

2024 SC Legislative Update



SOUTH CAROLINA
ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

2024 Legislative Update

- **Where Are We?**
- **What Got Accomplished?**
- **What's Ahead In 2025?**



2024 Legislative Session

Where Are We?

- 2nd Regular Session of 125th General Assembly
 - Convened on January 9, 2024
 - Adjourned on May 9, 2024* (*Sine Die Resolution*)
 - Legislation *Not Passed* in 2024 *Must Be Reintroduced*
- Election Year For All 170 Members of the General Assembly
 - *46 Senators (First Election Using New District Lines)*
 - *124 House Members*

South Carolina Party Control: 1992-2025

No Democratic trifectas • Twenty-three years of Republican trifectas

Scroll left and right on the table below to view more years.

Year	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Governor	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	D	D	D	D	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Senate	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
House	D	D	D	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R

2024 South Carolina legislative session



General information

Session start: January 9, 2024

Session end: May 9, 2024

Leadership

Senate President

Thomas Alexander (R)

House Speaker

G. Murrell Smith Jr. (R)

Majority Leader

Senate: Shane Massey (R)

House: Davey Hiott (R)

Minority Leader

Senate: Brad Hutto (D)

House: James Rutherford (D)

Elections

Next Election: November 5, 2024

Last Election: November 8, 2022



2024 Legislative Session Recap

Where Are We?

Over 3,900 pieces of legislation were filed last legislative session...

South Carolina Sessions

Year	Session	Introduced
2023-2024	125th General Assembly	3976
2021-2022	124th General Assembly	3900
2019-2020	123rd General Assembly	3897
2017-2018	122nd General Assembly	3745
2015-2016	121st General Assembly	3872
2013-2014	120th General Assembly	3782
2011-2012	119th General Assembly	3975
2009-2010	118th General Assembly	2758

Session 125 by the Numbers

Ratified Bills in Session 125 (2023 - 2024)



...of which, only 253* became law.



2024 Legislative Session

House Elections

HOUSE

15

OPEN SEATS

AS A RESULT OF RETIREMENTS &
NEWLY DRAWN DISTRICTS

UNOPPOSED

42

INCUMBENTS WILL NOT FACE OPPOSITION
IN THE PRIMARY AND GENERAL
ELECTIONS

39

PRIMARY ELECTIONS

INCUMBENTS FACE OPPOSITION
IN THE PRIMARY ELECTIONS

48

GENERAL ELECTIONS

INCUMBENTS FACE OPPOSITION
IN THE GENERAL ELECTION



2024 Legislative Session

Senate Elections

SENATE

6

OPEN SEATS

AS A RESULT OF RETIREMENTS & NEWLY DRAWN DISTRICTS

UNOPPOSED

13

INCUMBENTS WILL NOT FACE OPPOSITION IN THE PRIMARY AND GENERAL ELECTIONS

13

PRIMARY ELECTIONS

INCUMBENTS FACE OPPOSITION IN THE PRIMARY ELECTIONS

24

GENERAL ELECTIONS

INCUMBENTS FACE OPPOSITION IN THE GENERAL ELECTION






2024 Legislative Session

November Election Results

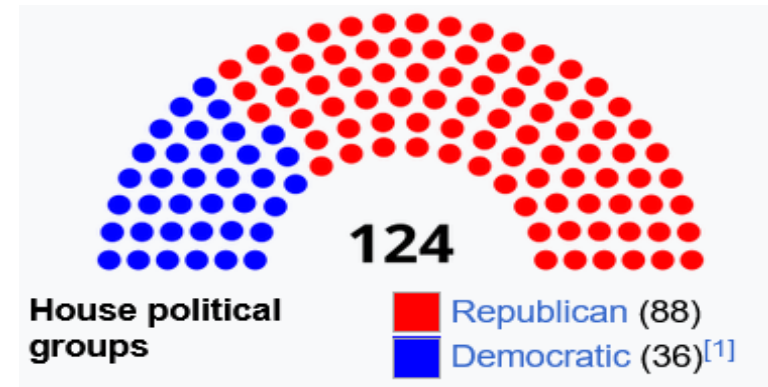
SENATE

- 13 New Senate Members
- First “Veto-Proof” Supermajority in over 100 years

South Carolina State Senate			
Party		As of November 5, 2024	After November 6, 2024
	Democratic Party	15	12
	Republican Party	30	34
	Independent	1	0
Total		46	46

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

- 19 New House Members
- Several R Incumbents Lost Primary Races



2024 Legislative Session

What Got Accomplished?

