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OneSpartanburg, Inc.
Anderson Area Chamber
Greater Greer Chamber
Greenwood Chamber
Laurens County Chamber
Cherokee County Chamber
Clemson Area Chamber
Greater Easley Chamber
Fountain Inn Chamber
Oconee County Chamber
Simpsonville Area Chamber
Greater Travelers Rest Chamber

2021

Legislative Report

South Carolina General Assembly





Jason Zacher
Executive Director

Our state's political watchers weren't expecting much to be accomplished in 2021 when predictions were ventured last fall. COVID-19 was unchecked, a number of hot-button social issues (fetal heartbeat, open carry, death penalty) were on the agenda, the Santee Cooper situation was still unresolved, the state budget was unknown, and redistricting was on the horizon.

So, we were pleasantly surprised when a number of major priorities moved quickly in 2021. While the social issues did take center stage in the media, the General Assembly quickly passed needed COVID liability protections that will shield businesses who are trying to do the right thing by following state and federal health guidelines as we continue to fully re-open our economy.

The Senate and the House each passed a number of other pro-business bills, some of which made it into law in the first year of the session: legislation giving small businesses the ability to lower their federal tax burden, approving higher teacher pay, extending the abandoned buildings tax credit, and expanded scholarships for students attending our two-year colleges.



Nikki Huber
Legislative Director

The state's business community was frustrated in the final days of the session as debate on two important bills was blocked. The important hate crimes penalty enhancements were passed by the House of Representatives, but several Upstate Senators blocked the bill from being considered or debated (Senators Josh Kimbrell, Danny Verdin, Tom Corbin, Rex Rice, and Richard Cash). We thank the broad, bi-partisan group of legislative leaders for their work on this bill. Despite the bitterness of the final days of the session, we are excited to get the bill all the way to the Senate floor — which is no small accomplishment.

After four years of trying to get a hearing in the House, our immigrant licensure bill quickly made it all the way to the Senate floor before also being blocked by Senator Kimbrell. (You can read more about that bill on Page 3.)

We publish this guide to let you know not only what we were able to do for our investors this year, but also to show you how your Upstate legislators voted. This is not meant to be a scorecard — there are lots of reasons a member voted yea, nay, or simply couldn't vote. Take a look at the votes in this guide and ask your legislators what they did to help ensure your priorities became law. Advocacy doesn't end on *sine die*, since this is the first year of a two-year session.

We hope you will continue your activism in 2021 so the Upstate will continue to be the best place to start or locate a business. **Thank you for your continued support of your local, hometown chamber of commerce and the Upstate Chamber Coalition.**

“ Take a look at the votes in this guide and ask your legislators what they did to help ensure your priorities became law. Advocacy doesn't end on *sine die*... ”



COVID LIABILITY PASSED

S. 147

Our top priority for 2021, the General Assembly delivered a strong package of liability protections that make sense. As we continue to rocket out of the COVID shutdowns, these simple protections will keep businesses from being held liable if they follow state health guidelines. We thank the Senate for taking quick action on this, the House for their work, and Governor McMaster for signing this without delay.

40

Number of states that enacted COVID liability protections before SC.

2

The number of states without hate crimes legislation.

HATE CRIME PENALTIES STALLED

More than 73% of business leaders in last fall's agenda survey cited this as a key priority for the 2021 session. A broad coalition of businesses and business groups got this legislation through the House with a veto-proof majority, only to see the bill stalled in the Senate by a group of largely Upstate Senators. This bill will live on to January, but will need a lot of help.

H. 3620

H. 3243

IMMIGRANT LICENCING STALLED

This legislation has been a priority for four years, and we got the bill all the way to the Senate floor before Senator Josh Kimbrell (R-Spartanburg) blocked debate. This is important workforce legislation that will make thousands eligible for dozens of professions that require licenses from the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation.

Up to 10,000

Number of immigrants eligible for licenses statewide under this proposal. Also the number of open jobs in top licensed professions.

\$32 Billion

The economic impact of the Port of Charleston on the Upstate economy. That includes supporting 116,000 jobs.

