



Week 11: March 19 - March 21



The SCEA President Sherry East with Dr. Angie Slatton and Rep. Gilda Cobb-Hunter



H. 5164: Universal Voucher Expansion

On Wednesday, the House debated and ultimately passed [H.5164](#). This bill expands the Education Scholarship Trust Fund by eliminating the existing income-based eligibility requirements, making vouchers available to every South Carolina family.

This is a similar program to what exists in Arizona and Florida, and we have seen in those states that these policies overwhelmingly benefit wealthy families that were already sending their children to private school while draining state budgets and increasing costs for taxpayers.

The SCEA strongly opposes this bill because we believe that any voucher program violates our state constitution, and we believe that public money belongs in public institutions, including our education system. We submitted a letter in opposition to this bill, which you can read [here](#).

H.5164 passed in a [69-32](#) vote. It now goes to the Senate.

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H.3309: Seizure Safe Schools Act

[H.3309](#) will require public schools to create seizure response plans that include training for educators so that they know how to recognize signs and symptoms of seizures, an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) for situations when a student has a seizure, and allow parents to give permission for students with epilepsy to self-administer medication as necessary.

The Senate discussed this bill on the floor on Wednesday and approved it in a 42-1 vote. Since it's already passed the House, this bill now goes to the Governor for his signature.

H.4655: Unstructured Physical Education

[H.4655](#) would change the existing requirements for PE and physical activity for students in kindergarten through eighth grade.

This bill would increase the minimum required time for physical education (PE) to ninety minutes per week for elementary school students and sixty hours per year for middle school students.

Additionally, this bill would require schools to provide a minimum of 20 minutes of daily unstructured recess to students in kindergarten through eighth grade and provide a plan for indoor recess periods during inclement weather. If passed, it would take effect June 1 of 2025.

On Wednesday, the full House approved this bill in a 110-0 vote. It now heads to the Senate.

H.4289: Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

On Thursday, the House Education & Public Works Committee discussed [H.4289](#), which would ban universities from requiring Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) training; prevent them from hiring or admitting students based on race, sex, gender, or ethnicity; bans universities from requiring or considering diversity statements as part of an admission or employment application; and requires universities to report on an annual basis the total number of administrative and

nonteaching positions they have that relate to DEI.

Debate on the bill largely fell along party lines, with the Democratic members of the committee opposing the bill and the Republican members supporting.

Several members of the committee voiced concerns about the bill, arguing that this is a politically driven and shortsighted approach that will negatively impact colleges and universities and result in increased discrimination against minority faculty or students. Supporters argued that they wanted to ensure that universities were not using tax dollars to use discriminatory hiring practices and were only considering candidates based on merit and not physical characteristics.

The full committee voted to give the bill a favorable report in a 11-4 vote. It will now go to the House floor.

H.4700: Social Media Regulation Act

[H.4700](#) is a bill that would prohibit certain minors from being social media account holders and would provide parents/guardians certain information surrounding a minor's account. The bill also directs the Department of Education to develop a model program to educate students in grades 6-12 about online safety while using social media.

On Wednesday, the Senate Labor & Employment Subcommittee heard public testimony on this bill. There were several speakers who opposed it, expressing concern that this law would not hold up in court and could potentially violate the First Amendment. Others supported the measure, citing concerns that social media is detrimental to mental health and can often contain explicit content.

The Committee carried over the bill.

H.3295: Competency-Based Education

[H.3295](#) creates an exemption process for schools that implement competency-based education practices and provides guidelines for competency-based education strategies. This provides public schools with more flexibility to adapt less traditional curriculum strategies.

[This article](#) on our website provides more information about competency-based education and how it compares to traditional methods.

H.3295 also clarifies the code around school year start dates to make it easier for districts that have moved to a year-round school calendar.

On Wednesday, the Senate passed this bill in a 43-0 vote. It now heads to the Governor for signature.

SC WIL Newsletter

South Carolina Women in Leadership (SC WIL), one of The SCEA's ally organizations, releases a weekly newsletter with updates about women in politics, including upcoming workshops, important campaign updates, and other ways to get involved to elect more women to office.

This week's newsletter discusses the appointment of new justices to the South Carolina Supreme Court and potential changes to the judicial selection process. When former Chief Justice Kaye Hearn had to retire, there were originally three candidates in the running to replace her. Only a few hours after requesting commitments from lawmakers, both female candidates dropped out of the race with no explanation.

A new bill regarding the Judicial Merit Selection Committee, [S.1046](#), aims to bring these conversations into the open and provide more public details.

Check out the newsletter [here](#).

Education Bills That Moved This Week

[HB3309: SEIZURE SAFE SCHOOLS ACT](#)

(Gilliam, L)

A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ENACTING THE "SEIZURE SAFE SCHOOLS ACT" BY ADDING SECTION 59-63-97 SO AS TO REQUIRE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SEIZURE ACTION PLANS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AND TO PROVIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR SUCH PLANS AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION, AMONG OTHER THINGS.