- **Property Tax Exemption for Disabled Veterans**
- **Public Safety Legislation**
- **Economic / Workforce Development**
 - Abandoned Buildings Tax Credit
 - SC Nexus
- **Judicial Reform**
- **Constitutional Carry**
- **Banning Cellphones in Prisons**



H. 3116 (Act No. 116) – Disabled Veteran Property Tax Exemption

- A veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces, who is permanently / totally disabled because of a service-connected disability that files with DOR and meets the other qualifications of Section 12-37-220(B)(1), may immediately claim a property tax exemption on their owner-occupied property. (1 year earlier than current law)
- Clarifies that the homestead exemption also applies to a qualified surviving spouse of an eligible owner, regardless of whether the deceased spouse applied for the exemption.
- Expands the current private passenger vehicle property tax exemption for a disabled veteran.
- Went into effect on March 11, 2024, and applies to tax years beginning in 2023 and any open period less than 3-years.



Act No. 109 (H. 4120) – Illegal Immigration Enforcement Unit

- This Act created the “Illegal Immigration Enforcement Unit” within SLED that was previously housed within DPS.
- Funded annually through the General Appropriations Act separate from SLED’s other appropriations.
- SLED is required to develop a training program regarding the implementation/enforcement of immigration laws and make the program available to all local law enforcement agencies.



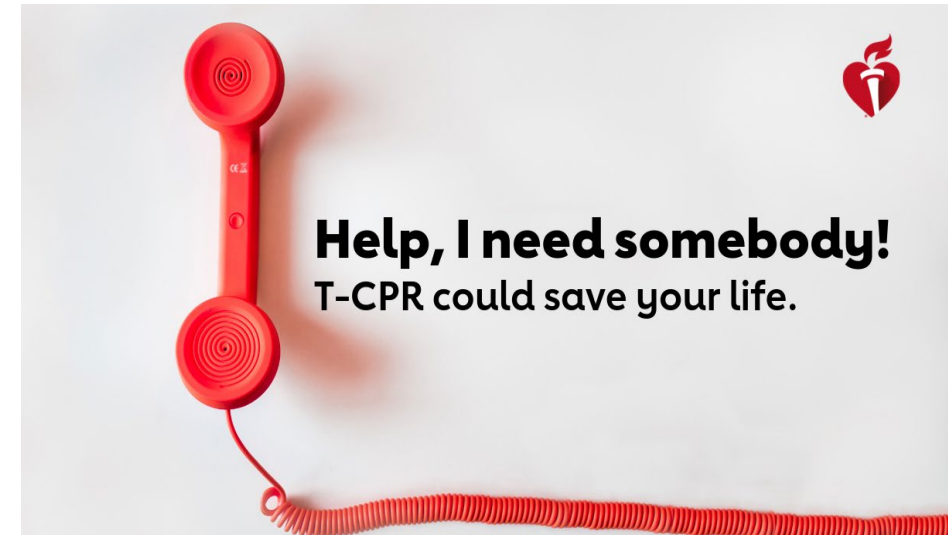
Act No. 163 (S. 728) – Firefighter Residency

- **Amends the definition of “firefighter” as it relates to the Firefighter Cancer Health Benefit Plan.**
 - *Includes employees of SC State Fire.*
 - *Deletes the requirement that a person must be a resident of this state when engaged in rescue, fire suppression or other related activities.*
- **Firefighter must have served in a SC fire department for at least 5 continuous years and has been in active service within 10 years of a diagnosis.**
- **The provisions of the Act apply to firefighters diagnosed with cancer on or after July 1, 2021.**



