

# 2015/2016 SC Club for Growth Senate Scorecard Key

**1. February 11, 2015 – Ethics Reform.** S. 0001, To lay on the table Amendment number P10. At the crux of the Ethics Reform debate was the independent investigation of legislators. Previously, legislative ethics committees were responsible for overseeing their own members' campaign filings. Conservative in the Senate sought to create a truly independent body but Senator Luke Ranking offered an amendment that created a special nine-member investigative ethics committee for legislators with legislators on the panel. He called the idea "transparent enough." Senator Larry Martin said the amendment created a "special, privileged class" for legislators and created the mirage of reform. The preferred vote was YES to tabling. Unfortunately, the motion to table failed 20-25 and killed the entire ethics reform package.

**2. April 30, 2015 – Gas Tax Increase to Special Order.** H. 3579, Motion to set roads to Special Order. This vote would have placed a controversial roads plan and gas tax increase on one of the limited special order slots. From the beginning, we supported Governor Haley's reasonable roads plan that increased the gas tax but had an offsetting reduction in the income tax and reformed the DOT. Legislators ignored the statewide call for significant DOT reform and no new gas tax without significant tax cuts. Instead, liberal lawmakers tried to ram this bill onto the calendar. The preferred vote was NO to special order. Fortunately, the motion failed 26-19.

**3. April 30, 2015 – Cell Phone Tax Increase.** S. 0277, State Telecom Equity in Funding Act, Third Reading. S. 0277 is the state's version of the federally mandated Universal Service Fund. The bill would have created a tax on all cell phone users in South Carolina. The monies collected would be used to subsidize telecommunication companies who provide landline service. The tax would force taxpayers to sponsor products and services people are less interested in buying. The preferred vote was NO. Unfortunately, the bill passed 22-20.

**4. May 5, 2015 – Playground Amendment.** H. 3701, To lay on the table Amendment number 22. This amendment was for \$150,000 towards a playground. While playgrounds and neighborhood parks are worthwhile, a taxpayer in Greenville should not have to pay for a playground in Georgetown. If this is an endeavor a local government wants to pursue, then local funds should be used for the project. The preferred vote was YES to tabling. Fortunately, the amendment was tabled 32-13.

**5. May 7, 2015 – Judicial Pay Raise.** H. 3701, To adopt Amendment number 87. This amendment would have increased the pay of judges 11%. This amendment was controversial for two reasons: 1) This pay increase was for some of the best-paid state employees. 2) This amendment was introduced on the Senate Floor at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour. Any increase in judicial pay should go through the committee process in an open and transparent manner. The preferred vote was NO to adopting. Unfortunately, the amendment was adopted 23-19.

**6. July 7, 2015 – Veto 42 Bus Shop.** H. 3701, To override veto 42. This veto targeted a proviso requiring funding for two bus shops while no other bus shops were mentioned. Not only is it an earmark but it also takes away the Superintendent's ability to effectively run his/her agency. The preferred vote was NO to overriding. Unfortunately, the veto was overridden 27-12.

**7. July 7, 2015 – Veto 54 Woodrow Wilson Home.** H. 3701, To override veto 54. This veto would have removed an earmark for the Woodrow Wilson's Family Home. There are historical homes in all corners of South Carolina that do not receive an earmark in the budget for marketing. Instead of funding via political favors there are other ways for places like this to raise money. The preferred vote was NO to overriding. Unfortunately, the Veto was overridden 26-13.

**8. July 7, 2015 – Veto 57 Columbia Museum of Art.** H. 3701, To override veto 57. This veto would have removed an earmark for the Columbia Museum of Art. There are museums in all corners of South Carolina that do not receive an earmark in the budget. Instead of funding via political favors there are other ways for places like this to raise money. The preferred vote was NO to overriding. Unfortunately, the veto was overridden 26-13.

**9. July 7, 2015 – Confederate Flag.** S. 0897, Third Reading. This vote determined whether or not the Battle Flag of the Army of Northern Virginia (AKA the Confederate Battle Flag) was to be removed from the State House grounds. The South Carolina Club for Growth advocated for the flag's removal due to its negative economic impact, particularly in sports and tourism and the millions of dollars associated with such events. Since 2001, the NCAA banned South Carolina from hosting postseason events – basketball tournaments, football bowl games, etc. – due to the flag. It has been estimated that South Carolina has lost out on at least \$10 million in tourism and revenue. The preferred vote was YES. Fortunately, the bill passed 37-3.

**10. February 2, 2016 – Music Therapy Practice Act.** S. 0589, Second Reading. The best thing government can do for business is get out of the way. Regrettably, this bill would do the opposite. S. 0589 expands the role of government, creates another government agency, creates new fees, and places further restrictions on small businesses. The preferred vote was NO. Unfortunately, the bill passed 35-7.

