



House Republican Caucus

SCHRC 2022 - Week 14

This week in the General Assembly was highlighted by the retirement of Speaker Jay Lucas and the election of our new Speaker, Murrell Smith.

Congratulations to my friend and the Speaker-Elect of the House, Murrell Smith. And thank you and Godspeed to House Speaker Jay Lucas!

Speaker Lucas, who has served in the House for 24 years, and as our leader for the last 8 years, announced his retirement this year. He will be sorely missed. His leadership, kindness, and most of all, his friendship will never be forgotten. His reputation as a consensus builder and true statesman will forever be part of South Carolina's history.

Speaker-Elect Smith, who previously served as the Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee and is also a friend. Speaker-Elect Smith is a natural-born leader. He will serve our body with a respectful consensus-building manner and will serve South Carolina in a way we will all be proud of.

As we enter the final six legislative days in the 124th South Carolina General Assembly, my House colleagues and I continue our work on several important bills...

Election Integrity Update

Two weeks ago, the House sent the Senate an incredibly strong election integrity bill that earned bipartisan support and unanimously passed the House. Additionally, this bill had the support of the Governor, Election officials, and citizens all over the state because of the important guardrails it provides for our election system. Essentially, it makes it easier to vote and harder to cheat in South Carolina.

Unfortunately, an unnecessary power grab from the Senate killed the bill. Realizing the urgency of election integrity, my colleagues and I in the House inserted election reform language into 8 different bills that will soon pass the House and go back to the Senate. This gives the Senate 8 *separate chances* to vote YES, in favor of election integrity and reform for South Carolina.

I urge you to contact your Senator and ask him or her to support election integrity reform because *election integrity cannot wait!*

Protecting Innocent Life

I am and always have been proudly pro-life. On Wednesday, I supported a bill requiring anyone receiving chemical-induced abortion medication (a set of 2 tablets, prescribed by a doctor) to include information reminding women that there are other options than abortion and that the pregnancy might be restored if they decide against taking the second pill. I am proud to support any legislation that helps to save innocent lives and was happy to see this pass the House on Wednesday.

Preventing Human Trafficking

By a vote of 88-11, the House passed the 'Massage Therapy Practice Act'. This legislation prescribes more stringent procedures and licensing requirements for massage therapists and massage therapy establishments. A law like this is important to ensure that massage therapists are licensed professionals and that these establishments are being used for massage purposes, rather than being used as a hub for human trafficking or other crimes.

In Committee This Week

- H. 4563 - This week, a committee met to discuss a bill that creates a new toll in helping fight crime. "Cyber Sexual Harassment" includes sending or distributing private images without the consent of the individual in the photo or video. This bill remains in committee for more discussion and refinement.
- S. 0935- This Senate bill aims to create education scholarship accounts for eligible students who would like to attend a private school. This fund can be used to pay tuition and other necessary school costs. Most importantly, this bill allows the parent to have more choice in where their child is educated. This received a favorable report from the House Ways and Means Committee.
- S. 2 - A bill that aims to divide DHEC into separate entities - one for health and one for the environment - had a hearing in the Ways and Means Committee this week. It remains in committee for additional testimony.
- S. 233 - The "Surviving Spouse Property Tax Exemptions" bill allows qualified spouses whose partner has passed away to qualify for tax exemptions on their homes and property to alleviate heavy tax burdens. This bill passed the House Ways and Means Committee favorably.

Looking Ahead

Next week, the House is expected to take up the issue of medical marijuana, or the 'Compassionate Care Act'. This Senate bill allows doctors to prescribe non-smokable medical-grade cannabis to individuals who face chronic or severe illnesses. I expect to be on the Floor for many hours debating this topic next week.