- 3/20/2024 - Read third time and enrolled
- 3/19/2024 - Read second time
- 3/19/2024 - Roll call Ayes-42 Nays-1

[HB3617: PAID FAMILY LEAVE](#)

(Bernstein, B)

A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTIONS 8-11-150 AND 8-11-155, BOTH RELATING TO PAID PARENTAL LEAVE, SO AS TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF WEEKS OF PAID PARENTAL LEAVE IN THE EVENT OF THE BIRTH OR ADOPTION OF A CHILD FOR ELIGIBLE STATE EMPLOYEES.

- 3/20/2024 - Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Yow, Mitchell

[HB4649: PRIVATE SECURITY SERVICES IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS](#)

(Bannister, B)

A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING SECTION 59-19-275 SO AS TO PROVIDE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS WITH MORE THAN FIFTEEN THOUSAND STUDENTS MAY USE CERTAIN SECURITY PERSONNEL TO PROMOTE SAFETY AND SECURITY ON

SCHOOL PREMISES IF LICENSED AS A PROPRIETARY SECURITY BUSINESS, AND TO PROVIDE DISTRICTS REMAIN OBLIGATED TO USE SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS AS OTHERWISE PROVIDED BY LAW; BY AMENDING SECTION 40-18-60, RELATING TO PROPRIETARY SECURITY BUSINESS LICENSURE, SO AS TO ADD PROVISIONS CONCERNING PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS APPLYING FOR LICENSURE; BY AMENDING SECTION 40-18-80, RELATING TO SECURITY OFFICER REGISTRATION CERTIFICATION, SO AS TO PROVIDE THE SOUTH CAROLINA LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION SHALL IMPLEMENT CERTAIN RELATED TRAINING REQUIREMENTS; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 40-18-140, RELATING TO EXCEPTIONS FROM PRIVATE SECURITY AND INVESTIGATION AGENCY LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS, SO AS TO CLARIFY THAT PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS ARE EXCLUDED FROM THESE REQUIREMENTS.

- 3/20/2024 - Debate adjourned
- 3/21/2024 - Debate adjourned

HB4655: UNSTRUCTURED AND SELF-DIRECTED RECESS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

(Haddon, P)

A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 59-10-10, RELATING TO STANDARDS FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN KINDERGARTEN THROUGH EIGHTH GRADE, SO AS TO REQUIRE CERTAIN MANDATORY MINIMUM PERIODS FOR PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND RECESS IN FOUR-YEAR OLD KINDERGARTEN THROUGH EIGHTH GRADE EACH YEAR IN ADDITION TO OTHER CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS, AND TO PROVIDE RECESS PERIODS MUST BE HELD INDOORS DURING TIMES OF INCLEMENT WEATHER; TO REDESIGNATE ARTICLE 1 OF CHAPTER 10, TITLE 59 AS "PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND ACTIVITY"; TO PROVIDE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SHALL TAKE CERTAIN MEASURES TO CONFORM THEIR RESPECTIVE REGULATIONS AND RULES TO THE PROVISIONS OF THIS ACT; AND TO CLARIFY THAT THE PROVISIONS OF THIS ACT PREVAIL TO THE EXTENT THEY CONFLICT WITH ANY SUCH REGULATIONS AND RULES.

- 3/20/2024 - Member(s) request name added as sponsor: McDaniel, Rivers
- 3/20/2024 - Amended
- 3/20/2024 - Read second time
- 3/20/2024 - Roll call Yeas-110 Nays-0
- 3/21/2024 - Read third time and sent to Senate

HB4700: SOUTH CAROLINA SOCIAL MEDIA REGULATION ACT

(Newton, W)

A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING ARTICLE 9 TO CHAPTER 5, TITLE 39 SO AS TO PROVIDE DEFINITIONS; TO PROVIDE THAT A SOCIAL MEDIA COMPANY MAY NOT PERMIT CERTAIN MINORS TO BE ACCOUNT HOLDERS; TO PROVIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA COMPANIES; TO PROVIDE THAT A SOCIAL MEDIA COMPANY SHALL PROVIDE CERTAIN PARENTS OR GUARDIANS WITH CERTAIN INFORMATION; TO PROVIDE THAT A SOCIAL MEDIA COMPANY SHALL RESTRICT SOCIAL MEDIA ACCESS TO MINORS DURING CERTAIN HOURS;

TO PROVIDE FOR CONSUMER COMPLAINTS; TO PROVIDE THAT THE CONSUMER SERVICES DIVISION HAS AUTHORITY TO ADMINISTER AND ENFORCE CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS; TO PROVIDE FOR AN ANNUAL REPORT; TO PROVIDE FOR A CAUSE OF ACTION; AND TO PROVIDE THAT CERTAIN WAIVERS AND LIMITATIONS ARE VOID.