PORT EXPANSION FUNDING PASSED

The Senate approved S. 491, which authorized \$550 million in bonds for critical improvements to the Port of Charleston. The House decided not to sell bonds, but help fund the project with one-time money in the budget. Either path was good with the Coalition, as we support any expansion of the Port that drives the Upstate's export economy.

S. 491 / H. 4000

S. 147 COVID Liability (Vote #56)
S. 491 Port Expansion (Senate Journal 2/24)
H. 3589 Schools of Innovation (Vote #73)
S. 271 Abandoned Bldgs (Vote #24)
S. 627 Biz Tax Deductions (Vote #104)
H. 3194 Santee Cooper (Vote #214)
H. 3017 Palmetto Fellows (Vote #199)

COALITION POSITION		YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Alexander, Thomas	R-Walhalla	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Allen, Karl	D-Greenville	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Cash, Richard	R-Piedmont	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Corbin, Tom	R-Travelers Rest	YEA	YEA	YEA	A	YEA	NAY	YEA
Gambrell, Mike	R-Honea Path	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Garrett, Billy	R-Greenwood	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Kimbrell, Josh	R-Spartanburg	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Loftis, Dwight	R-Greenville	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	A
Martin, Shane	R-Pauline	A	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Peeler, Harvey	R-Gaffney	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Rice, Rex	R-Easley	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Talley, Scott	R-Spartanburg	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Turner, Ross	R-Greenville	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Verdin, Danny	R-Laurens	YEA	YEA	YEA	A	YEA	YEA	YEA

X Did not vote A Excused Absence

2021 LEGISLATIVE WINS

S. 147 — COVID LIABILITY PROTECTIONS

Last: **Signed by Governor**
 Coalition Position: **Support**

This legislation provides temporary, targeted, and common-sense liability protections for businesses in regards to COVID-19. This legislation provides immunity for businesses from COVID-related cases provided the business is following DHEC safety guidelines. Businesses are protected unless they engage in "reckless or intentional conduct" that must be proven with "clear and convincing" evidence for most businesses.

H. 3609 — TEACHER PAY INCREASES

Last: **Signed by Governor**
 Coalition Position: **Support**

Reinstates the suspended teacher pay step increases from the FY2021 school year. Teachers will be paid back pay as a one-time lump sum later this school year. The Coalition has long supported funding for higher teacher pay, and given the state's financial position in early 2021, this bill is a good step.

H. 3243 — IMMIGRANT LICENSING

Last: **Passed by House, On Senate Calendar (blocked)**
 Coalition Position: **Support**

This legislation extends access to professional licenses for certain "undocumented" immigrants who have been granted legal working status in the United States by the federal government. As many as 10,000 people could be impacted.

H. 3620 — HATE CRIME PENALTIES

Last: **Passed by House / On Senate Calendar (Contested)**
 Coalition Position: **Support**

This legislation creates additional penalties for hate crimes committed against people in six federally protected classes plus LGBTQ residents. The bill was blocked by a group of Upstate Senators when it passed the Senate Judiciary Committee and was on the Senate Calendar. While the bill did not get a Senate vote, the bill passed Senate Judiciary 13-10:

YEA Votes (13)

Rankin (R-Horry), **Hutto** (D-Orangeburg), **Campsen** (R-Charleston), **Malloy** (D-Darlington), **Young** (R-Aiken), **Sabb** (D-Williamsburg), **Kimpson** (D-Charleston), **Harpoottian** (D-Richland), **Talley** (R-Spartanburg), **McLeod** (D-Richland), **Senn** (R-Charleston), **Stephens** (D-Orangeburg), **Bright Matthews** (D-Richland)

NAY Votes (10)

Massey (R-Edgefield), **Rice** (R-Pickens), **Climer** (R-York), **Johnson** (R-York), **Cash** (R-Anderson), **Loftis** (R-Greenville), **Gustafson** (R-Kershaw), **Adams** (R-Berkeley), **Garrett** (R-Greenwood), **Kimbrell** (R-Spartanburg)

