



From left: The SCEA-Retired President, Robin Anderson; former South Carolina Representative Rita Allison; South Carolina House Education Chair, Shannon Erickson; The SCEA President Sherry East, and South Carolina Representative Paula Rawl Calhoun. The group attended the 30th anniversary of the South Carolina General Assembly Women's Caucus on Wednesday at Brookland Baptist Church in Columbia.

The Ballot Initiative

The House approved legislation this week by a vote of 83-27 to place a referendum on the 2024 ballot to allow direct funding of private schools with state dollars.

The legislation (H.3591) would repeal the state constitution's ban on private schools receiving public funds. Opponents argue that public funds would be better allocated to the public education system.

The bill now moves to the Senate where it needs 31 Senators to vote in favor.

[To see the potential ballot question: click here.](#)

Take action to protect public schools and our Constitution!

School Safety and Targeted Violence

The House Education and Public Works Full Committee heard several bills this week.

[H.3360: Center for School Safety and Targeted Violence](#) establishes a center within the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) to produce extensive training, education, and expertise in school safety and targeted violence.

The bill comes as the number of threats directed at schools has significantly increased. The SCEA testified in favor of the bill because we support any legislation that protects educators, staff, and students from harm.

The bill was reported favorably out of committee and now moves to the House floor.

School Psychologists Certification

The House Committee also heard [H.3308: School Psychologists](#), a bill that will give temporary certifications to school psychologists, social workers, and guidance counselors that are certified in another state until they can become certified in South Carolina.

The bill also received a favorable report and will now move to the House floor.

Open Enrollment

The House Education and Public Works Committee reported favorably on [H. 3843: Open Enrollment](#).

This bill would diminish district lines and allow students to attend schools outside of their district if the school has space.

Sunscreen in Schools

Specialists, parents, and students have all emphasized to legislators the importance of allowing sunscreen in schools, since skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States. [S.256](#) will allow students to have and apply sunscreen in public schools, which previously required permission from a doctor or parent to have.

The bill was read a third time by the Senate and is currently in the House Education and Public Works Committee.

Aspiring Educator Scholarships

[S. 125: Scholarship Stipend](#) would encourage students to pursue a career in education by providing scholarships for aspiring teachers to lessen their student debt burden while receiving their degree.

The bill was passed by the Senate 38-0 and now heads to the House, where it is expected to be debated in the upcoming weeks.

Fire Drills

[S.203: Public School Drills](#) was passed by the Senate and is currently in the House Education and Public Works Committee. This bill would remove conflicting language to unify each school district's fire drill policy. This will lessen classroom disruptions due to drills while still ensuring students are prepared for emergency situations.

To see the new proposed drill requirements for schools, click [here](#).

Statewide Education and Workforce Development Act

The Labor, Commerce, and Workforce Development Committee heard [H. 3726: Statewide Education and Workforce Development Act](#).

This bill aims to consolidate workforce development entities and streamline the development process by creating the Office of Statewide Workforce Development Coordination within SCDEW, which would oversee publicly funded workforce development services. The committee gave [H. 3726](#) a favorable report.

The House also introduced [H. 4060](#), which directly addresses the education aspect of H. 3726. It is currently in the House Education and Public Works Committee.

Vouchers

[“Academic Choice in Education” \(ACE\) \(S.285\)](#) is a voucher scheme that will use tax credits to indirectly fund private and religious institutions that could discriminate against students.

This bill did not see any movement in the legislature this week. The other voucher scheme bill, [“Scholarship Trust Fund Bill” \(S.39\)](#), remains in committee.

The SCEA will continue to provide updates as these bills move through the legislature.

[Take action on Vouchers!](#)

Censorship

The Senate scheduled a subcommittee hearing to discuss [H. 3728: “South Carolina Transparency and Integrity in Education Act,”](#) on March 14th.

This is a censorship bill that could limit discussions of race, gender, and other important issues in K-12 and higher education classrooms, making it difficult for many teachers to accurately teach their subjects and restricting educators’ ability to respect, reflect, and protect all students in their classrooms.

Additionally, this bill requires schools to share curricula with parents and create a complaint form that parents, other students, and school employees can use to challenge lessons or curriculum components they believe violates this law.

The SCEA fears that many educators may become burdened with unnecessary complaints and fears for the future of accurate education in Black history and other cultural topics.

[Take action now to stand up for truth!](#)

The Democratic House Caucus Meeting

Vice President Kamala Harris visited Columbia on Tuesday as part of her [‘Internet for All’](#) agenda to expand broadband access.