**11. June 1, 2016 - Local Option Tourism Fee.** H. 5011, To Override the Governor's Veto. H. 5011 was one of many tax hikes and fees the General Assembly attempted to pass in 2016. The bill would allow local governments to take more money out of the pockets of hardworking citizens and increase taxes without a public referendum.

This unchecked ability to raise taxes runs counterintuitive to conservative principles. As a general rule, the SC Club for Growth is against raising taxes for a variety of reasons but recognizes the right of local citizens to self-impose taxes, should they choose to do so in a public referendum. This bill would not allow for such a vote. Additionally, H. 5011 calls for the lion's share of collected taxes to be used on "tourism advertisement and promotion." This non-specific term allows for waste, fraud, and abuse in the distribution of funds equating to a local government slush fund. The preferred vote was NO to overriding. Unfortunately, the veto was overridden 40-5.

**12. June 2, 2016 – Adjournment of the General Assembly.** S. 0267, To Adopt Amendment Number RFH-1. For nearly 20 years, the SC House has passed bills that would shorten the legislative session. Ultimately, these bills died in the SC Senate and never became law. While not the perfect bill due to the many exceptions the legislature could cite to extend the session, S. 0267 was a step in the right direction and one the Senate was able to pass. This bill, signed by the Governor, could potentially save taxpayers \$350,000 a year. The SC Club for Growth hopes the legislature will continue its efforts to reduce the length of the legislative session in the years to come. The preferred vote was YES. The amendment was passed 44-0.

**13., 14., 15. June 15, 2016 - Coastal Carolina University Football Stadium Expansion and Brooks Stadium Engineering.** H. 5001, To Override Veto 26, to Reconsider Veto 26, and to Override Veto 27. Coastal Carolina University switched athletic conferences and university officials sought approval to increase the size of CCU's football stadium through the issue of bonds. This bond approval process had to be approved by the Commission on Higher Education (CHE). The CHE, citing insufficient funding to cover the bond debt, denied the request multiple times.

In order to sidestep the CHE's denial, legislators slipped in two provisos late in the budget process. These provisos were included in the final budget. Governor Haley vetoed the provisos (Veto 26 and Veto 27). On

6/15/2016, the Senate sustained veto 26 (25-14). Unhappy with the results, the Senate voted again on veto 26, ultimately overriding the veto. Shortly thereafter, the Senate voted to override veto 27. By overriding these vetoes, legislators placed runaway higher education spending ahead of fiscal responsibility and student wellbeing. The preferred vote was NO to overriding. Unfortunately, vetoes 26 and 27 were overridden 27-13.

**16. June 15, 2016 - Payroll Deductions.** H. 5270, To Override the Veto. H. 5270 grows the size and scope of government by establishing a public dues collection agency for private organizations – clearly not a core function of government. The Society of Former SLED Agents is a private organization with the mission of providing support to its members. Much like the AFL-CIO and other unions, membership is contingent upon the paying of dues. This organization, like any other private organization, should collect dues through private means. The preferred vote was NO to overriding. Unfortunately, the veto was overridden 29-10.

**17. June 15, 2016 – State Aviation Fund.** H 5001, To Override Veto 29: Shortly before this veto was considered, Governor Haley signed a more than \$2 million reoccurring funding source for the Division of Aeronautics. Additionally, the agency only requested a \$5 million supplement to this fund. Apparently legislators in Columbia know more about the funding needs of this organization than the agency itself and slipped in a \$7 million proviso. Considering the reoccurring funding source and the department’s own budgeting request, the \$7 million proviso highlights the legislature’s poor record of fiscal accountability and budgeting abuse. The preferred vote was NO to overriding. Unfortunately, the veto was overridden 31-11.

**18. June 15, 2016 – South Carolina Artisans Center.** H. 5001, To Override Veto 33: This veto would have removed \$500,000 in pork from the state budget. The SC Artisans Center is a private organization and should be supported through private means, not public tax dollars. This pork project is another example of how legislators use your tax dollars to bring home the bacon. The preferred vote was NO to overriding. Unfortunately, the veto was overridden 27-11.

**19. June 15, 2016 – Sports Developing Marketing Program.** H 5001, To Override Veto 34: The \$3 million worth of pork in this proviso is nothing more than a poor attempt at hiding earmarks intended for private entities. Additionally, the recruiting of sports events is not a core function of government and certainly not worth of \$3 million of taxpayer dollars. Sadly, this is one more example of how legislators spend your hard earned tax dollars on pet projects instead of returning them to you. The preferred vote was NO to overriding. Unfortunately, the veto was overridden 27-12.