2021 VOTING RECORD HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



H. 3620 Hate Crime Penalties (Vote #1644)
H. 3243 Immigrant Licensure (Vote #1608)
H. 3144 SC WINS Expansion (Vote #1612)
H. 3589 Schools of Innovation (Vote #1247)
S. 147 COVID Liability (Vote #1668)
S. 271 Abandoned Bldgs (Vote #1652)
H. 3017 Palmetto Fellows (Vote #11260)
H. 3194 Santee Cooper (Vote #1212)
S. 627 Biz Tax Deductions (Vote #1778)
H. 3590 Teacher Certification (Vote #11588)
H. 3575 Curbside Alcohol (Vote #1336)
H. 3623 Drug Weights (Vote #1697)

COALITION POSITION		YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Allison, Rita	R-Lyman	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	A	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY
Bannister, Bruce	R-Greenville	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	X	YEA	YEA	X	YEA	YEA	YEA
Burns, Mike	R-Taylors	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	NAY
Carter, Jerry	R-Clemson	YEA	YEA	YEA	X	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY
Chumley, Bill	R-Reidville	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	NAY
Collins, Neal	R-Easley	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	A	YEA	YEA	YEA
Cox, Bobby	R-Greer	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY
Cox, West	R-Piedmont	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Dillard, Chandra	D-Greenville	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	NAY	X	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Elliott, Jason	R-Greenville	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Gagnon, Craig	R-Abbeville	NAY	YEA	YEA	A	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY
Gilliam, Doug	R-Union	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	NAY
Haddon, Patrick	R-Greenville	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	NAY
Hill, Jonathon	R-Townville	NAY	YEA	NAY	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY
Hiott, David	R-Pickens	NAY	A	A	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	X	A	NAY	NAY
Hyde, Max	R-Spartanburg	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Jones, Stewart	R-Laurens	A	A	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	X	X
Long, Steven	R-Boiling Springs	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	NAY
Magnuson, Josiah	R-Campobello	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY
McCrary, John	R-Greenville	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	X
Moore, Travis	R-Roebuck	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Morgan, Adam	R-Taylors	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	X	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	NAY
Moss, Dennis	R-Gaffney	NAY	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	A
Moss, Steve	R-Blacksburg	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	A	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	A
Henderson Myers, Rosalyn	D-Spartanburg	YEA	YEA	YEA	X	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	X	YEA	YEA
Nutt, Roger	R-Moore	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY
Parks, Anne	D-Greenwood	YEA	A	A	X	X	X	X	X	X	A	A	YEA
Robinson, Leola	D-Greenville	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	X	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	X
Sandifer, Bill	R-Seneca	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Smith, Garry	R-Simpsonville	NAY	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	NAY
Stringer, Tommy	R-Greer	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	X	X	X	A	A	YEA	A	NAY
Thayer, Anne	R-Anderson	NAY	A	YEA	YEA	YEA	X	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	X
Trantham, Ashley	R-Pelzer	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	A	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	A
West, Jay	R-Belton	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
White, Brian	R-Anderson	NAY	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	X	YEA	NAY	YEA	A	YEA	NAY
Whitmire, Bill	R-Walhalla	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY
Willis, Mark	R-Fountain Inn	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	A	YEA	A	YEA	YEA	NAY	NAY

X Did not vote A Excused Absence

S. 491 — PORTS AUTHORITY EXPANSION

Last: **S. 491 Passed Senate / Included in 2021-2022 Budget**
Coalition Position: **Support**

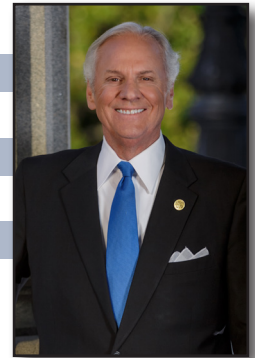
This legislation authorizes the sale of \$550 million in bonds to complete the Navy Base Intermodal Facility in North Charleston. The Coalition supports this legislation to help move containers in and out of the Port and expand port capacity. The Port of Charleston has a \$32 billion economic impact on the Upstate and supports 116,000 jobs.

