum resident-staff ratios for nursing homes.

(A) As a condition of licensure, in addition to the number of licensed nursing personnel required by R61-17, or any other regulation, a nursing home must provide at a minimum these resident-staff ratios for staff who provide nursing care:

(1) ~~9~~ *7* to 1 for shift 1;

(2) ~~13~~ *10* to 1 for shift 2;

(3) ~~22~~ *15* to 1 for shift 3.

These ratios shall not be met by non-nursing support staff but must be fulfilled by Certified Nursing Assistants providing direct care.

Section II: This bill will go into effect January 1st, 2027, upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Maddi Nagel
University of South Carolina

Purpose: To raise the minimum age for valid marriage to eighteen years of age.

Whereas, According to the International Journal of Epidemiology, girls who are married before the age of eighteen are almost fifty percent more likely to experience intimate partner violence than those who are married as adults: and,

Whereas, Adolescent girls who marry before the age of eighteen can be more prone to anxiety and mood disorders; and,

Whereas, Parental consent is not a protective measure, as it can sway judicial decisions at the expense of the child's consent.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: To amend Section 20-1-100 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to read:

"**SECTION 20-1-100.** Minimum age for valid marriage.

Any person under the age of ~~sixteen~~ *eighteen* is not capable of entering into a valid marriage, and all marriages hereinafter entered into by such persons are void ab initio. A common-law marriage hereinafter entered into by a person under the age of ~~sixteen~~ *eighteen* is void ab initio."

Section II: To amend Section 20-1-250 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to read:

"**SECTION 20-1-250.** Applicants under age of ~~consent; consent of relative or guardian.~~ *majority*

A marriage license must not be issued when either applicant is under the age of ~~sixteen~~ *eighteen*. ~~When either applicant is between the ages of sixteen to eighteen and that applicant resides with father, mother, other relative, or guardian, the probate judge or other officer authorized to issue marriage licenses shall not issue a license for the marriage until furnished with a sworn affidavit signed by the father, mother, other relative, or guardian giving consent to the marriage~~."

Section III: This bill will go into effect immediately upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Reagan Quast
University of South Carolina

Purpose: To create new public libraries in South Carolina.

Whereas, Libraries serve as community centers; and,

Whereas, Libraries provide access to public computers and internet; and,

Whereas, Libraries can increase literacy rates and promote learning among children and adults; and,

Whereas, In 2019, there was an average of 1 public library for every 19,000 people; and,

Whereas, South Carolina has the 10th lowest number of public libraries.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: To amend Section 4-9-35 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to add section (D), which shall read:

"*(D) Each county council shall prior to January 1, 2030, by ordinance establish within the county one public library for every 20,000 residents. The number of public libraries required per county will be reevaluated every 10 years in accordance with population reports from the United States Census Bureau.*

(1) Funding will be provided to each county based on population and taken from the general fund."

Section II: This bill will go into effect January 1, 2027 upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Doug Ruff
University of South Carolina

Purpose: To reform the composition of the Judicial Merit Selection Commission (hereinafter referred to as the JMSC) in order to eliminate the membership of legislators from the commission.

Whereas, The Judicial Merit Selection Commission (JMSC) is responsible for the initial screening and recommendation of candidates for election as a judge or justice of the state court system or administrative law court; and,

Whereas, Because of the current composition of the JMSC, members of the General Assembly, especially those that work as attorneys, have the potential to exercise undue and unfair influence over the process of recommending candidates who later go before the General Assembly for election to a seat on the judiciary; and,

Whereas, Ensuring a more neutral and impartial screening and recommendation process for judicial candidates, and eliminating the influence of legislators from the recommendation process is important for the continued legitimacy of and public confidence in the state's judicial system.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: To amend Section 2-19-5 Subsection A of the South Carolina Code of Laws to read:

"**SECTION 2-19-5.** South Carolina Judicial Merit Selection Commission creation; appointment; terms.

(A) There is created the South Carolina Judicial Merit Selection Commission composed of twelve members who must be appointed as follows:

(1) ~~four members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and of these appointments:~~

~~(a) three members must be members of the House of Representatives; and~~

~~(b) one members must be selected from the South Carolina Bar who must be a members of the Bar in good standing with ten years' experience in the practice of law;~~

~~(2) four members appointed by the Senate and of these appointments:~~

~~(a) two members must be appointed by the President of the Senate one of whom must be a member of the Senate and one of whom must be selected from the South Carolina Bar and must be a member in good standing with ten years' experience in the practice of law; and~~

~~(b) two members must be appointed by the Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, both of whom must be members of the Senate; and~~

(3) *twelve* ~~four~~ members appointed by the Governor ~~all~~ *eight* of which must be members in good standing of the South Carolina Bar with at least ten years' experience in the practice of law."

Section II: This bill will go into effect June 1, 2026 upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Maddi Nagel and Derrick Wargo
The University of South Carolina

Purpose: To ease restrictions on abortion for women in South Carolina.

Whereas, South Carolina is one of six states with early gestational limits on abortion; and,

Whereas, Most women won't find out if they're pregnant until 2-4 weeks after conception (NPR); and,

Whereas, States with abortion restrictions tend to have higher maternal mortality rates (Tulane University); and,

Whereas, States with abortion bans have higher infant mortality rates than expected with no bans (Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health); and,

Whereas, Restrictions of abortion to when a fetal heartbeat can be detected leads to fear of penalties for the physician performing the abortion; and,

Whereas, Many mothers cannot afford to raise children in already impoverished areas of the United States; and,

Whereas, Many women are not in a position to start a family, bringing undue burden on parents and setting their children up in a disadvantageous position.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: To amend Section 44-41-30 Section C of the South Carolina Code of Laws, which shall read:

"(C) Notwithstanding the consent required in subsections (A) and (B) consent must be waived if:

(1) a physician determines that a medical emergency exists involving the life of or grave physical injury to the pregnant woman; or

(2) the pregnancy is the result of incest*; or*

(3) the pregnant individual is a minor under the age of fourteen years."

Section II: To amend Section 44-41-31 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to read:

"(3) the attending physician or his agent has obtained the informed signed written consent of the minor and has received the order of the court obtained by the minor pursuant to this chapter*, or*

(4) the minor is under the age of fourteen years."