Expanding high-speed internet access is one of the areas the White House said is an area of focus in, “access, affordability, and equity.”

The SCEA President, Sherry East, and Orangeburg President Elizabeth Humphrey were in attendance.

Read more about the Vice President’s visit [here](#).



The SCEA Retired Member Beverly Frierson with Vice President Kamala Harris.

Lobby Day

Join The SCEA and educators across the state for Lobby Day on March 8!

The SCEA Lobby Day will begin at 9 a.m. in room 108 of the Blatt Building on the State Grounds. After a short registration period, The SCEA will provide a legislative briefing before we dismiss participants to talk to legislators.

[RSVP here! \(space is limited\)](#)

Teacher Recruitment and Retention Task Force Listening Session

The South Carolina Teacher Recruitment and Retention Task Force kicked off a series of statewide listening sessions with educators in Greenville last Monday. Thank you to everyone who showed up! The SCEA representative on the task force is Dr. Rise Strickland, English Teacher at Rock Hill High School.

There are two more listening sessions scheduled. Details are below:

- **March 13:** 4:30-6:30 p.m. Francis Marion University (Chapman Auditorium). Alumni Drive, Florence.
 - **March 20:** 4:30-6:30 p.m. Blatt Building, Room 110. 1105 Pendleton St., Columbia.
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Upcoming Meetings of Interest

Below are meetings scheduled for next week on bills of interest to you. You can click on the date link to view the agenda and the bill number to see the legislation.

[Tue 3/7 in Blatt Room 433](#)

[H 4060](#) (Education and Workforce Readiness)

[Wed 3/8 8:00 AM in Blatt Room 433](#)

[H 4023](#) (First Steps)

[Wed 3/8 10:30 AM in Gressette Room 105](#)

[S 126](#) (Charter School Accountability Act)

[Thu 3/9 9:00 AM in Gressette Room 207](#)

[S 244](#) (School Trustees); [S 305](#) (Work Experience Credit for New Teachers)

[Tue 3/14 9:30 AM in Gressette Room 105](#)

[H 3728](#) (Transparency and Integrity in Education Act)

Introductions of Interest

Below are bills that were introduced in the House and Senate this week that may be of interest to you. We have provided a brief description as well as a link to the full text of each bill. Please review and let us know if you have any comments or concerns.

[H. 4043: North Charleston School District](#)

Pendarvis

Representative Marvin Pendarvis (D-Charleston) introduced a bill that establishes North Charleston School District as an independent and autonomous school district, separate from the Charleston County School District. The governing body of the North Charleston School District would consist of a board of trustees which shall be composed of seven members. The bill was referred to the Charleston Delegation as local legislation.

[H. 4045: Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges](#)

Murphy

Representative Chris Murphy (R-Dorchester), Representative Gary Brewer (R-Charleston), Representative Robby Robbins (R-Dorchester) and others introduced a bill to recognize the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges for purposes of the Palmetto Fellows, LIFE and SC Hope Scholarships. The bill was referred to the House Ways and Means Committee.

[S. 579: STEM Education Day 2023](#)

Loftis

Senator Dwight Loftis (R-Greenville) introduced a resolution to declare April 12, 2023 as "STEM Education Day" in South Carolina. The resolution was adopted and referred to the Senate Education Committee.

[H. 4060: Education and Workforce Readiness](#)

Smith

Representative Murrell Smith (R-Sumter), Representative Jay West (R-Anderson), Representative Nathan Ballentine (R-Richland) and others introduced a bill to establish a "Statewide Workforce Readiness Goal" to ensure that all public high schools, including charter high schools, provide academic remediation courses in high school literacy and mathematics for students in the senior year of high school who desire to pursue a postsecondary education but are not academically prepared for college-level course work. The bill was referred to the House Education and Public Works Committee.

[S. 582: Theater in our Schools Month](#)

Massey

Senator Shane Massey (R-Edgefield) introduced a resolution to recognize March, 2023 as "Theater in Our Schools Month." The Senate resolution was adopted.

[H. 4069: Technical College Students on 2023 All-State Academic Team](#)

Erickson

Representative Shannon Erickson (R-Beaufort), Representative Terry Alexander (D-Florence), Representative Carl Anderson (D-Georgetown) and others introduced a resolution to recognize and congratulate the forty-three South Carolina technical college students named to South Carolina's 2023 All-State Academic Team by the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society in recognition of their scholarly accomplishments and service to their communities. The resolution was adopted and referred to the Senate.