H. 3589 — SCHOOLS OF INNOVATION

Last: **Signed by Governor**
Coalition Position: **Support**

This legislation allows school districts to choose to have multiple schools of innovation, which will give our school districts the flexibility to experiment to meet the needs of the community and our workforce. The schools of innovation must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the state board of education.

S. 147	COVID Liability Protections	SIGNED
S. 271	Abandoned Buildings Credit	SIGNED
H. 3589	Schools of Innovation	SIGNED
H. 3017	Palmetto Fellows Expansion	SIGNED
S. 627	Pass-Through Income Deduction	SIGNED



Governor Henry McMaster outlined a broad, pro-business agenda during his January State of the State Address, including new small business grants, higher teacher pay, additional scholarship funding for tech schools, as well as COVID Liability protections and pension reform.

2021 LEGISLATIVE WINS

S. 271 — ABANDONED BUILDINGS TAX CREDIT

Last: **Signed by Governor**
Coalition Position: **Support**

Extends the South Carolina Abandoned Buildings Revitalization Act provisions until the end of 2025. The Coalition led the effort when this bill was first proposed, and this legislation has been critical in redeveloping abandoned sites across the Upstate since it was first approved.

H. 3707 — VACCINE FUNDING

Last: **Signed by Governor**
Coalition Position: **Support**

This bill allocates \$208 million to allow spending on “eligible costs of administering” the COVID-19 vaccine. The \$208 million will be dispersed as follows:

- \$63 million to DHEC
- \$45 million to the MUSC, and
- \$100 million to a vaccine reserve fund

Of that final \$100 million in the reserve fund:

- \$75 million will go to hospitals and similar organizations and
- \$25 million is set aside for other vaccine providers.

H. 3575 — CURBSIDE ALCOHOL DELIVERY

Last: **Passed House / On Senate Calendar (Contestd by Sen. Malloy)**
Coalition Position: **Support**

Allows for curbside pickup of beer and wine. This is currently allowed under COVID Executive Orders, but will expire with the state of emergency. This legislation makes it permanent law.

BILLS LOSE, BUSINESS WINS

Business Advocacy is sometimes as much about stopping anti-business legislation as it is supporting our agenda. Here are a few bills that we took direct action to block.

H. 3460 — IMPACT FEES

Last: **Voted Down in House Committee**
Coalition Position: **Oppose**

This legislation adds a 6% impact fee on all commercial and residential development. We opposed this on two accounts. First, it would dramatically increase the cost of housing which would, in turn, exacerbate our affordable housing problems, and the way the bill was written, it was a back-door inclusionary zoning bill.

H. 3480 — MINIMUM WAGE HIKE

Last: **Voted Down in House Committee**
Coalition Position: **Oppose**

This legislation raised the minimum wage in South Carolina to \$13 per hour. Many of our Coalition Chambers support having a debate on increasing the minimum wage but remain concerned about nearly doubling the current minimum wage (or more than doubling it, in the case of the \$15 minimum wage) while many small businesses recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

H. 3772 — HOME ALCOHOL DELIVERY

Last: **Passed House** / In Senate Judiciary Committee
Coalition Position: **Support**

Allows home delivery of beer and wine from a business via a third-party partner or a business-owned service.

H. 3144 — SC WINS SCHOLARSHIP

Last: **Passed the House** / In Senate Education Committee
Coalition Position: **Support**