Section III: To reinstate Title 44, Chapter 41, Article 5 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to read:

"Article 5
South Carolina Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act

SECTION 44-41-410. This article may be cited as the 'South Carolina Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act'.

SECTION 44-41-420. The General Assembly makes the following findings:

(1) Pain receptors (nociceptors) are present throughout the unborn child's entire body and nerves link these receptors to the brain's thalamus and subcortical plate by no later than twenty weeks.

(2) By eight weeks after fertilization, the unborn child reacts to touch. After twenty weeks, the unborn child reacts to stimuli that would be recognized as painful if applied to an adult human, for example, by recoiling.

(3) Substantial evidence indicates that structures used for pain processing in early development differ from those of adults, using different neural elements available at specific times during development, such as the subcortical plate, to fulfill the role of pain processing.

(4) The position, asserted by some medical experts, that the unborn child remains in a coma-like sleep state that precludes the unborn child experiencing pain is inconsistent with the documented reaction of unborn children to painful stimuli and with the experience of fetal surgeons who have found it necessary to sedate the unborn child with anesthesia to prevent the unborn child from thrashing about in reaction to invasive surgery.

(5) Consequently, there is substantial medical evidence that an unborn child is capable of experiencing pain by twenty weeks after fertilization.

(6) It is the purpose of the State to assert a compelling state interest in protecting the lives of unborn children from the stage at which substantial medical evidence indicates that they are capable of feeling pain.

(7) South Carolina's compelling state interest in protecting the lives of unborn children from the stage at which substantial medical evidence indicates that they are capable of feeling pain is intended to be separate from and independent of South Carolina's compelling state interest in protecting the lives of unborn children from the stage of viability, and neither state interest is intended to replace the other.

SECTION 44-41-430. For the purposes of this article:

(1) 'Abortion' means the use or prescription of any instrument, medicine, drug, or any other substance or device:

(a) to intentionally kill the unborn child of a woman known to be pregnant; or
(b) to intentionally prematurely terminate the pregnancy of a woman known to be pregnant, with an intention other than to increase the probability of a live birth or of preserving the life or health of the child after live birth.

(2) 'Attempt to perform or induce an abortion' means an act, or an omission of a statutorily required act, that, under the circumstances as the actor believes them to be, constitutes a substantial step in a course of conduct planned to culminate in Environmental Control.the performance or induction of an abortion in this State in violation of this article.

(3) 'Department' means the South Carolina Department of Health, and

(4) 'Fertilization' means the fusion of a human spermatozoon with a human ovum.

(5) 'Fetal anomaly' means that, in reasonable medical judgment, the unborn child has a profound and irremediable congenital or chromosomal anomaly that, with or without the provision of life-preserving treatment, would be incompatible with sustaining life after birth.

(6) 'Medical emergency' means a condition that, in reasonable medical judgment, so complicates the medical condition of the pregnant woman that it necessitates the immediate abortion of her pregnancy without first determining post-fertilization age to avert her death or for which the delay necessary to determine post-fertilization age will create serious risk of substantial and irreversible physical impairment of a major bodily function, not including psychological or emotional conditions. No condition must be considered a medical emergency if based on a claim or diagnosis that the woman will engage in conduct which she intends to result in her death or in substantial and irreversible physical impairment of a major bodily function.

(7) 'Physician' means any person licensed to practice medicine and surgery or osteopathic medicine and surgery in this State.

(8) 'Post-fertilization age' means the age of the unborn child as calculated from the fusion of a human spermatozoon with a human ovum.

(9) 'Probable post-fertilization age of the unborn child' means what, in reasonable medical judgment, will with reasonable probability be the post-fertilization age of the unborn child at the time the abortion is planned to be performed or induced.

(10) 'Reasonable medical judgment' means a medical judgment that would be made by a reasonably prudent physician, knowledgeable about the case and the treatment possibilities with respect to the medical conditions involved.

(11) 'Unborn child' or 'fetus' each means an individual organism of the species homo sapiens from fertilization until live birth.

SECTION 44-41-440. Except in the case of a medical emergency or fetal anomaly, no abortion must be performed or induced or be attempted to be performed or induced unless the physician performing or inducing it has first made a determination of the probable post-fertilization age of the unborn child or relied upon such a determination made by another physician. In making such a determination, the physician shall make such inquiries of the woman and perform or cause to be performed such medical examinations and tests as a reasonably prudent physician, knowledgeable about the case and the medical conditions involved, would consider necessary to perform in making an accurate diagnosis with respect to post-fertilization age.

SECTION 44-41-450. (A) No person shall perform or induce or attempt to perform or induce an abortion upon a woman when it has been determined, by the physician performing or inducing or attempting to perform or induce the abortion or by another physician upon whose determination that physician relies, that the probable post-fertilization age of the woman's unborn child is twenty or more weeks, except in the case of fetal anomaly, or in reasonable medical judgment, she has a condition which so complicates her medical condition as to necessitate the abortion of her pregnancy to avert her death or to avert serious risk of substantial and irreversible physical impairment of a major bodily function, not including psychological or emotional conditions. No such greater risk must be considered to exist if it is based on a claim or diagnosis that the woman will engage in conduct which she intends to result in her death or in substantial and irreversible physical impairment of a major bodily function.

(B) When an abortion upon a woman whose unborn child has been determined to have a probable post-fertilization age of twenty or more weeks is not prohibited by subsection (A), the physician shall terminate the pregnancy in the manner

which, in reasonable medical judgment, provides the best opportunity for the unborn child to survive, unless, in reasonable medical judgment, termination of the pregnancy in that manner would pose a greater risk either of the death of the pregnant woman or of the substantial and irreversible physical impairment of a major bodily function, not including psychological or emotional conditions, of the woman than would other available methods. No such greater risk must be considered to exist if it is based on a claim or diagnosis that the woman will engage in conduct which she intends to result in her death or in substantial and irreversible physical impairment of a major bodily function."