Act No. 179 (H. 4867) – 911 T-CPR

- Requires all 911 telecommunicators who provide dispatch for emergency medical conditions to be trained in high-quality telecommunicator CPR on an annual basis beginning on January 1, 2025.
- The SC Criminal Justice Academy must monitor adherence to the T-CPR training requirements and is responsible for penalizing agencies that are found to be in noncompliance.
- Political subdivisions, the State, and telecommunicators shall not be liable for civil damages arising from the provisions of CPR instructions to 911 callers except acts or omissions amounting to gross negligence, recklessness, or willful, wanton, or intentional misconduct.



Act No. 217 (S. 969) – Income Tax Deductions for Firefighters and Law Enforcement

- **Increases the individual income tax subsistence allowance deduction for law enforcement officers and full-time firefighters and EMS personnel from \$8 to \$16 per day beginning in tax year 2024.**
- **Increases the maximum deduction for volunteer firefighters, rescue squad members, hazardous materials response team members, reserve police officers, DNR deputy enforcement officers, members of the State Guard, and volunteer state constables who meet the volunteer activity requirements as specified in the statute from \$3,000 to \$6,000.**
- **The allowable deduction per taxpayer must be certified by Revenue and Fiscal Affairs annually such that the total revenue loss does not exceed an aggregate limit of \$3.1 million per year in total, which remains unchanged.**
- **Amends the local option transportation tax to permit a local government to opt to exempt sales of unprepared food items from the tax for those imposed pursuant to a referendum held on or after November 5, 2024.**



Act No. 174 (H. 4436) – Emergency Vehicle Operations

- Requires the driver of a vehicle who approaches or passes an emergency scene or vehicle with flashing emergency lights to maintain control of their vehicle to avoid interfering with the operation of an authorized emergency vehicle.
- A person who violates this requirement is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be fined not less than \$300 nor more than \$500.



Economic / Workforce Development: Act No. 169 (S. 1021) Abandoned Bldgs. Tax Credit

- Extends the provisions of the SC Abandoned Buildings Revitalization Act that was set to expire on December 31, 2025, through 2035.
- Increases the amount of the maximum tax credit that may be earned by a taxpayer in a tax year from \$500,000 to \$700,000.
- Also includes provisions from H. 3737, the “Short Line Railroad Modernization Act.”
 - Creates a new income tax credit for Class II and III railroads based on qualified railroad reconstruction or replacement expenditures.
 - The amount of this credit may not exceed \$5,000 times the number of railroad track miles owned or leased within the State by the taxpayer, not to exceed \$1.5 million in a tax year.



Economic / Workforce Development: SC Nexus

- **Aims to be a global leader in advanced energy**
 - Led by SC Department of Commerce;
 - Emphasis on cyber-secure grid resilience technologies, and;
 - Improving clean energy supply chains.
- **In July of 2024, the U.S. Economic Development Association awarded approximately \$45 million to SC NEXUS**
 - One of only 12 tech hubs across the nation to receive EDA implementation grant funds



Act No. 219 (S. 1046) – Judicial Reform

- **Increases the membership of JMSC to 12 members:**
 - *4 members selected by the Speaker of the House (3 of which must be members of the House)*
 - *2 members selected by the President of the Senate (1 must be a member of the Senate);*
 - *2 members selected by the Senate Judiciary Chairman (both must be members of the Senate); and*
 - *4 members selected by the Governor*
 - *****All nonlegislative members must be members of the SC Bar with at least 10 years of experience.*****
- **The commission will serve staggered two-year terms and can serve up to two consecutive terms, which would prevent a judge from appearing before the same JMSC members for re-election.**
- **The number of qualified candidates sent to the Legislature would increase from three to six and there would be a mid-term review of elected Judges and restrictions on seeking pledges and vote counters.**
- **Additionally, the Act increases the amount of time members of the legislature and the public can review a candidate's qualifications.**