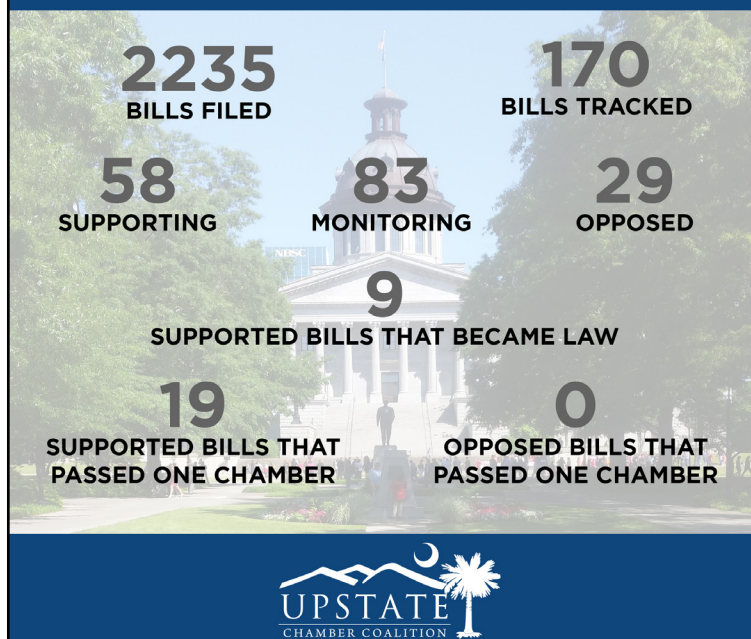
This legislation establishes the SC WINS program. A student attending a technical college, and majoring in a critical workforce area program, and who is receiving a Lottery Tuition Scholarship, shall receive an additional South Carolina "Workforce Industry Needs Scholarship" equal to the cost of tuition and mandatory fees after applying all other scholarships or grants, not to exceed \$2,500 each year. Applies to degree or certificate programs.

H. 3726 — "BUYDOWN BILL"

Last: **Signed by Governor**
Coalition Position: **Support**

This legislation excludes buydowns (money paid by a manufacturer or wholesale company to the retailer to reduce the retail price) from gross proceeds of sales. This is a common practice for convenience stores and other retailers.

2021-2022 LEGISLATIVE SESSION BY THE NUMBERS



WHAT DIDN'T HAPPEN



Three major business priorities barely even scored a public hearing this year or weren't debated once while the General Assembly focused on red meat.

S. 145/H. 3750 — FAIR SHARE ACT

Last: **Filed**
Coalition Position: **Support**

This legislation overturns a Supreme Court decision that allocates fault in an accident or tort claim only among the defendants in court. Plaintiff's attorneys settle with individuals before trial, leaving businesses with good insurance to foot the entire bill – whether they were truly at fault or not. The Fair Share bill will ensure businesses that might be 1% responsible for an accident don't have to pay 100% of the settlement simply because they have deep pockets.

S. 176 — PENSION REFORM

Last: **In Senate Finance Subcommittee**
Coalition Position: **Support**

This legislation creates a defined contribution plan (like a 401(k)) for state employees while largely closing the current retirement system to new employees. We believe this reform is essential to reduce the tax burden on businesses, protect state finances, and still keep the promises made to current state employees and retirees.

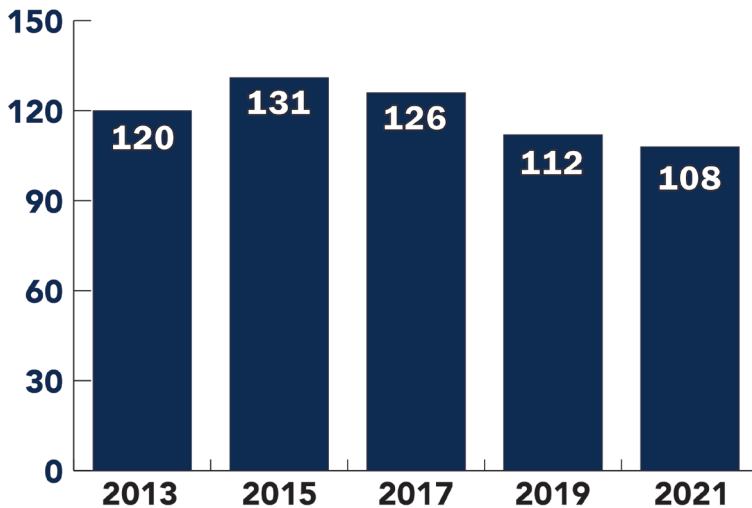
S. 35 (& OTHERS) — INCOME TAX REFORM

Last: **Filed**
Coalition Position: **Monitor**

Reduces the state personal income tax by 1% per year over a 5-year period with circuit breakers to pause the reduction if there isn't sufficient state revenue. We support the income tax reforms to lower our "highest in the Southeast" income tax rate for competitive purposes. We do believe that this needs to be looked at as part of a broader tax structure package.

What Was Accomplished?

