



UpstateChamberCoalition

2025 Legislative Report



2025 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

IMPROVE OUR BUSINESS CLIMATE

- Support the rights of private businesses to make their own operating decisions, champion legislation that enhances competitiveness for small businesses and entrepreneurs and encourages economic development and business growth.
- Reinstating joint and several liability protections to improve fairness in allocating fault impacting both the cost of doing business and the state's insurance climate.

ACCESSIBILITY & AFFORDABILITY OF CHILDCARE

- Support solutions to expand the accessibility and affordability of quality childcare to ensure working parents may increase participation in the workforce.

WORKFORCE SUSTAINABILITY

- Support legislation that addresses education funding, teacher compensation, workforce barriers, and development to enhance statewide access, quality, and career readiness.

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Support investments in our state's road, bridge, broadband, airport, electricity, transit, and housing infrastructure to meet current and future demands and enhance resiliency, and advocate for legislation that streamlines processes to be more efficient and business friendly.

EVERGREEN PRIORITIES

- Ensure adequate tourism funding.
- Close the state pension system to protect taxpayers & invested individuals and move to a defined contribution plan.
- Advocate for initiative-taking measures in sustainable land use, and resilient infrastructure to ensure environmental stewardship and community resilience.
- Support tax reform that makes the tax code a more fair, equitable and competitive system for the business community.
- Support eligibility for occupational or professional licenses for those that have current and valid employment authorizations.
- Increase the state's police training capacity and address return-to-work requirements for retirees.
- Promote penalty enhancements for hate crimes.
- Expand policies to attract veterans and military dependents while continuing to advocate for policies that support the mission readiness and operations of our state's military bases.



Effective July 1, 2025, South Carolina's new state budget prioritizes key investments in workforce development, infrastructure, education, and economic competitiveness. Lawmakers chose to leave \$248 million in recurring funds and \$225 million in one-time funds unallocated, signaling openness to potential tax relief in the next legislative session and reflecting caution amid uncertainty over future federal funding.

Even with this conservative approach, the FY 2025–26 budget delivers significant gains for the state's business and economic landscape. Highlights include the continued phased reduction of the individual income tax, increased teacher salaries that now exceed those in neighboring states, historic investments in workforce training and site readiness, and targeted funding for rural infrastructure, healthcare workforce development, and college affordability.

- **\$290 million** to fund the phased-in reduction of the individual income tax rate from 6.3% to 6.0%.
- Funding to increase teacher starting salaries to **\$48,500** bringing South Carolina higher than Georgia and North Carolina.
- **\$3 million** to increase full-day 4k funding.
- **\$91.4 million** to fund the SC Workforce Industry Needs Scholarship Program (SCWINS).
- **\$5 million** to ReadySC for Economic Development Training.
- **\$71.3 million** to freeze in-state tuition at public colleges and universities.
- **\$13 million** to enhance the technical college system and its 16 colleges' ability to meet workforce demands effectively.
- **\$16 million** to address workforce shortages by expanding medical residency programs and supporting the training and development of paraprofessional healthcare workers.
- **\$81 million** to LocateSC to allow South Carolina to proactively prepare sites, plan on the state and local level, support local governments with grants and ensure the state remains attractive and competitive.
- **\$27 million** to the rural infrastructure authority to further water and sewer grant opportunities.
- **\$5 million** to fund first time homebuyer grant opportunities for workforce housing.
- **\$80 million** for airport infrastructure and safety projects.
- **\$12 million** to the rural infrastructure fund to enhance the quality of life for residents in communities across South Carolina by providing grant and loan financing options, as well as training, technical assistance and funding coordination for qualified infrastructure projects for water and wastewater systems and stormwater drainage facilities.
- **\$13.1 million** to the Statewide Education and Workforce Development for portal development and maintenance. The Education & Workforce Portal will serve as the state's central access point for education and workforce information to users as their opportunities and pathways change throughout their life. The portal will be a desktop- and mobile-browser-friendly online resource that will provide users with tailored resources relating to workforce opportunities and pathways.
- **\$200 million** to SCDOT to accelerate bridge infrastructure improvements throughout the state.
- **\$40 million** to Office of Resilience for disaster relief and reserve fund replenishment.
- **\$14.5 million** to Dept. of Environmental Services (DES) to improve permitting timeframes. This is accompanied by proviso language that implements a 90-day deadline for DES to issue a permit decision.



S.78 *Workforce Experience Credit for Educators*

Signed by Governor

With the ongoing teacher shortage in South Carolina, we asked for innovative solutions to attract qualified professionals to our classrooms. S.78 addresses this by offering individuals with prior relevant work experience a spot in line on the teacher pay scale that reflects their experience. This bill is an important step forward in helping mid-career professionals transition into teaching.

S.79 *Noncertified Teacher Pilot Program*

Signed by Governor

This bill creates an optional pilot program allowing school districts to hire non-certified teachers, with the ratio of non-certified teachers capped at 10% of the teaching staff. It's another measure aimed at addressing the teacher workforce shortage.