Act No. 111 (H. 3594) – Constitutional Carry

- **Major overhaul to SC gun laws:**
 - *Authorizes individuals who are not otherwise prohibited from possessing a firearm, to legally possess a firearm openly or concealed without training and without a CWP.*
 - *No restrictions of guns inside vehicles (can be stored anywhere).*
 - *A visible firearm does not qualify as probable cause for a law enforcement officer to stop and question a person.*
 - *Establishes graduated mandatory minimum penalties for felons that possess firearms*
 - *Adds penalties for those who commit a crime with a concealed weapon who do not have a CWP.*
 - *Clerks of Court and Public Defenders added to a list of individuals who may carry a firearm anywhere in SC with a CWP.*
 - *Establishes State funded firearms training administered by SLED and CWP instructors 2x per month in every county.*



Act No. 111 (H. 3594) – Constitutional Carry

- **Places where individuals may not possess a firearm:**
 - *Law Enforcement, Correctional, or Detention facilities;*
 - *Courthouses or other buildings where court is held and is session;*
 - *Polling places on election days;*
 - *Meetings of the governing body of a county, municipality or school districts;*
 - *Daycares, schools, and athletic events;*
 - *Churches or religious sanctuaries (unless express permission);*
 - *Hospitals and medical facilities (unless express permission); and*
 - *Places clearly marked with a sign prohibiting the carrying of a concealed weapon in compliance with Section 23-31-235.*



Act No. 137 (H. 4002) – Cellphones in Prisons “Captain Robert Johnson Act”

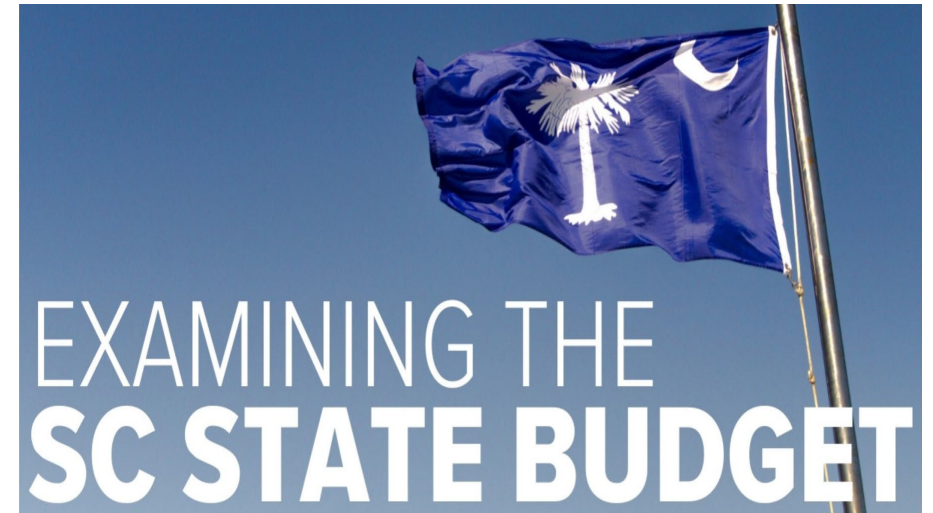
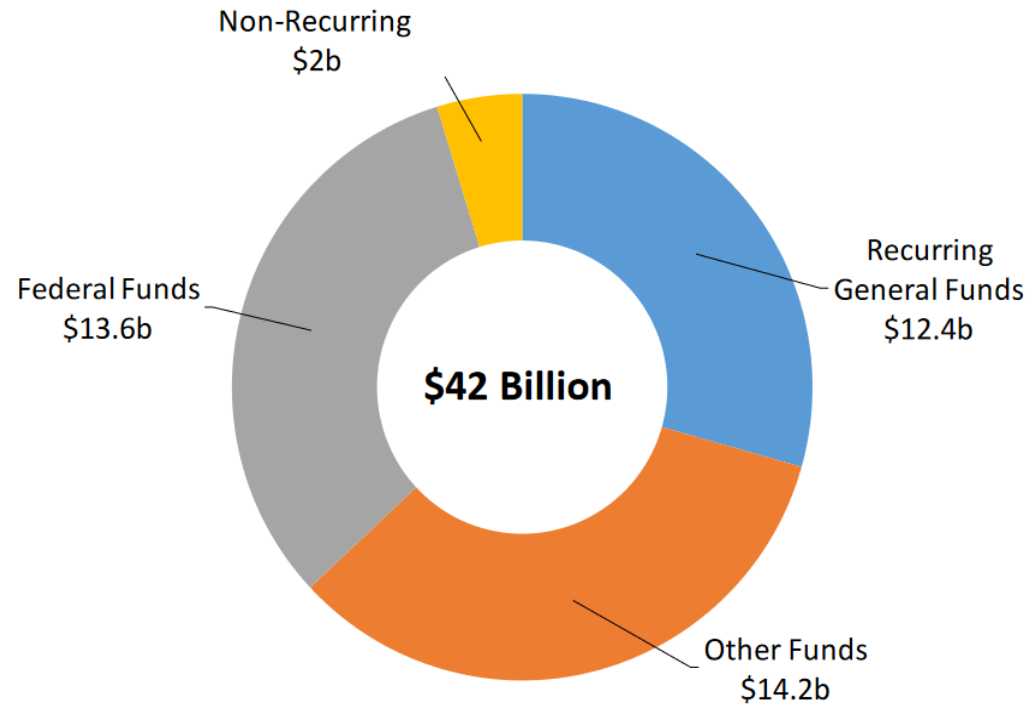
- Provides that it is unlawful for an inmate under the jurisdiction of the Department of Corrections to possess a cell phone or any other type of telecommunication device unless authorized by the director of the Department.
- Any person violating this provision, upon conviction, is guilty of a misdemeanor and must not be imprisoned for not more than one year.
 - For a second and subsequent offense, the person is guilty of a felony and must be imprisoned for not more than five years.
- If a judge or finder of fact finds beyond a reasonable doubt that a violation of this provision was the proximate cause of any subsequent felony offense, the person is guilty of a felony and must be imprisoned no more than 10 years.