[S. 584: Assisting Children](#)

Senn

Senator Sandy Senn (R-Charleston) and Senator Katrina Shealy (R-Lexington) introduced a bill to require all school districts to develop policies to ensure sufficient staff are present when services of a personal nature are being provided to handicapped children. Assistance of duties include eating, toileting, or dressing. The bill was referred to the Senate Education Committee.

Numbers to Know

- **\$2.97:** Gas average price per gallon in SC last week
- **48:** Total number of states with hate crime laws, excluding SC
- **58%:** Percentage of South Carolinians who were born in and still reside in the state
- **1:** Number of 24-hour Crisis Stabilization Units in the state for mental health treatment
- **438:** Number of preschoolers suspended throughout the state in 2022

Education Bills That Moved This Week

[Click here to follow all tracked bills](#)

SB124: NON-CERTIFIED TEACHER PILOT PROGRAM (HEMBREE G)

- Current Status: 3/2/2023 - Referred to Committee House Education and Public Works

SJR123: FIRST STEPS (HEMBREE G)

- Current Status: 3/2/2023 - Referred to Committee House Education and Public Works

HB3360: CENTER FOR SCHOOL SAFETY AND TARGETED VIOLENCE (POPE T)

- Current Status: 3/2/2023 - Member(s) request name added as sponsor : Mitchell

SB203: PUBLIC SCHOOL DRILLS (FANNING M)

- Current Status: 3/2/2023 - Referred to Committee House Education and Public Works

SB245: BOOSTER CLUBS (KIMBRELL J)

- Current Status: 3/2/2023 - Roll call Ayes-38 Nays-0

SB256: SUNSCREEN AT SCHOOL (JOHNSON M)

- Current Status: 3/2/2023 - Referred to Committee House Education and Public Works

HB3309: SEIZURE SAFE SCHOOLS ACT (GILLIAM L)

- Current Status: 3/1/2023 - Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Davis

HB3509: INVESTMENTS, AUTHORIZED FOR POLITICAL SUBDIVISION (LONG S)

- Current Status: 3/1/2023 - Member(s) request name added as sponsor : Yow, Mitchell

HJR3591: CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT (SMITH, JR. G)

- Current Status: 3/1/2023 - Referred to Committee Senate Judiciary
- News stories: 2/10/2023 - [Bill seeking voters' approval to send SC tax dollars to private schools advances in House](#)
- 12/28/2022 - [Funding of religious schools, abortion access: SC legislation to watch for in 2023 session](#)

SB125: SCHOLARSHIP STIPEND (HEMBREE G)

Current Status: 3/1/2023 - Roll call [Ayes-38 Nays-0](#)

In The News

SC House passes bail reform to stop what it calls “revolving door” or criminals

The South Carolina House of Representatives passed a reform to the state’s bail bond system that supporters say will make it harder for defendants to commit crimes while awaiting trial: a condition Republicans repeatedly dubbed “the revolving door.”

The Post & Courier

Want alcoholic beverages delivered to your home? A SC Senate bill would allow it

Some South Carolina lawmakers are trying to make it easier for residents to buy alcoholic beverages, but tougher for bartenders to serve the drinks.

The State

SC House Freedom Caucus takes colleagues to federal court on free speech grounds

The South Carolina House Freedom Caucus is taking its colleagues to federal court.

The State

As feds investigate, SC must stop “warehousing” disabled people, advocates say

Pam Loudon’s life changed forever nine months after she gave birth to her daughter P.J. Sloat.

The Post & Courier

SC lawmakers propose bill to make abortions punishable as homicides

South Carolina lawmakers proposed a bill to consider the punishment for women and those who enable abortions similar to homicide punishments.

WISTV

SC House budget pushes economic development, investments in people; includes tuition freeze

South Carolina House budget writers aimed to continue investing in economic development and the people of the state, the House’s lead writer says of the Ways and Means Committee budget proposal approved last week.

The State

SC ranks 4th in country in rate of private gun thefts, national report reveals

South Carolina in the past five years experienced the fourth-highest rate of personally reported gun thefts in the country, a sweeping national report released this month on guns used in crimes revealed.

The State

Is the SC Comptroller General in trouble for 3.5 billion accounting error? What we know.

South Carolina’s financial books had a \$3.5 billion accounting error in 2022, and it’s a problem that’s been around for the last 10 years.

Independent Mail

South Carolina Senate OKs “shield law” for lethal injections

The South Carolina Senate passed on Wednesday a law shielding the identity of pharmaceutical companies providing lethal injection drugs for state executions.

WISTV

