

2015 LEGISLATIVE REPORT

*for the
South Carolina General Assembly*

The Greenville Chamber creates an environment that allows Greenville to become a more prosperous place to live for all.

We accomplish this by advocating for the things that enable our businesses to grow, thrive, remain relevant and forward-thinking in an ever-changing world.

We will be the uniting force that brings together and leads all those who work to improve the quality of life in our community through business growth.



Greenville Chamber
ADVOCACY

The Leading Advocate for the Upstate Business Community

At the Greenville Chamber, we strive to be the business community's authority on well-considered public policy and influence. We do that by ensuring the business community is informed and engaged on relevant policy issues and supporting business-friendly public officials. We enhance our influence by leading the Upstate Chamber Coalition — an alliance of 13 Upstate Chambers of Commerce unified toward that common goal.



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AGENDA SURVEY

Each October, the Chamber distributes an agenda survey so every Investor may provide input into our annual advocacy priorities. The survey is active throughout the month.

2

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

In November, the Chamber's Legislative Committee and Board of Directors adopt the Legislative Agenda based on the issues identified by Investors and staff that will impact business in the coming year. The Agenda is shared with elected officials at our December Legislative Breakfast and our staff advocates for these issues throughout the year.

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YOUR BUSINESS VOICE

We provide regular weekly updates via email and monthly updates to our Advocacy Committees. We also send "Action Alerts" when we need your help. For more information on how to get involved, visit www.greenvillechamber.org.

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REPORT

The Chamber creates this annual legislative report to show how our elected officials responded to the needs of Greenville and the Upstate.

2015 Legislative Agenda

1. Repair our Aging Infrastructure

H. 3579 — Comprehensive Road Funding and Governance Package

H. 4230 — Supplemental Funds for Roads

H. 4266 — Suspend DOT Secretary Sunset Provisions

Passed

House

Senate

Greenville
Delegation



2. Educate the Workforce

Proviso 179 — Succeed SC

Funding for Greenville Tech Center for Manufacturing Innovation



3. Promote Entrepreneurship

Department of Innovation Funding

Comprehensive Tax Reform

H. 3525 — “Uber” Bill



4. Ensure Good Governance

S. 1 / H. 3722 — Ethics Reform

Regulatory Reform (House Rule / 2014 Senate Bill)

H. 3014 — Shortening the Legislative Session



5. Other Bills

S. 3 — Criminal Domestic Violence

S. 897 — Confederate Flag

S. 229 — Pollution Control Act

H. 3266 — Trespasser Act



KEY: Failed Passed Passed Narrowly No Vote / Incomplete

Repair our Aging Infrastructure

H. 3579 — Comprehensive Road Funding and Governance Package

Chamber Position

Support new, substantial, and recurring funding to repair the \$40 billion transportation deficit our state faces over the next 25 years.

Bill Summary

House 3579 increases the excise tax on gas by the equivalent of 10 cents per gallon, restructures the DOT board, and increases the sales tax cap on cars by \$200. Provides modest income tax reduction. Expected to raise \$430 million.

Bill Status

Passed House with 2/3 vote, but Senate filibusters killed it. Senate Finance amended the bill to include a 12-cent gas tax increase and fees on electric and hybrid cars. GOP wants 1% income tax cut. Senate creates \$800 million. Bill up for Special Order in the Senate in January 2016.

H. 4230 — Supplemental Funds for Roads

Chamber Position

While this doesn't even constitute a Band-Aid, any additional funding for roads is welcomed.

Bill Summary

The Supplemental Budget sent \$216 million in one-time funding to the County Transportation Committees. Greenville received about \$12 million.

Bill Status

Signed into law.

H. 4266 — Suspend DOT Secretary Sunset Provisions

Chamber Position

Without comprehensive DOT legislation, this stop-gap measure prevented the 2007 DOT reforms from being rolled back.

Bill Summary

Act 114 (2007) reformed the Department of Transportation with a sunset. Since the General Assembly didn't act in 2015, this suspended the sunset.

Bill Status

This legislation was part of a continuing resolution to fund state government. It was signed into law.

Educate the Workforce

Proviso 179 — Succeed SC

Chamber Position

In consultation with Chamber and industry partners across the state, we supported Governor Haley's proposal to create this new workforce program.

Bill Summary

This proviso was an amendment to the state budget to create the Succeed SC job training program focused on "those most likely to produce long-term employment ... and display potential for long-term wage growth."

Bill Status

Proviso amendment failed 45-58 with most of the Greenville House Delegation voting to support the measure. The Senate never took it up.

Funding for Greenville Technical College's Center for Manufacturing Innovation

Chamber Position

Greenville Tech's CMI will revolutionize job readiness and prepare students for the exact skills they will need to immediately join the workforce. This is important to Upstate workforce development.

Bill Summary

This was part of a capital projects "Bond Bill" that failed in the House, was resurrected in the Senate Finance Committee, and then failed again. Funding for this project could have been passed as part of the State Appropriations or Supplemental Appropriations bills.