FY 2024-25 Budget

H. 5100: FY 24-25 Appropriations Bill

FY 2024-25 Budget – Total Funds



FY 2024-25 Budget Highlights

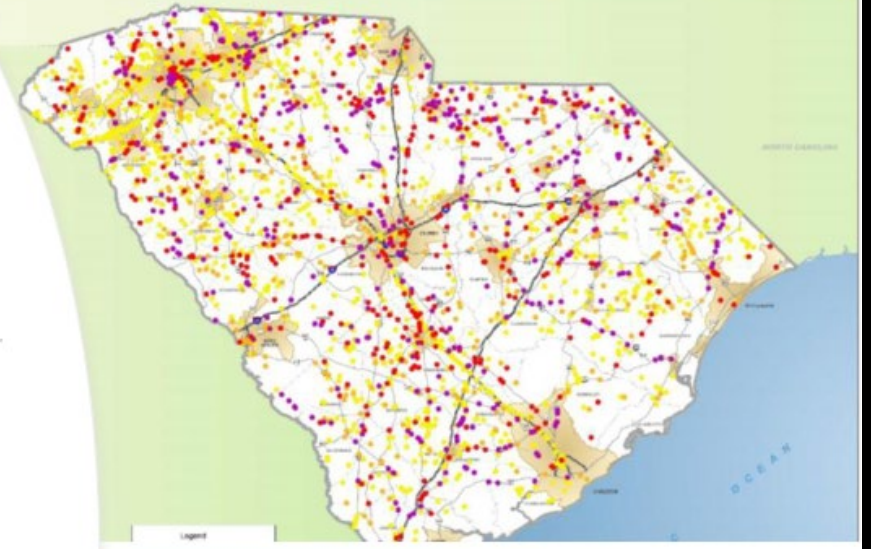
- **Additional funding to the *Local Government Fund***
 - *Increase of \$13.2 Million (Fully Funded at 5%)*
- **\$12 Million for the Rural County Stabilization Fund**
 - *Counties with less than 5.35% growth in the 2020 Census*
- **\$750,000 for PTSD Treatment for first responders**
- **Base pay increase for state employees:**
 - *Provided a \$1,125 base pay increase for state employees making \$50,000 or less and a 2.25% base pay increase for state employees making more than \$50,000.*