The “do nothing” label was thrown around in the final weeks of session, and by historical standards, less was accomplished this year than in the previous sessions. We’ll concede that the General Assembly not passing laws isn’t necessarily a bad thing... but here is the total number of Ratified Acts over the past five first years of a session. NOTE: This total may still change.



source: www.scstatehouse.gov

H. 3017 — PALMETTO FELLOWS SCHOLARSHIP

Last: Signed by Governor
Coalition Position: Support

Allows individuals who qualify for a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship to use the scholarship at a 2-year or technical college. We support any measures intended to expand access to higher education and make a technical college education or job training more affordable. Expanding educational attainment is a key priority for the Upstate business community.

H. 3194 — SANTEE COOPER REFORM

Last: In Conference Committee
Coalition Position: Support

This bill orders the reform of Santee Cooper — our state-owned utility. The House version authorizes the sale or reform of Santee Cooper, while the Senate version does not. The Coalition has supported the sale of Santee Cooper for several years. The public asset is deeply in debt and offloading Santee Cooper is strongly supported by our members.

S. 619 — THE “GALLO” BILL

Last: Signed by Governor
Coalition Position: Support

This bill allows wineries and micro-distilleries to sell product and host tastings on site. Also allows for a higher alcohol content permissible for on-site tasting and consumption and product sale at breweries. Initially set as an economic development bill to bring the Gallo winery to Chester County, numerous provisions were added to the bill to expand on-site tastings. We have long supported legislation to enable entrepreneurs in this booming sector of our economy to better serve their customers.

S. 627 — PASS-THROUGH INCOME DEDUCTIONS

Last: Signed by Governor
Coalition Position: Support

This legislation amends the tax code for tax partnerships and “S”-Corporations allowing them to file their income as “pass through” income for tax credit. Amends state law to conform with a US Treasury-allowed tax pass-through. This is a simple change to the law that will reduce the tax burden for tens of thousands of small businesses.

H. 3590 — TEACHER CERTIFICATION

Last: Passed the House / In Senate Education Committee
Coalition Position: Support

Public schools that have vacant teaching positions may hire non-certified teachers five days before the start of the school year. These non-certified teachers may not cover more than 25% of the entire teaching staff at the technology center or school. This legislation should help schools (1) fill critical needs gaps in teaching and (2) make it easier for professionals to get into teaching as a second career.

H. 3623 — DRUG WEIGHTS

Last: Passed the House / In Senate Corrections Committee
Coalition Position: Support

The bill reduces penalties for drug crimes, including eliminating mandatory minimum sentences, reducing no-parole-eligible sentences, and increases the drug amounts necessary for charges. When we passed the historic expungement legislation in 2018, changing the drug weights eligible for felony charges was commonly cited as a problem, and legislation we considered as a next step.

H. 3348 — TAX CREDIT FOR RETURNING CITIZENS

Last: Passed House Ways & Means Subcommittee
Coalition Position: Support

H. 3348 is one of several that allow a \$5,000 tax credit to those that employ formerly incarcerated individuals. This bill also includes veterans in the tax credit if you hire them into apprenticeship programs. This mimics an existing federal tax credit. We have supported this legislation for a number of years as a way to help encourage the hiring of returning citizens.

S. 376 — HIGHER ED EFFICIENCY ACT

Last: On Senate Calendar (Contested by Sen. Leatherman)
Coalition Position: Support

Allows the Board of Trustees of an institution of higher education to establish an auxiliary division and reviews the terms of the auxiliary division. This gives our colleges and universities some additional flexibility to meet the needs of the market without having to go before the Commission on Higher Education to get every little thing approved.

S. 173 — TEACHER PAY TO NAT'L AVERAGE

Last: Filed
Coalition Position: Support

S. 173 is one of a number of pieces of legislation that requires that each teacher be paid the national salary average instead of the southeastern average. Moving teacher pay to the national average is a Coalition priority.

H. 3348 — TAX CREDIT FOR HIRING TEACHERS

Last: Filed
Coalition Position: Support

Allows income tax credits for taxpayers that employ public school teachers teaching grades 6-12 as interns and provides requirements for those internships. This has been a successful program at some Upstate businesses, and gives teachers a good view of the skills needed for manufacturing and other professions.

