



**Dear Friends,**

As we close this legislative session, I am pleased to report that it has been successful with \$2 billion being returned to our taxpayers due to our strong economy. First, I know many of you like myself are pleased that our efforts to protect life, religious freedom, and our second amendment right to bear arms have paid off. Second, we have made significant strides with the revenue that will benefit everyone as a whole and ensure a successful future for our state. Finally, we have made significant well deserved contributions towards public safety and education.

### **Roe v. Wade Overturned**

- After months of deliberations, the US Supreme Court voted to overturn the Roe v. Wade decision, ending constitutional protections for abortions
- The Supreme Court voted 6-3 to uphold Mississippi's 20-week abortion ban in the case of Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization, asserting that a person does not inherently have the right to privacy and that no provision in the US Constitution protects the right to abortion
- Justice Samuel Alito's opinion declared the court's decision in Roe v. Wade was "egregiously wrong from the start" and that "its reasoning was exceptionally weak"
- This ruling does not ban or outlaw abortions nationwide, it simply allows states to now make the decision
- The Governor filed a motion to lift the injunction on SC's Fetal Heartbeat Act, which was signed into law February 21, 2021
  - According to Attorney General Alan Wilson, a federal judge has lifted this ban and as of June 27, 2022 the Fetal Heartbeat Law is now in effect in South Carolina

### **Protecting Religious Freedom**

- The US Supreme Court sided with a Washington State Football Coach who sought to kneel and pray on the field after games
- The Court ruled 6-3 in favor of the Coach and said prayer was protected by the First Amendment
- Justice Neil Gorsuch said "The Constitution and the best of our traditions counsel mutual respect and tolerance, not censorship and suppression, for religious and nonreligious views alike. Further,

“respect for religious expressions is indispensable to life in a free and diverse Republic – whether those expressions take place in a sanctuary or on a field, and whether they manifest through the spoken word or a bowed head.”

### **New York Concealed Weapons Law**

- In a landmark decision, the US Supreme Court’s conservative supermajority declared for the first time that there is a constitutional right to carry a handgun in public for self-defense
- By a vote of 6-3, the court struck down a century-old gun law in New York that limited licenses to carry a gun outside the home to carrying them for sports, like hunting or shooting, and those with a special need, like messengers carrying cash
- Justice Thomas stated that “the constitutional right to bear arms in public for self-defense is not a second class right subject to an entirely different body of rules” and just like the First Amendment doesn’t allow the banning on unpopular speech, the Second Amendment is not limited to people who can demonstrate a special need to carry a gun in public

### **Tax Cut Bill**

- The largest tax cut and tax rebate in the history of South Carolina
- \$1 billion rebates this year to all tax filers with tax liability
  - This could provide up to \$800 for some income taxpayers (as calculated by the Department of Revenue) with checks mailed out before Christmas
  - Based on actual income taxes paid for tax year 2021 -- no refundable portion
- \$1 billion in income tax relief
  - The spending plan, which takes effect July 1, immediately cuts the top income tax rate from 7% to 6.5% and gradually lowers it to 6% over five years
  - Cut applies to Tax Year 2022
  - The plan collapses current tax brackets of 6%, 5% and 3% into one bracket taxed at 3%
  - Reduces taxes on almost all tax filers and raises taxes on no one while simplifying South Carolina’s income tax system
- Manufacturing property tax cut from 9% to 6% -- effective for property tax year 2022
  - Approximately \$100M recurring annual savings for manufacturing companies

### **Reserve Fund**

- Creates a \$1 billion reserve in case the economy falters
- Increases total reserves from 7% to 10%
  - General Reserve Fund from 5% to 7% (ramps up .5% over 4 years)
  - Capital Reserve Fund from 2% to 3%
- Allows mid-year use of the Capital Reserve Fund to offset revenue reduction which protects essential state services from mid-year cuts

### **Law Enforcement**

- Provides over \$15M to increase salaries for law enforcement officers and fully funds the law enforcement compensation analysis conducted by the Department of Administration. This funding will increase retention at the Department of Public Safety, SLED, Department of Juvenile Justice, Law Enforcement Training Council (Criminal Justice Academy), and Probation, Parole and Pardon Services.
- Provides over \$20M for correctional officers at the Department of Corrections and Department of Juvenile Justice
- Provides over 39 new positions at SLED. (\$4M)

- \$15M for a new helicopter at SLED.
- Adds 87 new positions at the Department of Corrections for inmate health care, behavioral health, and positions to ensure safe and secure prisons.
  - The House also agreed with the Senate on a much-deserved salary increase for dental assistants at the Department of Corrections
- Adds 28 new positions at the Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services in the re-entry program, domestic violence program expansion, and mental health program expansion.
- Provides law enforcement equipment such as vehicles, agency body cameras, and communication equipment for state agencies and various local law enforcement agencies. In addition, funded the statewide body camera and vest program at \$20M.
- Provides funding for equipment and capital needs such as \$48M at the Department of Corrections; \$20M for the Severely Mentally Ill Youth Facility requested by Department of Juvenile Justice; \$4M for the Pee Dee Regional Office for SLED; \$389K to renovate the Administrative Law Court common areas and certain court rooms; \$1.2M to renovate campus dormitory restrooms at the Criminal Justice Academy.
- Invests in technology needs: \$9.6M for solicitor technology and case management system at Prosecution Coordination Commission; and \$423K for Administrative Law Judges.
- The Senate adopted, and the House ultimately concurred, directive language for the Department of Corrections to eliminate 200 vacant positions and reinvest the cost savings back into the remaining correctional officer positions to increase retention.

### **K-12/Teachers**

- \$275 million increase in annual funding for public education; focuses state dollars on classrooms and teachers!
- This budget increases the state minimum salary schedule for each teacher by \$4,000. The starting salary for a teacher is increased from \$36,000 to \$40,000. (This is a 32% increase over the past five years)
- Allocates \$4.3 million to give bus drivers a 5% raise (This is in addition to the 3% state employee pay raise).
- Increased the Teacher Supply reimbursement from \$275 to \$300.
- Provides \$140 million Capital Funding for Disadvantaged School Districts.
- Provides \$100 million for Instructional Materials.
- Provides \$12 million for School Bus purchases.
- Provides \$12 million for the State Department of Education Grants Program.

### **Higher Education**

- No inflation for tuition at South Carolina's public universities and colleges.
- For the 4th year, tuition for in-state undergraduate students is frozen at both 4-year and 2-year campuses.
- Fully funds LIFE, HOPE, Palmetto Fellows Scholarships, and Lottery for Tuition Assistance for the seventh consecutive year.

Thank you for allowing me to represent you in Columbia. I value your input and your friendship. Please do not hesitate to call on me if I can ever be of assistance to you.

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