

2021 SC House Scorecard Key

1. Judicial Election. February 3, 2021. Court of Appeals, Seat 9.

South Carolina is one of two states where judicial appointments are made by the legislature. South Carolina Club for Growth has long opposed this process, preferring gubernatorial appointments with the advice and consent of the State Senate (similar to the federal model). Notwithstanding our opposition to how South Carolina elects judges, SC Club for Growth – and other limited government organizations – urged lawmakers to support Florence County family court judge Jay Vinson for a seat on the SC Court of Appeals. Mr. Vinson is a strict constitutionalist and self-described minimalist; characteristics our judges desperately need. Fortunately, Mr. Vinson was elected by the legislature by a vote of 94 – 63. The tally in the State House was 72 – 46.

<https://www.scstatehouse.gov/votehistory.php?KEY=18211>

2. Budget Transparency. March 9, 2021. H 3605. Passage of Bill. Vote # H1318

H.3605 would repeal the law requiring the House and Senate budget-writing committees hold joint, public hearings on the governor’s proposed state spending plan. Insanely, there is no record of those open meetings ever taking place. Instead of repealing transparency laws the legislature refuses to follow, they should become compliant with state law and make it easier for citizens to track the budget’s development. The preferred vote was “NO.” Unfortunately, the bill passed 103 – 16.

<https://www.scstatehouse.gov/votehistory.php?KEY=18600>

3. Department of Commerce Transparency. March 23, 2021. H 4100. Amendment 36. Vote # H1570.

Millions in state spending remains shrouded in mystery. According to recent reports by *The State* newspaper, \$43.8 million in the 2019-20 fiscal year was sent through state agencies that didn’t request the money to various nonprofits, local governments and businesses. These funds, commonly called earmarks, are frequently requested by legislators with no transparency. Amendment 36 to H. 4100 (the annual budget bill) was an attempt to raise awareness on this issue. Amendment 36 was not perfect, in that it only applied to Department of Commerce grants and making sure “recipients of these grants funds are meeting required obligations.” However, South Carolina’s state budget needs even the smallest steps towards transparency. The preferred vote was “NO” to tabling. Unfortunately, the amendment was tabled 70 – 40.

<https://www.scstatehouse.gov/votehistory.php?KEY=18924>

4. **EOC Transparency.** March 23, 2021. H 4100. Amendment 42. Vote # H1583.

During the debate on the appropriations bill, Representative Josiah Magnuson offered an amendment that would require, as part of the funds being expended, the Education Oversight Committee to “study ... and publish a report identifying and detailing federal funding streams for programs and grants in elementary and secondary education in this State in total and breaking out the cost of overhead, compliance, and reporting incurred by the Department of Education, school districts, and local schools.” The goal of the amendment was to evaluate if “the cost of compliance exceeds the value of the funding in consideration of federally imposed control and regulation.” The SC Club for Growth has long held the position that parents should be the ultimate decider on how and where their children get educated through universal school choice and “backpacking” fund. In that spirit, we recognize that with every federal education dollar that comes to South Carolina, Washington’s “regulatory tentacles [dive] deep[er] into the education system.” It would behoove South Carolina to conduct this cost benefit analysis and the preferred vote was “NO” to tabling. Unfortunately, the amendment was tabled 73 – 43.

<https://www.scstatehouse.gov/votehistory.php?KEY=18952>

5. **Government Overreach.** April 6, 2021. H 3795. Passage of Bill. Vote #H1604.

H 3795 would require a sign language interpreter who works for state or local government agencies to register with LLR and pay a fee. In addition, it creates a new public database of all registered interpreters. Occupational licensing and fees to work are in direct conflict with the free market – an interpreter should not have to register nor pay a fee to practice in South Carolina. And while ensure interpreters are proficient is a worthy goal, private sector alternatives to establishing credentials of interpreters exist. The preferred vote was “NO” to passage. Unfortunately, the bill passed 78 – 35.

<https://www.scstatehouse.gov/votehistory.php?KEY=19065>

6. **Double Taxation.** April 6, 2021. H 3948. Passage of Bill. Vote #H1613.