Section IV: To amend Section 44-41-650 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to read:

"**SECTION 44-41-650**. Exceptions for rape and incest; physician required to notify law enforcement.
(A) A physician may perform, induce, or attempt to perform or induce an abortion on a pregnant woman after the ~~fetal heartbeat has been detected~~ *post-fertilization age of twenty or more weeks* in accordance with Section 44-41-630 if:

(1) the pregnancy is the result of rape, and the probable gestational age of the unborn child is not more than ~~twelve weeks~~ *twenty four weeks*; or

(2) the pregnancy is the result of incest, and the probable gestational age of the unborn child is not more than ~~twelve weeks~~ *twenty four weeks*."

Section V: To remove Title 44, Chapter 41, Article Six of the South Carolina Code of Laws.

Section VI: This bill will go into effect on July 1st, 2026, upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

A Bill
Presented by Ryan Young
University of South Carolina

Purpose: A bill to combat sex trafficking by making it easier for victims of sex trafficking to report crimes committed against them.

Whereas, Persons who engage in sexual activity for payment, forced or not, are often reluctant to report being the victim of abuse due to fear of prosecution for prostitution in jurisdictions like South Carolina; and

Whereas, Sex trafficking is a growing problem across the US, including in South Carolina, where almost 400 minors were suspected to have been trafficked in 2023, which is still believed to be a gross undercount.

Therefore, Be it enacted by the South Carolina Student Legislature in regular session assembled the following:

Section I: To amend section 16-15-90, subsections (1) and (5) of the South Carolina Code of Laws to read the following:

"(1) ~~Engage in prostitution~~ Pay for prostitution;

(5) Reside in, enter or remain in any place, structure, building, vehicle, trailer or conveyance for the purpose of ~~lewdness, assignation or prostitution~~ paying for prostitution;"

Section II: This bill will go into effect June 30th, 2026, upon passage by the General Assembly and the signature of the Governor.

The Bylaws of the South Carolina Student Legislature

Article I
Meetings

Section 1. Notice of all meetings shall be given no less than two weeks prior to the meeting.

Section 2. Spring Session.

(A) Each Delegation in attendance is entitled to one vote for the following purposes:

1. Amendments or revisions of the Bylaws;

2. Election of Fall Session Committee Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen in accordance with Article V of the Bylaws; and

3. Any other business deemed by the Executive Committee to be pertinent to the South Carolina Student Legislature.

Section 3. Fall Session.

(A) No more than two (2) of these delegates shall serve in the Senate and the remainder shall compose the House Delegation. Each serving delegate shall be entitled to one vote.

(B) Delegates must be present in order to cast a vote. A delegation's designated Senate Proxy may step in to vote for a missing Senator provided that the student pays his registration fees prior to voting in accordance with Article I, Section 3, Subsection E of this document.

(C) The Secretary of State and the Attorney General shall obtain from each member delegation a statement signed by the registrar of that institution listing the number of full-time undergraduate students.

1. The enrollment statement must be received before Fall Session ends on the final day in order for the delegation to receive its full quota of members.

2. The Secretary of State and the Attorney General shall calculate membership allowed for each delegation and inform the delegation chairmen of their findings regarding the populations and votes

allotted to each school. Reapportionment of the chairmen shall occur at every Fall Session.

3. The Secretary of State and the Attorney General shall make the number of voting members as well as the total number of full-time undergraduate students available to all of the delegations have membership in the South Carolina Student Legislature.

4. Any delegation tardy in the provision of its enrollment statement or found falsifying its enrollment statement shall be punished by the suspension of member votes. The Executive Committee shall determine the specific number.

(D) Legislation.

1. Legislation shall be turned in no later than the date appointed by order of the Executive Committee;

2. Any legislation not found in the Bill Book must:

i. Be approved by the Executive Committee before the last day of session.

ii. Approved legislation will only take place upon completion of all legislation found in the bill book.

iii. All legislation presented to the Governor will be signed or vetoed and returned to the chamber in which it originated prior to the time scheduled for adjournment of the Senate and House. Each chamber may, by a two-thirds vote, extend its session and consider only those pieces of legislation vetoed and returned by the Governor.

iv. Any legislation passed by the Senate and House and vetoed by the Governor, subsequent to the adjournment of the regular session of the Senate and House, may be sent to the chamber in which it originated during an extended session.

v. Any legislation passed by the Senate and the House and signed or neither signed nor vetoed by the Governor within a month after the final adjournment of the Senate and House, after the final adjournment of the Senate and House, including any extended session, shall be considered approved by the Governor and ordered printed in the "Journal of Acts and Resolutions."

(E) Members of the Senate and the House of Representatives may not serve in the opposite chamber unless they are their school's designated Senate Proxy. Each school will designate one member as its Senate Proxy. This proxy may step in for one of its Delegation's senators if that Senator is not on the floor. Each school will submit its Senate Proxy to the Secretary of State and President of the Senate on the first day of Session. However, the Senate Proxy may not vote or participate in debate on bills he has already debated and voted on in the House of Representatives.

Section 4. Interim meetings.

(A) Interim meetings shall be called by the Executive Committee between sessions in order to carry on the business of the organization.

(B) The executive committee shall call at least two Interim meetings a year.

(C) On all items of business conducted at an Interim Meeting, each delegation in attendance shall be allowed one vote.

Section 5. Establishing quorum.

(A) At the beginning of each Call to Order, a role call shall be done to establish quorum.

(B) Quorum shall mean two-thirds of all voting delegates present at the Call to Order.

Article II
Supreme Court

Section 1. Election of members of the Supreme Court.

(A) The members of the Supreme Court shall be appointed by the Governor once vacancies open with the advice and consent of a majority of Delegation Chairs. No more than two justices shall be chosen from the same delegation.

(B) The Supreme Court shall consist of exactly five members.

Article III
Committees

Section 1. The Executive Committee shall:

(A) Consist of the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the House, President of the Senate, and the Speaker Pro Tempore of the House and shall be chaired by the Governor;

(B) Approve all officers appointed by the Governor;

(C) Call all meetings of the South Carolina Student Legislature;

(D) Be responsible to plan all meetings of the South Carolina Student Legislature;

(E) Review and approve an annual budget; and

(F) Appoint one member from every delegation except the delegations of the Chief Justice and Attorney General to the Constitutional Committee.