S.244 *Tort Reform*

Passed by the Senate / House Committee

Businesses have asked, and the Senate has delivered. Real lawsuit reform that ends joint and several liability, drops minimum coverage from \$1mm to \$500,000, and allows nonparties to appear on the verdict form. Addresses Medical Malpractice and Construction Statute of Repose.

H.3309 *South Carolina Energy Security Act*

Signed by Governor

As South Carolina grows, we must ensure we have the energy infrastructure to support it. H. 3309 addresses the critical need for reliable energy generation by providing regulatory clarity, including permitting reform to streamline the construction of vital energy infrastructure. This bill passed the House and will be heard in the Senate Judiciary Committee this week. We believe it will play a crucial role in ensuring our state's energy future.

H.3430 *Liquor Liability and Tort Reform*

Signed by Governor

The compromise is most of what the House originally passed minus DUI penalty enhancements. The tiered mandatory minimum coverage and knowingly language prevailed. Joint and several language, with many exceptions, remained in the bill from S.244 language. Gross negligence was excluded and allowances to the verdict form made it into the bill.



H.4216 Income Tax Reform

Passed by the House / Senate Committee

South Carolina has one of the highest effective tax rates in the southeast region. House members, along with Senate leaders and the Governor unveiled a flat tax structure that would lower the rate initially to 3.99% with triggers to lower the rate to 2.49%. Following the publication of the fiscal impact statement the bill was amended to a two tiers, 5.39% and 1.99% respectively, with triggers to zero if revenue continues its current pace.

H.3768 Highway System Construction

Passed by the House / Senate Committee

The legislation extends existing law until 2031, requiring entities involved in transportation improvement projects to cover the costs of relocating water and sewer lines within the project's rights-of-way. This includes expenses for design, engineering, and installation, with provisions based on the utility's size. The approach is seen as a cost-saving measure, especially for smaller utilities like Charleston Water System, which would otherwise have to pass relocation costs onto customers or delay the relocations until they have enough funds, potentially delaying highway construction.

H.3927 Anti-DEI

Passed by the House / Senate Committee

It is our position it is the right of private business to make their own operating decisions. The bill was amended to reflect more closely the proviso language that was ruled out of order during the budget debate then amended again with contractor requirements that place undue burden on employers to comply with political policy.

H.3801 SCDOT Procurement

Passed by the House / Senate Committee

The bill adds planning for repairs to bridges, highways, roads, and other improvements on state rights of way to the list of exemptions from the state procurement code. Currently, SC DOT uses its own procurement process for highways and related infrastructure but must follow state procurement procedures for projects like mass transit facilities. This often results in separate entities managing different parts of the same project. The proposed changes in H. 3801 would streamline the process, reduce duplication, and improve overall efficiency in managing such projects.



SCORECARD - VOTING RECORD



South Carolina Senate

POSITION			S.78 - Work Experience Credit	S.79 - No-Certified Teacher Pilot	S.244 - Tort Reform	H.3309 - SC Energy Security Act	H.3430 - Liquor Liability/ Lawsuit Reform	H.4025 - Budget	When Voting
			YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	
Alexander	Thomas	Pickens	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	100%
Allen	Karl	Greenville	YEA	YEA	X	NAY	X	YEA	75%
Cash	Richard	Anderrson	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	83%
Corbin	Tom	Greenville	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	100%
Elliott	Jason	Greenville	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	100%
Gambrell	Mike	Anderson	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	100%
Garrett	Billy	Greenwood	YEA	YEA	A	YEA	YEA	YEA	100%
Kimbrell	Josh	Spartanburg	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	100%
Martin	Shane	Spartanburg	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	83%
Nutt	Roger	Spartanburg	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	100%
Peeler	Harvey	Cherokee	A	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	80%
Rice	Rex	Pickens	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	83%
Turner	Ross	Greenville	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	100%
Verdin	Danny	Laurens	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	100%

LEGEND

UPSTATE BUSINESS GUARDIAN

Guardian of Upstate Business defined as voting for Greenville Chamber agenda when voting at **100%**.

BUSINESS CHAMPION

Business Champion defined as voting for Greenville Chamber agenda when voting at **75% or above**.