Under existing state law, counties may not impose a 1% capital project sales tax for roads, bridges, public facilities, and water and sewer projects if they already impose a 1% transportation sales tax. This bill would allow counties to do both, thus doubling the possible tax on citizens. The preferred vote was “NO.” Unfortunately, the bill passed 75 – 29.

<https://www.scstatehouse.gov/votehistory.php?KEY=19075>

7. **Growing Government.** April 21, 2021. H 3956. Passage of Bill. Vote #H1667.

H 3956 seeks to create yet another state government board, this time tasked with conducting research, outreach, and developing recommendations related to rare-disease patients. While this is a worthy endeavor, this is a job for the federal government and the private sector.

In fact, the private sector is already saturated with organizations dedicated to research, outreach, and developing recommendations related to rare-disease patients such as the Spina Bifida Association of the Carolinas, the South Carolina Chapter of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, MDA of South Carolina, and many others. Additionally, this bill would increase recurring General Fund expenditures of the Department of Health and Environmental Control by \$250,000. The preferred vote was “NO” to passage. Unfortunately, the bill passed the House by a vote of 63 – 45.

<https://www.scstatehouse.gov/votehistory.php?KEY=19247>

8. **Sell Santee Cooper.** May 4, 2021. H 3194. Amendment 4A. Vote #H1716.

South Carolinians already pay the highest electricity bills in the South, and some of the highest in the nation. The V.C. Summer nuclear debacle has only made things worse.

Santee Cooper customers are the sole source for repaying more than \$4 billion in debt from the failed V.C. Summer nuclear project and billions more in operational debt. That means the average Santee Cooper customer will pay thousands for the failed project over the next several decades.

The SC Club for Growth has long advocated for the privatization of Santee Cooper. Unfortunately, the legislature only started paying attention after billions of dollars were spent on two holes in the ground and billions more in debt.

Santee Cooper is broken. It should be subject to the same market forces, oversight, and reforms that other energy companies face. For these reasons and more, the SC Club for Growth urged state leaders to pursue a timely, market-based sale of Santee Cooper that would protect customers and taxpayers from further pain.

Amendment 4A to H. 3194 (the Santee Cooper “reform bill”) established a special legislative committee that would “to consider offers for the sale of some or all of the assets of” Santee Cooper. This amendment was a much-needed, positive step towards selling Santee Cooper.

The preferred vote was “YEA” to the amendment. Fortunately, the amendment was adopted by the House by a vote of 85 – 34.

<https://www.scstatehouse.gov/votehistory.php?KEY=19503>

9. **Rollover Slush Funds.** June 9, 2021. H 4100. Amendment 14A. Vote #1828.

Members of the South Carolina House of Representatives are afforded taxpayer funded accounts for postage (\$2,500), printing expenses (\$500), travel, and flag reimbursements (\$250). Normally, these funds expire every fiscal year, whether they are used or not.

But Amendment 14A of the annual appropriations bill sought to “roll over” any remaining funds. These funds can be used appropriately for official correspondence, legislative updates,

or member business cards. However, these funds, especially the travel funds, are often abused by legislators who take taxpayer-funded junkets to desirable locations for vacations under the guise of attending legislative conferences.

For example, conferences have been held in Salt Lake City, Austin, Tampa, New Orleans, and Nashville. Member's Facebook feeds during these events often show them anywhere but at meetings; instead they are often at the beach, attending concerts, shopping, etc. This particular vote was especially egregious because many legislators were upset they were unable to travel on the taxpayers' dime during COVID-19, so they moved to change the law. The preferred vote was "NO" to adopting. Unfortunately, the amendment passed 87 – 26.

<https://www.scstatehouse.gov/votehistory.php?KEY=19753>

10. Tax Exemptions. June 29, 2021. H 4100. To Override Veto 7. Vote # H1847.

Provision 109.12 created a temporary one-year sales tax exemption for food manufacturing equipment. This type of piecemeal tax policy hurts our state's ability to compete for jobs, investment, and capital. As Governor McMaster rightly said in his veto message, "comprehensive tax reform must happen. Our neighbor states have reformed their tax codes and structure, leaving our State at a competitive disadvantage."

The preferred vote was "NO" to overriding. Unfortunately, the veto was overridden 86 – 25.

<https://www.scstatehouse.gov/votehistory.php?KEY=19785>