Section 2. The Finance Committee shall:

(A) Consist of the Treasurer, the Governor, and the Speaker of the House and be chaired by the Treasurer;

(B) Prepare an annual budget no later than the last Interim meeting before Fall Session;

(C) Set and levy registration fees;

(D) Solicit funds for South Carolina Student Legislature;

(E) Approve all disbursements and reimbursements; and

(F) Review and revise the Treasurer Manual before Spring Session annually.

Section 3. The Trial Committee.

(A) The committee shall consist of the Chief Justice of the Court and all Delegation Chairmen of the member schools, and shall be chaired by the Chief Justice of the Court.

(B) The committee shall hear all parties involved in an impeachment and shall convict or acquit the accused;

(C) In the event that the Chief Justice of the court is unable to serve under this provision, the remaining committee members shall replace him with an Associate Justice to be confirmed by the Executive Committee.

(D) In the event that a Delegation Chairman is unable to serve, the Vice-Chairmen from his delegation shall replace him.

(E) Quorum for the Trial Committee will be three-fourths (¾) of the member schools.

(F) The Chief Justice of the Court shall call all meetings of the Trial Committee and shall give notice as prescribed in Article VI, Section 1.

(G) The accused and the Attorney General shall submit a list of witnesses to the Chief Justice of the Court, who shall summon them to the trial.

Section 4. The Constitutional Committee shall:

(A) Consist of the Chief Justice of the Court, the Attorney General, and one member at large from every delegation except the delegations of the Chief Justice and Attorney General and shall be chaired by the Chief Justice of the Court:

1. While each delegation, except those of the Chief Justice and Attorney General, has the right to be represented in the Constitutional Committee, they may waive their right to be represented in the Committee with the consent of the Governor.

2. Any school may waive their right to be represented in the Constitution Committee by signing a form which reads: “I hereby waive my right to participate in the Constitutional Committee of South Carolina Student Legislature for the meeting held on [insert date].”

3. Any school that waives their right by signing the aforementioned form will not be included in quorum calculations for the Committee, which is a majority of possible members of the Constitutional Committee.

(B) Not allow any of the members-at-large to be from the same school as the Chief Justice of the Court or the Attorney General.

(C) Review, prepare, and circulate any needed amendments or revisions to the Constitution and the Bylaws.

Section 5. The Election and Awards Committee.

(A) The committee shall consist of the chairmen of each member delegation.

(B) The committee shall be chaired by the most senior delegation chair by number of sessions attended.

(C) No member of the Committee who is running for office shall continue to serve on the Committee. In this case, the respective Vice Chair of the delegation will take his place on the Committee. In the Case that the Vice Chair is also running for office, the replacement shall be appointed by the Governor with the consent of the Executive Committee.

(D) Any member of the Committee who has been nominated for an award may not vote on the award(s) that they have been nominated for. In this case, the Committee member will step away to allow for discussion on their nomination. In the event that any member of the Committee belongs to a delegation who is eligible for an award as an entire delegation, the Committee member may not vote for their delegation and will step away to allow discussion on the nomination of their delegation.

(E) The Secretary of State shall assist the Committee in making preparations and shall deliver the results to the Governor.

(F) The Secretary of State shall count the ballots in all elections. They are also allowed to appoint one Committee member at large to help with this, with the majority consent of the Committee.

(G) The committee shall oversee the qualification for awards in accordance to Article XIII of the Constitution of the South Carolina Student Legislature

(H) The committee shall submit a teller's report as discussed in Section 44 of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised through the Secretary of State and the Committee Chairman. This report shall be delivered to the Executive Committee and shall be available to any delegation upon request.

Section 6. The Conference Committee shall:

(A) Consist of seven members, three Senators and four Representatives, appointed by their respective presiding officers; and

(B) Resolve all differences between legislation passed by both chambers.

Section 7. The Fall Session committees.

(A) The Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of the seven committees shall be elected at Spring Session in accordance with Article V of the Bylaws.

(B) The Fall Session committees shall consider all legislation and shall report on the legislation to the respective officers of the House and Senate.

(C) The Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of each committee shall rank all legislation passed through their committee for review by the officers of the chambers.

Article IV
Budget

Section 1. The Executive Committee shall ensure, through the operating budget presented, that the annual expenditure of the South Carolina Student Legislature does not exceed the organization's annual revenue. The budget shall include all annual expenditures greater than 25 dollars.

Section 2. The Treasurer shall make available for review an annual financial report upon request. The review shall be available by Fall Session.

Section 3. The presentation of the operational budget shall be at the first joint session of the first full eight-hour day of Fall Session. The new operating budget must be passed by the South Carolina Student Legislature General Assembly prior to the conclusion of Fall Session.

Section 4. In the event any one of (1) the operating budget, (2) actual revenues, or (3) actual expenditures exceeds $15,000, the Comptroller General shall provide for and obtain an annual external audit of the finances of the South Carolina Student Legislature by a reputable certified public accountant for so long as the budget continues to exceed $15,000 or as long as the Executive Committee deems it necessary. The auditor's report shall be emailed to all delegation chairs within two days of its receipt and shall be presented and explained by the Comptroller General to the General Assembly as the first order of business at the first joint session of the first full day of the next Fall or Spring Session. The audit report shall also be made available on the South Carolina Student Legislature website.

Article V
Nominations

Section 1. Nominations shall be by the Secretary of State each day of Spring Session for Chairman and Vice Chairman of each committee listed in Article III. The candidates will be listed on the Ballot in alphabetical order by last name. Chairmen and Vice Chairmen shall be elected by secret ballot. Each Delegation shall be given one vote for each chair and vice chair position. Ballots shall be distributed, collected, counted, and certified by the Secretary of State, the Chief Justice, and the Attorney General on the last day of Spring Session. Results of these elections shall be announced to the delegates before the conclusion of Spring Session.

Section 2. The officers shall be elected by secret ballot, which shall be given to the chair of each Delegation to be completed in accordance with such rules as may have been adopted by the Delegation. The completed ballot shall be submitted to the Election and Awards Committee during the first joint session on the last day of the session as prescribed the Election and Awards Committee.

Section 3. Ballots may be distributed electronically through an internet poll. In the case that internet is not available, ballots will be distributed by paper.

Article VI
Discipline of Officers and Appointments

Section 1. Impeachment.