YEA =
Affirmative
Vote

A =
Excused
Absence

NAY =
Negative
Vote

X =
Not
Voting



South Carolina House of Representatives

POSITION

			S.78 - Work Experience Credit	S.79 - No-Certified Teacher Pilot	H.3309 - SC Energy Security Act	H.3927 - Anti-DEI	H.3801 - Exempting SCDOT from State Procurement	H.4216 - Income Tax Reform	H.3768 - Highway System Construction	H.4025 - Budget	When Voting
			YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	
Bannister	Bruce	Greenville	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	88%
Beach	Thomas	Anderson	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	NAY	63%
Bowers	Phillip	Pickens	YEA	YEA	X	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	75%
Burns	Mike	Greenville	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	X	YEA	NAY	63%
Chapman	Don	Anderson	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	88%
Chumley	Bill	Spartanburg	YEA	YEA	X	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	NAY	50%
Collins	Neal	Pickens	YEA	YEA	YEA	A	YEA	YEA	YEA	X	100%
Cox	Bobby	Greenville	YEA	YEA	YEA	X	A	A	A	X	80%
Cromer	April	Anderson	YEA	YEA	X	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	NAY	57%
Dillard	Chandra	Greenville	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	88%
Duncan	Adam	Oconee	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	NAY	63%
Edgerton	Sarita	Spartanburg	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	NAY	63%
Frank	Stephen	Greenville	YEA	YEA	YEA	A	YEA	NAY	YEA	NAY	71%
Gagnon	Craig	Abbeville	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	88%
Gibson	Daniel	Greenwood	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	88%
Gilliam	Doug	Union	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	88%
Gilreath	Lee	Anderson	YEA	YEA	A	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	NAY	57%
Haddon	Patrick	Greenville	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	88%
Harris	Rob	Spartanburg	YEA	YEA	X	YEA	YEA	NAY	X	A	60%
Henderson-Myers	Rosalyn	Spartanburg	YEA	X	NAY	NAY	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	71%
Hiott	David	Pickens	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	88%
Huff	Chris	Greenville	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	NAY	63%
Jones	Wendell	Greenville	YEA	YEA	NAY	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	75%



SCORECARD - VOTING RECORD



South Carolina House of Representatives (continued)

POSITION			S.78 - Work Experience Credit	S.79 - No-Certified Teacher Pilot	H.3309 - SC Energy Security Act	H.3927 - Anti-DEI	H.3801 - Exempting SCDOT from State Procurement	H.4216 - Income Tax Reform	H.3768 - Highway System Construction	H.4025 - Budget	When Voting
			YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	
Lawson	Brian	Cherokee	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	88%
Long	Steven	Spartanburg	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	88%
Magnuson	Josiah	Spartanburg	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	NAY	63%
McCravy	John	Greenwood	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	75%
Montgomery	Scott	Spartanburg	X	YEA	X	X	YEA	X	YEA	YEA	100%
Moore	Travis	Spartanburg	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	A	YEA	A	YEA	83%
Morgan	Alan	Greenville	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	75%
Moss	Dennis	Cherokee	YEA	YEA	A	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	85%
Rankin	Luke	Laurens	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	88%
Sanders	Blake	Anderson	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	88%
Vaughan	David	Greenville	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	88%
Whitmire	Bill	Oconee	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	88%
Wickensimer	Paul	Greenville	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	88%
Willis	Mark	Greenville	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	88%

LEGEND

UPSTATE BUSINESS GUARDIAN

Guardian of Upstate Business defined as voting for Greenville Chamber agenda when voting at **100%**.

BUSINESS CHAMPION

Business Champion defined as voting for Greenville Chamber agenda when voting at **75% or above**.

YEA =
Affirmative
Vote

A =
Excused
Absence

NAY =
Negative
Vote

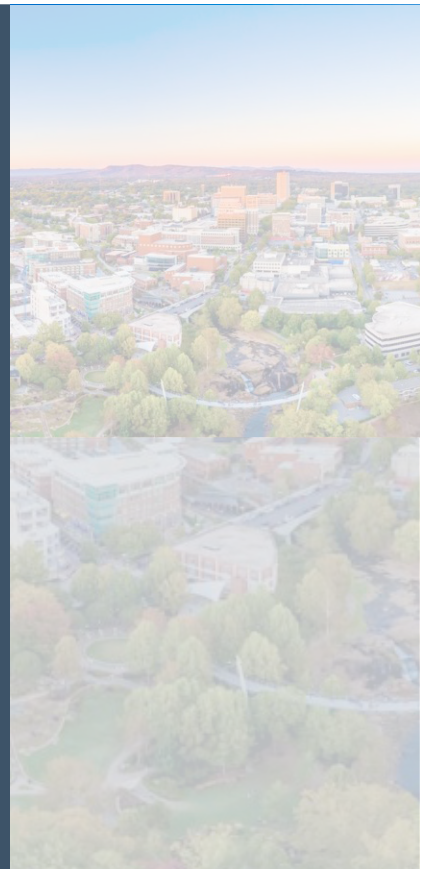
X =
Not
Voting



Advocacy made approachable.

See where you can
plug in next.

Check out the events calendar
for upcoming events.



ONE OF GREENVILLE'S MOST ANTICIPATED
POLITICAL EVENTS OF THE YEAR



Greenville Chamber
**LEGISLATIVE
BREAKFAST**

DECEMBER 12
8:00 AM - 9:30 AM
EMBASSY SUITES VERDAE





UpstateChamberCoalition

UPSTATE CHAMBER COALITION

MATT WILLS
mwills@greenvillechamber.org

TAFT MATNEY
taft@taftmatney.com

upstatechamber.org



@UpstateChamberSC



@UpstateChamber



@UpstateChamberCoalition