FY 2024-25 Budget Highlights

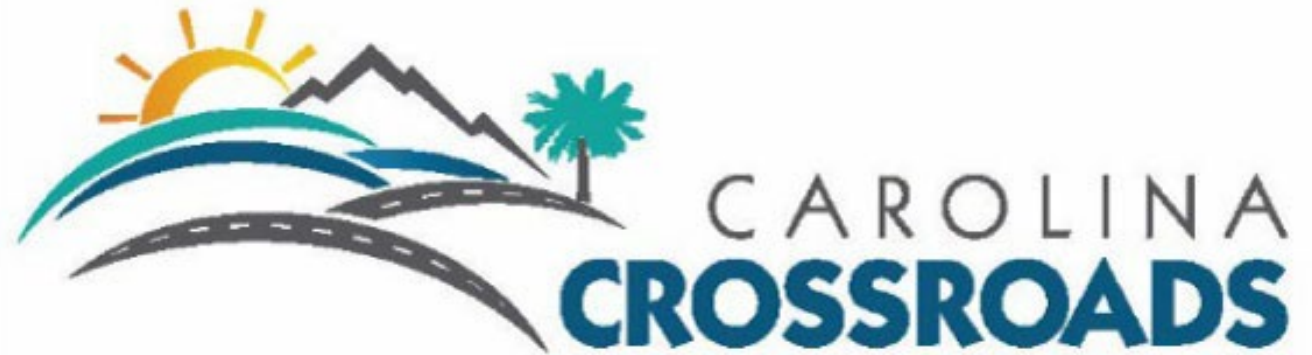
Aging Bridges Across the State

- Each dot on the map represents a bridge at least 60 years old.
 - Yellow: 60-70 years
 - Orange: 70-80 years
 - Red: 80-90 years
 - Purple: 90+ years
- Bridges in the state are built with a 60 to 75-year life.
- **\$100 million** will go towards Interstate/Primary Network and **\$100 million** towards Secondary Network.



**FY 2024-25
Budget Highlights:
Funding for Infrastructure
and Roads**

- \$200 Million to CTCs to accelerate local road projects.
- \$117.4 Million to the Rural Road Safety Program.
- \$42.4 Million to RIA for Water and Sewer Projects.
- 30.3 Million in additional local infrastructure spending through RIA.



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

FY 2024-25 Budget: Homestead Exemption Fund

- **Proviso 118.22: Homestead Exemption Fund**
- **Debate between the House and Senate on how to distribute \$600 million from the HEX Fund: *Property Tax Relief vs. Project Funding***
- **Ultimately, the \$600 million was directed to be distributed as follows:**
 - \$99.5 million for accelerated Income Tax Reduction (6.3% to 6.2%);
 - \$200 million to the County Transportation Committee Acceleration Fund;
 - \$100 million to SCDOT for the Bridge Acceleration Fund;
 - \$117.4 million to SCDOT for the Rural Road Safety Program;
 - \$30 million to RIA for Local Grant/Loan Program; and
 - \$53 million to USC Health Sciences Campus for bond avoidance.



2024 Legislative Update

Where Are We Going?

- **House and Senate Organizational Session:**
 - *Senate: December 3rd*
 - *House: December 3-4th*
- **House and Senate Prefile Dates:**
 - *Senate: December 11th*
 - *House: December 5th & 11th*
- **Session Begins January 14th, 2025**



2024 Legislative Update

Where Are We Going?

- **Areas to Watch for 2025:**
 - Energy, Energy, Energy!
 - Funding Recovery Efforts from Storms
 - Infrastructure & Economic Development
 - School Choice / Vouchers
 - Social Issues
 - House Infighting / “New” Senate



Thank You!

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