(A) An impeached officer or appointee shall remain in office and he shall have until the next meeting of the members to prepare a defense. The Executive Committee will determine the time between the two meetings thus stated. The officer or appointee in question will have a minimum of 72 hours to prepare a defense.

(B) Following impeachment charges, a hearing consisting of no less than three quarters (¾) of the members, shall be held to consider all charges made against the impeached officer or appointee.

(C) At the hearing all charges and evidence shall be brought forth in front of the Trial Committee. The impeached officer or appointee shall be afforded a maximum time allotted to deliver a defense, and shall have final remarks before a vote is taken.

(D) Upon a three quarters (¾) vote of the Trial Committee present, the impeached officer or appointee shall be removed from office.

(E) Any vacancies by the discipline of the Trial Committee shall be filled according to the method laid out in the Constitution and Bylaws of the South Carolina Student Legislature.

Article VII
Personal Liability

Section 1. Agents in Due Course.

(A) An agent of SCSL, who having been given written authority by the Governor or the Executive Committee to contractually obligate the organization, shall sign all contracts in the name of South Carolina Student

Legislature. South Carolina shall indemnify and hold harmless any agent acting on this authority.

Article VIII
State of Emergency

Section 1. In the case of a natural disaster, pandemic, epidemic, or any other act of God, the Governor may call a State of Emergency and cancel Fall or Spring session.

(A) The State of Emergency ordered can be overruled by a three-fourths vote of Delegation Chairs.

(B) The Governor may call a State of Emergency retroactively for a session that was cancelled prior to the ratification of this amendment.

Section 2. In the case of a cancelled Spring Session:

(A) The Constitution Committee, Executive Committee, Delegation Chairs, or any other committee listed in the Constitution and Bylaws may meet to conduct business virtually or in a manner deemed safe by the Governor and Committee Chair.

(B) Legislative Committee Chairs will be appointed by the Executive Committee with a three-fourths confirmation vote of Delegation Chairs.

(C) Delegates may use the cancelled Spring Session towards their session requirement to run for office.

Section 3. In the case of a cancelled Fall Session:

(A) Any Constitutional amendments passed by the Constitution Committee that did not have the chance to be passed by the body may be passed provisionally by a two-thirds vote of Delegation Chairs. These amendments will be provisionally enacted until the entire legislative body meets again. Provisional amendments must be ratified by the body pursuant to Article XV, Section 2 of the Constitution to become permanent.

(B) Elections will be held virtually with virtual caucuses and campaigning. The Election and Awards Committee will create a plan for how the virtual campaigning is to be run.

(C) Each member delegation will get one vote for each Executive Committee position.

(D) Delegates may use the cancelled Fall Session towards their session requirement to run for office.

(E) The Treasurer shall present a budget to the Delegation Chairs. The budget must receive two-thirds approval of the Delegation Chairs to pass.

The Constitution of the South Carolina Student Legislature

Article I
Name

Section 1. This organization shall be called the South Carolina Student Legislature.

Article II
Purpose

Section 1. This organization shall be formed to provide a forum in which students may experience the full range of legislative activity, to promote student input into public policy-making in South Carolina, and to educate students about the functions of democratic government.

Section 2. The motto of this organization shall be "Our Freedom, Our Future, Our Responsibility."

Article III
Membership

Section 1. The membership of the South Carolina Student Legislature shall be composed of delegates from South Carolina's universities and colleges.

Section 2. Each delegation shall select its members from the student body of the institution that it represents.

Section 3. For the purpose of this document, "students" means all those with the privileges of an undergraduate student at the member institution. No student shall serve as a delegate for more than five years.

Section 4. Delegations may dismiss a delegate during session when he has violated the delegation and/or school conduct rules, has been arrested for a crime while at session, has become ill or injured and must return home, or in case of emergency.

Section 5. A delegation shall obtain membership upon registration with the Governor, approval of the state officers, and payment of registration fees.

Section 6. Upon approval of the registration and the receipt of the dues, the Governor shall issue the delegation an official letter recognizing it as a member delegation.

Section 7. All memberships are for the calendar year and shall expire upon the thirty-first day of December.

Article IV
Officers

Section 1. The elected officers of the organization shall be the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the House, the President of the Senate, the Speaker Pro Tempore of the House, and the Comptroller General. These officers, with the exception of the Comptroller General, shall be members of the Executive Committee.

Section 2. The Governor shall, with the consent of the Executive Committee, appoint a Secretary of State, an Attorney General, a Treasurer, and a Chief Justice of the Court. For the purpose of this document, "consent of the Executive Committee" means a majority of the members of the committee.

Section 3. The Governor shall, with the consent of the Executive Committee, have full power to create and fill any other officer that the Governor deems necessary to the South Carolina Student Legislature.

Section 4. No person shall hold more than one office at a time.

Section 5. Officer terms shall coincide with the calendar year.

Section 6. Each candidate for office shall be a student in good standing with the institution he attends.

Section 7. A candidate for Governor shall have attended at least two sessions prior to the session in which the election is being held, including at least one Fall Session. The Fall Session during which the election is being held shall not count towards the two-session requirement.

Section 8. A candidate for Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the House, or Comptroller General shall have attended at least two sessions prior to the session in which elections are being held, and the session in which elections are being held shall not count towards the two-session requirement. A candidate for Lieutenant Governor shall be a member of the Senate during which the election is being held. A candidate for Speaker of the House shall be a member of the House during the session in which the election is being held.

Section 9. A candidate for President of the Senate and Speaker Pro Tempore shall have attended at least one session prior to the session in which the election is being held. The Fall Session during which the election is being held shall not count towards the one-session requirement.

Section 10. In the event that the office of President of the Senate or Speaker Pro

Tempore shall become vacant, the Governor shall nominate a qualified replacement. The replacement shall be confirmed by the Executive Committee and shall begin fulfilling the duties of the office immediately.

