

Legislative Updates of interest for Higher Education Week of Apr. 21 – Apr. 25, 2008

Budget Update –

Last week, the Senate returned its recommendations for the FY 2008-09 Budget ([H.4800 and H.4801](#)) to the House. The budget recommendations are now under consideration of the House which did not take any action on during the week. Past CHE summary reports on the House and Senate recommendations for higher education are at [Week of April 7 – April 11](#) for Senate recommendations and at [Week of March 10 – March 14](#) for the House recommendations.

As a reminder in regard to the process, the House now has an opportunity to concur with the Senate recommendations or amend the recommendations prior to returning the budget to the Senate. If the House recommendations differ from those of the Senate, a conference committee will be named. Three members from each chamber including the respective finance committee chairs will be appointed to serve on the budget conference committee which will work out the differences between the two versions of the budget. Once the conference committee has done so, and the General Assembly has agreed to the budget, it goes to the Governor who will have the opportunity to veto items. The General Assembly will consider any vetoes before the budget is finalized.

In the House –

Before being adopted by the House and sent to the Senate, committee amendments for [H.4493](#), which establishes the SC LightRail Consortium and provides for its governance, funding, duties and powers, were adopted. This bill now awaits consideration by the Senate Education Committee. On Tuesday, the House Education and Public Works Committee submitted favorable committee reports on [H.4368](#) relating to the garnishment of wages for outstanding education benefits and [H.4451](#) relating to scholarship programs and citizenship. By the end of the week, H.4368 was committed to the House Judiciary Committee for further consideration and H.4451 received its third reading and was sent to the Senate. [H.4883](#) relating to local sales and use tax for education capital improvements also received its third reading and was sent to the House. This bill would provide for the ability of certain areas to request a referendum for the addition of a one-cent sales tax for capital bonds for local secondary and post-secondary facilities. A similar bill, [S.1217](#), is under consideration of the Senate. The House concurred with Senate amendments of [H.4860](#), a bill to amend the membership of the Spartanburg County Commission for Technical and Community Education, and then enrolled the bill for ratification. Also, during the week, the House passed legislation, [H.3590](#), relating to the Government restructuring which includes provisions for the periodic review of state agencies.

For a look at upcoming House meetings, go to http://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess117_2007-2008/blatmeet.htm

In the Senate –

The Senate Finance Committee met on Tuesday and voted to give favorable reports to several bills including: two bills related to the financing of higher education facilities – [S.1224](#) to establish authority for athletic revenue bonds for Francis Marion and [S.1225](#) relating to issuance of revenue bonds by USC for a new business school – and to [S.1232](#) relating to local sales and use tax for education capital improvements. S.1232 is similar to H.4883 which was considered during the week by the House. The Committee also considered legislation relating to state spending limitations ([S.718](#) and [S.1220](#)).

The full Senate received the report on S.1232 and gave the bill its second reading. The Senate also approved [S.950](#) relating to Denmark Technical College and authority to enter into ground lease agreements with private entities. Like the House, the Senate is also considering legislation relating to state agencies and energy conservation. [S.1140](#) was given its second reading after amendments to the bill were adopted. One amendment related to higher education facilities and for higher education institutions would make the provisions applicable to only those facilities that are greater than ten thousand gross square feet and would exempt higher education facilities whose function is defined as athletics, housing, or research. A similar bill, [H.4766](#) relating to requirements of state agencies and energy conservation plans, currently awaits consideration by the House. Also, during the week, the Senate also gave second reading to [S.530](#) that would codify in permanent legislation a number of temporary provisions, including several relating to higher education, that have been included in the annual Appropriations Act.

For a look at upcoming Senate meetings, go to http://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess117_2007-2008/gresmeet.htm

Reminder: The above report is not intended to be all inclusive. Bill numbers are linked to the SC General Assembly page. The link should go to the most recent version of the bill. For additional information on legislation referenced above and other legislation relating to higher education, see http://www.che.sc.gov/CHE_Docs/InfoCntr/Legis/HigherEd_Legis_List.xls. Detailed information on the 2008 Session of the General

Assembly may be access at www.scstatehouse.net or from links included on CHE's website at <http://www.che.sc.gov/Home/CHELegislativeUpdates/LegislativeSession2008.aspx> .