Bill Status

Dead for now. There is a movement to create a legislative study committee to streamline the requests and bring the bill back up in 2016.

Promote Entrepreneurship

Department of Commerce Office of Innovation Funding

Chamber Position

Stable, recurring funding for the Commerce Department's Office of Innovation is an important step toward developing the next wave of strong, SC-based companies.

Bill Summary

The Office of Innovation aims to help make S.C. a top state to start and build a high-growth business by supporting access to capital, growing the workforce, developing a critical mass of high-impact tech companies, and supporting a connected innovation community.

Bill Status

The Office of Innovation received \$250,000 in recurring operations funding in the 2015-2016 budget — much less than we hoped for.

Comprehensive Tax Reform

Chamber Position

Comprehensive tax reform legislation has been a Chamber priority for years so we can create a better, more even playing field for people and businesses.

Bill Summary

No substantive legislation was filed or debated this year.

Bill Status

None.

H. 3525 — The "Uber" Bill

Chamber Position

The Chamber supported this legislation as a litmus test for easing government regulations for innovative companies.

Bill Summary

The Public Service Commission asked Uber to stop operating in South Carolina in 2014 because of antiquated regulations.

Bill Status

Signed into law after passing the House and Senate with strong majorities.

Ensure Good Governance

S. 1 / H. 3722 — Ethics Reform

Chamber Position

Ethics Reform is needed to restore public confidence in our elected leaders. The Chamber supports a strong reform bill that will put the issue to rest.

Bill Summary

The two bills reform nearly all major pieces of the 20-year-old ethics law. Which body should investigate lawmakers was the major sticking point.

Bill Status

The House strongly supported Ethics Reform. The Senate gutted the bill and its primary sponsors killed it.

Regulatory Reform

Chamber Position

The Chamber supports sunset provisions on new regulations or an up-or-down vote by the General Assembly.

Bill Summary

By rule, the House created a Regulations and Administrative Procedures Committee. This brings all new regulations to a central place so they are more easily reviewed by the public.

Bill Status

Approved by House Rule.

Other Legislation

S. 3 — Criminal Domestic Violence

Chamber Position

Criminal Domestic Violence might not seem like a business issue, but it is vital we take action to ensure the safety and well-being of our employees.

Bill Summary

Increases penalties for both number of offenses and severity of offenses. Strips many gun rights from abusers, and judges may set bond based on danger to the individual.

Bill Status

Signed into law.

Other Legislation (continued)

S. 897 — Confederate Flag

Chamber Position

“It is time for the General Assembly to remove the Confederate flag from the Statehouse grounds.”

— Chamber Statement: June 29, 2015

Bill Summary

Legislation moves the Confederate Battle Flag from the Confederate Soldiers’ Monument in front of the State House to the State Museum’s Confederate Relic Room.

Bill Status

Signed into law. Greenville Delegation approved the legislation by a 12-9 margin.

S. 229 — Pollution Control Act

Chamber Position

The Chamber supports codifying a PCA compromise struck by business, environmental, and trial attorney groups in 2011.

Bill Summary

This legislation clarified that there is no private cause of action under the PCA, and that a company may not be sued for not having a permit when no permitting program applies

Bill Status

Passed by the Senate, but stalled in the House Judiciary Committee as the session expired.

H. 3266 — Trespasser Act

Chamber Position

The Chamber supports legislation that codifies common law that prevents legal action against property owners for injuries sustained by people trespassing on property.

Bill Summary

Under this act and current common law, a possessor of land owes no duty to a trespasser, except to refrain from causing a willful or wanton injury. This new legislative development is similar to statutes 20 states, including neighboring our states Georgia and North Carolina.

Bill Status

Signed into law.



Who We Are

The Greenville Chamber’s Business Advocacy programs advocate on behalf of the Upstate business community as well as educate business leaders about the issues important to them.

ADVOCATE

The Greenville Chamber is a pioneer in advocating for local business at the Statehouse. We have two full-time business lobbyists who:

- work to prevent anti-business legislation,
- research and develop solutions to address business concerns, and,
- work directly with other business advocacy organizations to look out for the best interests of our investors.

While most of our attention is spent on the General Assembly, we work closely with our local government as well as with our Congressional delegation.

EDUCATE

To ensure the business community has a strong voice, we also work to educate business leaders about the issues. We:

- have four committees where investors can interact with decision makers,
- send weekly updates on public policy topics and news,
- blog regularly about getting involved,
- conduct regular “candidate schools” for interested leaders,
- hold quarterly lunches with political leaders, and
- run at least two in-depth summits on policy topics of interest to business leaders.

UPSTATE CHAMBER COALITION

The Greenville Chamber also leads the Upstate Chamber Coalition, a business advocacy association of 13 Upstate Chambers of Commerce. These chambers encompass 8,000 members and more than 200,000 employees, making it one of the largest pro-business advocacy groups in the state.

For more information: www.upstatechamber.org

let's do something that matters today

**2015
Advocacy
Totals**

2

STAFF LOBBYISTS

647

ADVOCACY HOURS

93

MEETINGS

17,350

EMAIL UPDATES SENT



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