Article V
Powers and Duties of Officers

Section 1. The Governor shall:

(A) With the advice and consent of the Executive Committee, have the power to form a cabinet, which includes the following positions and any others deemed by the Governor as necessary to the operations of the South Carolina Student Legislature:

1. A Secretary of State;

2. An Attorney General;

3. A Chief Justice;

4. A Treasurer; and

5. Four Associate Justices;

(B) Have full power, with the consent of the Executive Committee, to create and fill any other office which the Governor deems necessary to the South Carolina Student Legislature; With the advice of the Executive Committee, have full power to establish and maintain an "Office of the Governor" for his assistance and to perform the duties designated by the Governor as necessary to the operations and execution of the powers of the Governor of the South Carolina Student Legislature;

(C) Have full power to appoint a Chief of Staff to manage and coordinate the operations of the Office of the Governor;

(D) Represent South Carolina Student Legislature throughout the State of South Carolina and the United States;

(E) Present the "Journal of Acts and Resolutions" to the governor and the General Assembly of South Carolina;

(F) Report to the South Carolina Student Legislature at the Fall Session on the state of the Organization;

(G) Preside over all Interim meetings;

(H) Serve as a member of the Finance Committee; and

(I) Sign or veto all legislation that has passed the House and the Senate during Session.

Section 2. The Lieutenant Governor shall:

(A) Assume the duties of the Governor in the event that the Governor has vacated the office or is incapable of fulfilling the duties of the office;

(B) Serve as a member of the Executive Committee;

(C) Preside over the Senate, but shall have no vote except in the event of a tie;

(D) With the consent of the Senate, appoint three members of that body, no two of whom shall be from the same school, to serve on the Conference Committee;

(E) Serve as a member of the Finance Committee;

(F) Publish the "Journal of Acts and Resolutions";

(G) Compile and publish the Bill Book; and

(H) In conjunction with the Speaker of the House, organize and distribute a legislation calendar for Fall Session.

Section 3. The Speaker of the House shall:

(A) Assume the duties of the Governor in the event that the Governor and Lieutenant Governor have vacated the office or are incapable of fulfilling the duties of the office;

(B) Serve as a member of the Executive Committee;

(C) Preside over the House as a member of the House;

(D) With the consent of the House, appoint four members of that body, no two of whom shall be from the same school, to serve on the Conference Committee;

(E) Serve as a member of the Finance Committee; and

(F) In conjunction with the Lieutenant Governor, organize and distribute a legislation calendar for Fall Session.

Section 4. The President of the Senate shall:

(A) Assume the duties of the Lieutenant Governor in the event the Lieutenant Governor has vacated the office or is incapable of fulfilling the duties of the office;

(B) Assume the duties of the Governor in the event that the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Speaker of the House have vacated the office or are incapable of fulfilling the duties of the office;

(C) Serve as a member of the Executive Committee; and

(D) Preside over the Senate in the absence of the Lieutenant Governor.

Section 5. The Speaker Pro Tempore shall:

(A) Assume the duties of the Speaker of the House in the event the Speaker of the House has vacated the office or is incapable of fulfilling the duties of the office;

(B) Serve as a member of the Executive Committee; and

(C) Preside over the House in the absence of the Speaker of the House.

Section 6. The Secretary of State shall:

(A) Assist and advise the Governor in all matters in which the Governor needs aid;

(B) Prepare the minutes and records of interim meetings and Spring Session;

(C) In conjunction with the Attorney General, reapportion the votes of each delegation prior to Fall Session;

(D) Assist the Election and Awards Committee as that committee may deem appropriate; and

(E) Receive the certified results from the Election Chair of the Election and Awards Committee.

Section 7. The Attorney General shall:

(A) Act as Prosecutor in a Senate Trial;

(B) Be replaced as Prosecutor if impeached;

(C) Serve as a member of the Constitutional Committee;

(D) In conjunction with the Secretary of State, reapportion the votes of each delegation prior to Fall Session; and

(E) Advise the General Assembly on the constitutionality of legislation whose constitutionality has been called into question on the floor under the Constitution of the State of South Carolina.

1. The legislation shall be tabled for review by the Attorney General.

2. Within one hour of receiving the legislation in question, the Attorney General shall recommend a course of action to the body based on his review.

(F) Assist and advise other officers in Supreme Court cases.

Section 8. Chief Justice of the Court shall:

(A) Serve a one-year term;

(B) Preside over any session of the Supreme Court as outlined in Article VII;

(C) Preside over Senate trial proceedings;

(D) Serve as Chairman of the Constitutional Committee; and

(E) Obtain and distribute the case to be used in the Supreme Court hearings at session no later than 30 days prior to session.

Section 9. The Treasurer shall:

(A) Keep a current account of all funds of the South Carolina Student Legislature;

(B) Serve as Chairman of the Finance Committee; and

(C) Prepare and present the annual operating budget.

Section 10. The Fall Session Committee Chairmen shall:

(A) Chair their respective committees at Fall Session.

Section 11. The Comptroller General shall:

(A) Perform an annual internal audit of the organization and prepare an audit report;

(B) Present the audit report to the General Assembly as the first order of business at the first joint session of the first full day of Fall Session;

(C) Coordinate with external auditors in the case of an external audit of the organization; and

(D) Give documented approval for disbursements of more than $25.

1. Email or written notation is sufficient documentation.

2. A documented unanimous vote of the Finance Committee may override disapproval from the Comptroller General.

Section 12. The Associate Justices of the Supreme Court shall:

(A) Serve one-year terms; and

(B) Participate in any session of the Supreme Court.

Section 13. Delegation Chairs.

(A) Each school shall designate its own Delegation Chair/Co-Chairs.

(B) Schools with multiple delegation chairs shall have only one vote in a delegation chair vote.

(C) A Delegation Chair shall:

1. Participate in any meetings, votes, or responsibilities laid out in the Constitution or the Bylaws of the South Carolina Student Legislature;

2. Be the spokesperson for his respective delegation;

3. Lead and guide their delegation during its meetings; and

4. Represent his delegation’s interests at the state-level of the South Carolina Student Legislature.

Section 14. The Parliamentarian shall:

(A) Rule on questions of Robert's Rules of Order on the floor.

Article VI
Executive Committee

Section 1. The Governor shall call all meetings.

(A) Meeting times must be approved by the Executive Committee and Delegation Chairs.

(B) The Executive Committee shall propose the order of business and business to be conducted.

(C) The meetings shall be:

1. Spring Session;

2. Fall Session; and

3. Interim meetings.

Section 2. Spring Session:

(A) Spring Session shall be presided over by all presiding officers of the Executive Committee.

