



SENATOR REX RICE

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

WEEK OF FEBRUARY 8-12, 2021

GREETINGS! As the South Carolina Senator of District 2, who has the great privilege of representing Pickens County, I would like to thank you for reaching out to me. I gladly welcome and encourage feedback from my constituents, and if you are receiving this, I have received an email or phone call from you concerning various legislative matters. As a way of communicating updated information during this 124rd Session of the General Assembly, I will periodically send out informational emails, such as this. I hope you find it helpful.

Please feel free to contact my Senate office with questions or if I can be of service to you. My assistant's email is deanahage@scsenate.gov or you can call 803-212-6116. If you need immediate assistance, you can reach me on my cell phone at 864-884-0408.

You may also visit my website at <https://www.rexrice.com/> for information related to Pickens County, and to view previous legislative updates.

WEEK IN REVIEW: February 8-12, 2020

Given Third Reading, Passed the Senate

S.107 – Baseline for Coastal Erosion Zones: A bill to establish a baseline for coastal erosion zones. If a primary oceanfront sand dune is more than 200 feet landward of the line of stable vegetation, the baseline must be seaward of the primary oceanfront sand dune at least thirty percent of the measured distance. If there is no primary sand dune, the baseline must be established further landward of the most seaward of the locations or the landward edge of active beach.

S.131 – Capitol Grounds: A bill to redefine the South Carolina capitol grounds, to reflect complex expansion, to include the inward area of Gervais, Sumter, Pendleton and Assembly Streets in Columbia. Additionally, the bill provides the Sergeant at Arms of the House or Representatives and the Sergeant at Arms of the Senate the powers of commissioned constables and be permitted to exercise the duties of their office throughout the State.

S.158 – Exemptions from Continuing Education Requirements: A bill to add brokers or salespersons with twenty-five years or more of experience who is 65 years of age or more to the exemptions from biennial continuing education requirements.

S.201 – Accountability Measures for Public Schools and Public School Districts: A bill to strengthen processes for assistance and intervention in struggling schools and districts. The bill establishes thresholds based on severity and duration of low performance and the methods for intervention in a State of Education Emergency, meaning an area that has been chronically underperforming for three consecutive years. The State Superintendent of Education, under certain circumstances, may assume the management of the district and dismiss the governing board under the declaration, and implement an interim five-member board: 1 by the Governor, 3 by the local legislation delegation and 1 by the SSE with consultation of the local delegation, and other provisions intended to provide better educational outcomes for students.

S.242 - Drivers For A Cure Special License Plates: A bill to authorize the Department of Motor Vehicles to issue 'Drivers For A Cure' special license plates to owners of private passenger-carrying motor vehicles or motorcycles. The plates expire twenty-four months from the date issued and must be the same size and general design as regular motor vehicle license plates. The biennial fee for each plate is

thirty dollars plus the regular motor vehicle license fee. Any portion of the fee must be distributed evenly between the MUSC Hollings Cancer Center and the Duke Cancer Institute.

S.271 – Abandoned Buildings Revitalization Act: A bill to extend the provisions of the South Carolina Abandoned Buildings Revitalization Act until December 31, 2025. Additionally, the bill adds railroads rights of way to the provision.

S.287 – Requirements for Licensure By Board of Physical Therapy Examiners: A bill to require the department to require a state criminal records check, and fingerprints, for licensure to the Board of Physical Therapy Examiners. The results of the records check must not be shared outside the department.

S.516 – Teacher and Support Staff Vaccination Plan: A joint resolution to require the Department of Health and Environmental Control to identify certified teachers and school support staff, as mission-critical workers, and be eligible for vaccination under Phase 1a of the South Carolina COVID-19 Vaccination Plan. DHEC shall offer teachers and support staff to be fully vaccinated within thirty days of the effective date of the joint resolution. Upon the opportunity to be fully vaccinated, every school district must offer five-day, in-person classroom instruction to students no later than March 22, 2021. All South Carolina residents who are eligible under Phase 1a who have received the first vaccine dose remain eligible to be fully vaccinated within the appropriate recommended time period. Additionally, 37,500 doses allocated for long-term care facilities shall be set aside for the teacher vaccination allocation.