- 3/20/2024 - Senate LCI - Labor & Employment Subcommittee, (Bill Scheduled for Hearing)

SB839: HOMICIDE BY CHILD ABUSE

(Alexander, T)

A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 16-3-85, RELATING TO HOMICIDE BY CHILD ABUSE, SO AS TO INCREASE THE AGE OF A CHILD UNDER THIS SECTION FROM UNDER THE AGE OF ELEVEN TO UNDER THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN.

- 3/20/2024 - Introduced and read first time
- 3/20/2024 - Referred to Committee House Judiciary

HB4702: COMPUTER SCIENCE EDUCATION INITIATIVE ACT

(Davis, S)

A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ENACTING THE "SOUTH CAROLINA COMPUTER SCIENCE EDUCATION INITIATIVE ACT" BY ADDING SECTION 59-29-250 SO AS TO PROVIDE FOR THE EXPANSION AND ENHANCEMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE EDUCATION IN PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS THROUGH THE CREATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A STATEWIDE COMPUTER SCIENCE EDUCATION PLAN AND THE REQUIREMENT THAT EACH PUBLIC SCHOOL OFFERS AT LEAST ONE COMPUTER SCIENCE COURSE THAT MEETS CERTAIN CRITERIA, AND TO PROVIDE RELATED REQUIREMENTS OF THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.

- 3/21/2024 - House EPW: K-12 Subcommittee, (Bill Scheduled for Hearing)
- 3/21/2024 - House Subcommittee recommends passage, as amended, House EPW K-12 Subcommittee
- 3/21/2024 - Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Erickson, Bradley

HB4703: SOUTH CAROLINA STEM OPPORTUNITY ACT

(Davis, S)

A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ENACTING THE "SOUTH CAROLINA STEM OPPORTUNITY ACT" BY ADDING ARTICLE 17 TO CHAPTER 1, TITLE 13 SO AS TO ESTABLISH THE SOUTH CAROLINA SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATHEMATICS (STEM) COALITION, THE SOUTH CAROLINA SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATHEMATICS (STEM) EDUCATION FUND WITHIN THE STATE TREASURY, AND THE SC STEM COALITION ADVISORY COUNCIL, AND TO PROVIDE THEIR RESPECTIVE PURPOSES AND FUNCTIONS.

- 3/21/2024 - House EPW: K-12 Subcommittee, (Bill Scheduled for Hearing)
- 3/21/2024 - House Subcommittee recommends passage, as amended, House EPW K-12 Subcommittee
- 3/21/2024 - Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Erickson, Bradley

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 3/26 in Blatt Room 433](#)

[H 4702](#) (Computer Science Education Initiative Act); [H 4703](#) (South Carolina Stem Opportunity Act); [H 5144](#) (School Mapping Data Program); [H 5245](#) (Charter School Enrollment Preferences)

[Tue 3/26 in Blatt Room 427](#)

[H 4934](#) (Paid Military Leave)

[Wed 3/27 10:00 AM in Gressette Room 105](#)

[S 150](#) (Private School Sports Participation); [S 161](#) (Private School Students in Public School Sports); [S 1173](#) (Interscholastic Sports)

[Wed 3/27 10:00 AM in Gressette Room 408](#)

[S 1188](#) (Notification Requirements for Expulsion Hearings)

Introduction of Interest

Below are bills that were introduced 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.

[S. 1188: Notification Requirements for Expulsion Hearings](#)

Tedder

Senators Deon Tedder (D-Charleston) and Greg Hembree (R-Horry) introduced legislation to require the written notification of expulsion of a student to the parents or legal guardian to include their right to have legal counsel present at the hearing and all other regular legal rights.

This bill was referred to the Senate Education Committee.

[H. 5290: Baby Olivia Act](#)

Oremus

Representatives Melissa Lackey Oremus (R-Aiken), John McCravy (R-Greenwood), April Cromer (R-Anderson), Ashley Trantham (R-Greenville), and Jordan Pace (R-Berkeley) introduced legislation to require the human growth and development instruction in public schools include a presentation of a high-definition ultrasound video with certain specifications and a high-quality animated rendering of the process of fertilization and every state of human development inside the uterus. The Attorney General would be able to bring a civil action for a writ of mandamus to compel a public school district to comply.

This bill was referred to the House Judiciary Committee.

[H. 5311: Adaptive Kindergarten Readiness Program](#)

Kirby

Representative Roger Kirby (D-Florence) and others introduced legislation to establish the Adaptive Kindergarten Readiness Program in South Carolina and establish goals for the program to promote early childhood literacy. The program would be available statewide and use a home-based or center-based educational technology program and family engagement to develop school readiness skills of preschool children. The program would include individualized software instruction in reading, mathematics, and science, a multisensory reading tutoring program, and a validated adaptive reading test.

This bill provides contractor requirements, as well as enrollment and reporting requirements and recruitment plans.

This bill was referred to the House Education and Public Works Committee.