(B) Legislation shall be turned in no later than the date appointed by the order of the Executive Committee.

(C) Any legislation not found in the Bill Book must:

1. Be approved by the Executive Committee before the last day of session.

2. Approved legislation will only take place upon completion of all legislation found in the Bill Book.

(D) The Lieutenant Governor and the Speaker of the House shall, in conjunction with the President of the Senate and the Speaker Pro Tempore, form calendars of legislation for the chambers.

(E) A bill or resolution passing the joint session shall be presented to the Governor for Approval.

(F) All legislation signed by the Governor or neither signed nor vetoed by the Governor within a month after it has been presented to him shall be included in the "Journal of Acts and Resolutions."

(G) Member dues will be collected at the beginning of session at the discretion of the Finance Committee.

(H) The Governor may not serve as a legislator for Spring Session.

Section 3. Fall Session:

(A) Fall Session shall be an annual student legislature, modeled after the General Assembly of South Carolina and shall be comprised of a Senate, a House of Representatives, and a Supreme Court.

(B) Elections for the offices of Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the House, President of the Senate, and Speaker Pro Tempore of the House shall be held as the first order of business at the first joint session on the last day.

(C) Each member school shall be represented by a delegation consisting of:

1. A Chair;

2. Up to two delegates per school;

3. One delegate for each 200 full time undergraduate students for the first 1,000 students (five possible);

4. One delegate for each 1,000 full time undergraduate students from 1,000 to 10,000 (nine possible); and

5. One delegate for each 3,000 full time undergraduate students from 10,000 up.

6. All numbers shall be rounded up if the numbers exceed the previous population bracket by more than fifty percent.

(D) Legislation:

1. The Lieutenant Governor and the Speaker of the House shall assign each bill or resolution to a committee.

2. Legislation which passes committee shall be assigned to its chamber by the Lieutenant Governor and the Speaker of the House.

3. The Lieutenant Governor and the Speaker of the House shall, in conjunction with the President of the Senate and Speaker Pro Tempore, form calendars of legislation for their respective chambers.

4. Once a bill or resolution passes one chamber, it shall be transferred to the calendar of the opposite chamber.

5. A bill or resolution passing both chambers shall be presented to the Governor for approval.

6. All legislation signed by the Governor or neither signed nor vetoed by the Governor within a month after it has been presented to him shall be included in the "Journal of Acts and Resolutions."

7. All legislation passed in differing forms in the chambers shall be reviewed and revised by the Conference Committee.

(E) Both chambers shall abide by their respective rules, which shall be amended or revised as the first order of business when the chambers convene.

(F) Only voting members of the Senate and House may be present on their respective floors unless presenting legislation or appearing before the body.

(G) Registration fees will be collected at the beginning of session at the discretion of the Finance Committee.

(H) The Governor may not serve as a legislator for Fall Session.

Article VII
The Supreme Court

Section 1. The Supreme Court in general.

(A) The Supreme Court shall consist of a Chief Justice and four Associate Justices, any three of whom shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. The Chief Justice shall preside, and in his absence, the senior Associate Justice. In all cases decided by the Supreme Court, the concurrence of three of the Justices shall be necessary of the judgment below.

Section 2. Jurisdiction.

(A) The Supreme Court shall have power to review the trial case presented by the Chief Justice. The ruling of the Supreme Court will determine brief awards which are outlined in Article XII of the Constitution of South Carolina Student Legislature.

(B) The Supreme Court shall constitute a court for the correction of errors at law under such regulations as the General Assembly may prescribe.

(C) If legislation is passed and signed into law but its constitutionality under the United States Constitution, the Constitution of South Carolina, or the SCSL Constitution is contested, by petition for Writ of Certiorari, the Chief Justice may coordinate with the Governor to schedule a session of the Supreme Court to review the contested law at the next Session of the South Carolina Student Legislature. If for whatever reason the Chief Justice and Governor deem it necessary to review the contested law during the session in which it is contested, the Chief Justice may coordinate with the Executive Committee to schedule a special session of the Court to review the contested law. The review process will allow the delegate who has questioned the constitutionality of legislation to present his argument before the Supreme Court and the legislation author to refute these arguments. The legislation author may receive help from his delegation for his defense. The Supreme Court shall publish a decision no later than one week following the hearing.

(D) The Supreme Court shall have sole jurisdiction to hear cases concerning constitutionality. If any delegate or group of delegates believes that the Constitution is being violated, they may petition the Supreme Court to take up the case by producing a written brief and presenting it to the Chief Justice. Upon receipt of the brief, the Chief Justice shall allow the challenged party a reasonable amount of time to file a written response. Oral arguments, either in person or virtual, may also take place if a majority of the Court believes them to be necessary or beneficial in deciding the case. After considering all relevant information, the Court shall release a decision in written form detailing their decision and reasoning. Justices who disagree with the majority decision, either in part or entirely, may write concurring or dissenting opinions in addition to the opinion of the Court. The opinion of the Supreme Court on issues of constitutionality shall be final and binding. Opinions of the Court must be preserved and easily accessible, and any applicable past Court rulings should be considered in future cases and questions of constitutionality.

(E) The Chief Justice shall have the power to set procedure for any court cases arising from their jurisdiction in this Article, so long as it does not violate the provisions of this Constitution or the Bylaws.

Article VIII
Committees

Section 1. The Fall Session Committees shall consist of:

(A) The Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources;

(B) The Committee on Education;

(C) The Committee on Judiciary;

(D) The Committee on Labor, Commerce, and Industry;

(E) The Committee on Medical, Municipal, Military, Transportation, and Public Administration;

(F) The Committee on Miscellaneous; and

(G) The Committee on Ways and Means.

Article IX
Finances

Section 1. The Executive Committee shall, each year, through the office of the Treasurer, provide the South Carolina Student Legislature with an annual operating budget. The Treasurer shall present the operating budget to the General Assembly during Fall Session.

Article X
Elections

Section 1. An officer shall be elected by a majority of the legal ballots cast.

Section 2. The Senate and the House of Representatives shall elect the Governor and the Lieutenant Governor.

Section 3. The Senate shall elect the President of the Senate.

Section 4. The House of Representatives shall elect the Speaker of the House and the Speaker Pro Tempore of the House.