S.521 – Invest In Veterans Week: A concurrent resolution to commemorate Lexington Chamber and Visitors Center for declaring March 1-7 in support of veteran-owned businesses, and name Invest In Veterans Week.

H.3825 – Invest In Veterans Week: A concurrent resolution to commemorate Lexington Chamber and Visitors Center for declaring March 1-7 in support of veteran-owned businesses, and name Invest In Veterans Week.

Given Second Reading

S.221 – Extended Foster Care For Persons Eighteen To Twenty-One: A bill to extend foster care for persons eighteen to twenty-one, create an extended foster care program and provide voluntary placement, and other conforming changes.

S.222 – Kinship Foster Care Program: A bill to provide that fictive kin - an individual not related by birth, adoption, or marriage to a child but has an emotionally significant relationship with the child - is eligible to be foster parents under the kinship foster care program under certain circumstances.

S.378 – Police Dogs and Horses: A bill to increase the penalties for injury or death caused to police dogs and horses. A person who willfully and maliciously taunts, torments, teases, beats, strikes or administers a chemical to a law enforcement dog or horse must be fined not less than five hundred dollars nor more than one thousand dollars or imprisoned not more than six months or both. A person who willfully or maliciously tortures, mutilates, injures, disables, poisons or kills a law enforcement dog or horse must be fined not less than two thousand dollars nor

more than ten thousand dollars, imprisoned not more than ten years or both; must pay restitution to the agency to cover the full cost of the animal; and may be required to complete up to five hundred hours or community service with an animal-related organization or foundation.

This Week In Committee

Judiciary Committee:

S.82 – Limitations on Liability Cap: A bill to increase the liability caps of an agency or political subdivision from \$300,000 to \$500,000 for losses arising from a single occurrence and from \$600,000 to \$1,000,000 for a total sum of a loss regardless of the number of agencies or political subdivisions involved. Additionally, a party that files an offer of judgement shall be allowed to recover regardless of whether the total administrative, filing, or other costs, and the eight percent interest on the amount of the verdict or award, combined with the verdict.

S.147 – COVID-19 Liability Safe Harbor: A bill to provide liability protections for a limited time period for healthcare providers and businesses that follow public health guidance in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency. The safe harbor will not apply if a claimant proves by clear and convincing evidence that the covered entity or individual caused injury or damage by reckless, willful or intentional misconduct or by failing to make any attempt to adhere to public health guidance.

S.475 – Compelling of Certain Documents Related to NextEra Energy Inc.: A joint resolution to require NextEra Energy to provide documents related to the Public Service Authority to the General Assembly. Documents include any

correspondence to, from, or between NextEra relating to proposed legislation on Santee Cooper; correspondence between any member of the General Assembly; to the Governor or Department of Administration; to staff of the General Assembly; any printed material, reports, memoranda of any format regarding proposed legislation; listing of any and all law firms, consultant, lobbyists, public relations professionals or other individuals in related to Santee Cooper; engagement in political action committees; political or parties campaigns or caucuses; and more.

Family & Veterans Services:

S.441 – DSS Investigations: A bill to provide investigations of abuse in qualified residential treatment programs, restrictions on foster care or adoption placements, and make other review requirements.

Education Committee:

S.16 – Personal Finance: A bill to require the completion of a certain basic personal finance coursework for high school graduation instead of existing economics coursework requirements and develop corresponding standards.

S.160 – Disposal of Surplus Property by Midlands Technical College Enterprise Authority: A bill to permanently authorize and repeal the sunset of Act 189 of 2018 to require the authority to file certain documents with the State Fiscal Accountability Authority related to the disposal of surplus government property.

S.203 – Removal of District Trustees: A bill to provide that district trustees guilty of malfeasance, misfeasance, incompetency, absenteeism, conflicts of interest,

misconduct, persistent neglect of duty in office, or incapacity shall be subject to removal from office by the Governor.

S.208 – Schools of Innovation: A bill to provide that school districts may instead create multiple schools of innovation and provide exemption from state statutes and regulation by schools of innovation if approved by a two-thirds vote of the State Board of Education.