

Legislative Updates of interest for Higher Education

Week of March 19 – March 23, 2007:

In the House –

In regard to higher education legislation, the House took up H.3379 relating to S.C. residents who have attended high schools in another state and eligibility for Palmetto Fellows and LIFE scholarship programs. The amendment of the House Education and Public Works Committee was adopted and the bill received its second and third readings. It was sent to the Senate on Thursday where it was referred to Education. This bill, H.3379, would amend and put into permanent code a temporary budget proviso implemented this year. If passed, H.3379 would continue to enable S.C. resident students who attended high school in another state to use a high school rank provided that it is calculated per a state-approved, standardized grading system for purposes of meeting eligibility requirements for the Palmetto Fellows and LIFE scholarships. A similar provision to amend the existing budget proviso is recommended in the House FY 07-08 budget recommendations. Additionally, H.3476 relating to alternative teacher certification was also amended as recommended by the House Education and Public Works Committee and received its second and third readings before being sent to the Senate on Wednesday where it was referred to Education.

In the Senate –

Presentations to the Higher Education Budget Subcommittee of Senate Finance continued. The subcommittee heard from the University of South Carolina and S.C. Tuition Grants on Tuesday and the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education, the Medical University of South Carolina, the Area Health Education Consortium (AHEC), and the Citadel on Wednesday. Members of the subcommittee include Senator John Courson (Chair), Senator John Matthews, Senator Clementa Pinckney, and Senator Ronnie Cromer. The hearings for higher education are scheduled through the week of March 26. In the chamber, S.591 was introduced and referred to Finance. This bill would enable South Carolinians to withdraw funds at any age from a qualified tax-deferred plan (e.g., 401-K, IRA) free of all state of S.C. income tax or penalties for early withdrawal provided funds are contributed to a charitable, educational, religious or eleemosynary organization within 60 days of withdrawal.

Reminder: Additional information on legislation referenced above and other legislation relating to higher education is available on CHE's website at

http://www.che.sc.gov/CHE_Docs/InfoCntr/Legisl/HigherEd_Legis_List.xls Links to S.C.'s Legislative Website and other relevant information is also available on CHE's website at

<http://www.che.sc.gov/Home/CHELegislativeUpdates/LegislativeSession2007.aspx>