Section 5. The Chair of the Election and Awards Committee shall preside over the elections.

In the event that the Chair of the Election and Awards Committee is running for office, he shall resign as Chair of the Election and Awards Committee, and the next most senior delegation chair shall replace him as Chair.

Section 6. The Elections shall be conducted as follows:

(A) All candidates shall be listed on an official election ballot(s) as deemed official by the Election and Awards Committee.

(B) All Ballots shall be handed out to the respective delegation chairs proceeding the last joint session of the Session.

(C) Ballots for Each Official Delegate will be given either electronically or by paper to Delegation Chairs to hand out to their respective Delegates. Delegates will then personally submit their own ballot to the Secretary of State.

(D) A delegate can only place his name on the ballot for a single office and cannot be listed more than once.

(E) The candidates will be listed on the Ballot in alphabetical order by last name.

(F) Ballots which do not clearly identify the preference of the vote shall not be counted.

Article XI
Discipline of Officers

Section 1. Any elected or appointed officer may be removed from office for the following reasons:

(A) Failure to discharge the duties of his office; or

(B) Behavior determined by the body to be demeaning to the integrity of the South Carolina Student Legislature.

Section 2. Specific Charges against the officer must be presented either at a formal meeting of Delegation Chairs, Spring Session, or Fall Session. The impeachment and removal process is as follows:

(A) Upon a majority passage of Articles of Impeachment in the House of Representatives, and a 2/3 Conviction of the Senate, the officer in question shall be removed from office. The officer in question and Attorney General will each be provided 10 minutes to testify in front of the Senate

before the Senate Vote. The Senate Trial will be presided over by the Chief Justice; or

(B) Upon unanimous vote of Delegation Chairs to impeach and convict, the officer in question shall be removed from office. The officer in question and Attorney General will each be provided 10 minutes to testify in front of Delegation Chairs before the Delegation Chair Vote. The Delegation Chair Trial will be presided over by the Chief Justice.

Article XII
Awards

Section 1. The Carlisle Award is given annually at Fall Session in honor of the founder of the South Carolina Student Legislature, Dr. Douglas Carlisle. The Carlisle Award is awarded to the delegate or officer who, in the opinion of the Election and Awards Committee, best represents the ideals of the South Carolina Student Legislature.

Section 2. The Best Senator Award is given annually at Fall Session to the Senator who shows himself to be an accomplished speaker and conscientious statesman. The Senators shall nominate candidates for the Best Senator Award, and each Senator shall cast one vote for a nominee. The Lieutenant Governor shall cast a vote in case of a tie. The Election and Awards Committee shall administer the ballots.

Section 3. The Best Representative Award is given annually at Fall Session to the Representative who shows himself to be an accomplished speaker and conscientious statesman. The Representatives shall nominate candidates for the Best Representative Award, and each Representative shall cast one vote for a nominee. The Speaker of the House shall cast a vote in case of a tie. The Election and Awards Committee shall administer the ballots.

Section 4. The Best Legislation Award is given annually at Fall Session to the author whose legislation, in the opinion of the Election and Awards Committee, best manifests thorough research, topicality, and excellent use of language. The award may go to legislation presented in either chamber.

Section 5. The Best Delegation Award is given annually at Fall Session to the small, medium and large delegations that, in the opinion of the Elections and Awards Committee, best exemplified cohesion and activity.

(A) A small delegation shall be defined as a delegation whose school has a current population of 2,000 students or less.

(B) A medium delegation shall be defined as a delegation whose school has a current population between 2,001 and 8,000 students.

(C) A large delegation shall be defined as a delegation whose school has a population over 8,001 students.

Section 6. The Chad M. Beatty Award is given annually at Fall Session to the outstanding non-state officer senior as decided by the Election and Awards Committee.

Section 7. The Blake Alexander Campbell Memorial Award is given annually at Fall Session to a freshman Representative or Senator who, in the opinion of the Election and Awards Committee and the Executive Committee, shows himself to be a positive representative for the future of our organization through statesmanship, honor, courage and integrity.

Section 8. The Best Written Brief award is given at Fall and/or Spring Sessions in which the Supreme Court presides over a case to the delegate(s) who, in the opinion of the Justices of the Supreme Court, shows exceptional legal writing skills.

Section 9. The Best Oral Argument award is given annually at Fall and/or Spring Sessions in which the Supreme Court presides over a case to the delegate(s) who, in the opinion of the Justices of the Supreme Court, shows excellent use of language skills, communication skills, and the art of advocacy.

Section 10. The Palmetto Award for Best Overall Delegation will be awarded to the Best Delegation out of the winners for best Small, Medium, and Large Delegation. This award is presented to the delegation who, in the opinion of the Election and Awards Committee, best represents the ideals of our organization through legislation, activity, cohesion, and commitment.

Article XIII
Parliamentary Authority

Section 1. The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order; Newly Revised* shall govern the South Carolina Student Legislature in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with this Constitution and any special rules this organization may adopt.

Section 2. The parliamentary authority prescribed in their respective rules shall govern the Senate and House.

Article XIV
Equality

Section 1. Any occurrence of pronouns throughout this document shall not be deemed gender specific.

Section 2. No delegate shall be discriminated against in any way on the basis of gender, race, religion, creed, sexual orientation, gender identity, or age.

Article XV
Amendment of the Constitution and Bylaws

Section 1. Any member may present amendments to the Constitution or the Bylaws at any joint meeting at either Fall or Spring Sessions.

Section 2. Constitutional amendments approved by a majority of the Constitutional Committee must be ratified by two-thirds of quorum of the General Assembly, unless under State of Emergency provisions as outlined in Article VIII of the Bylaws. Upon approval, the Secretary of State shall declare such amendments to be in effect.

Section 3. Bylaws amendments approved by a majority of the Constitutional Committee must be ratified by either:

(A) a majority vote of the Delegation Chairs when the South Carolina Student Legislature is out of session; or

(B) a two-thirds vote of quorum of the General Assembly.

Article XVI
Preemption of Constitution and Bylaws

Section 1. Members of the South Carolina Student Legislature are bound by the Constitution and Bylaws. The Constitution shall hold precedence over the Bylaws in all matters. The Bylaws shall not preempt or supersede the Constitution.