H. 3106/S. 234 — PENSION CONTRIBUTIONS

Last: Filed
Coalition Position: Support

Allows a political subdivision to pay all or a portion of the required employee state pension system contributions during a fiscal year. Our pension system's woes weigh on local governments, and this legislation will allow them to pay a portion of the employee's contribution (nearly 10% of their paycheck) to increase take-home pay. This is a competitive situation for many local governments.

H. 3611 — DATA OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Last: Filed
Coalition Position: Support

Establishes the Workforce and Education Data Oversight committee. Getting non-identifiable data on how our students are progressing from education to the workforce is key data we need to improve education outcomes.



The 2021 Legislative Agenda was created after months of (virtual) meetings from August through October, capped off with our legislative survey in the month of October. A number of these issues passed at least one chamber in the first year of the two-year session. We thank the nearly 1,000 people from all 13 Upstate chambers who participated in the agenda-creation process. Our 2022 Agenda process will begin this August. Look out for announcements of a listening tour and survey.

Lower Education and Workforce Barriers

- Public School Reform
 - Commit to a path to increasing teacher pay to the National Average;
 - Study the implementation of pay bands for teachers with special skills and give districts more flexibility in recruiting for critical-needs areas;
 - Allow districts to designate more deregulated schools;
 - Allow high-performing schools to have up to 10% of their teachers be non-certified;
 - Make it easier for mid-career professionals to switch to teaching;
 - Offer tax credits to businesses that hire teachers as summer employees.
- Increase Educational Attainment
 - Allow lottery tuition assistance to be used for those seeking high-quality industry credentials.
- Professional Licensing
 - Require LLR and the boards that oversee professional licenses to carefully examine requirements to ensure they are necessary and not merely barriers to competition.
 - Give our DACA residents the right to receive state licenses to work.
- Increase Access to Childcare
 - Expand the accessibility of childcare options – a major workforce barrier. We must work on solutions to increase the accessibility of childcare and lower the cost to workers.

Criminal Justice Reform

The Coalition urges the General Assembly to review our state's current penal code to prepare inmates for high-demand career opportunities and make it easier to transition into the workforce. Addressing the following issues will meet these directives in the future:

- Reform civil asset forfeiture laws;
- Pass a hate crime statute;
- Expand expungement for non-violent offenders;
- Assist returning citizens with vital records upon release; and
- Create a state tax credit for hiring returning citizens.

Reasonable, Fair Legal Reforms

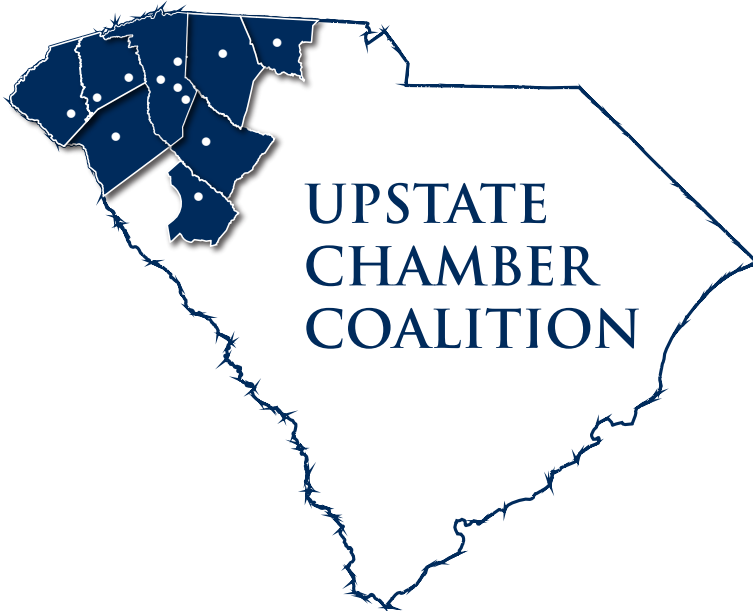
- Provide fair COVID liability protections;
- Pass the "Fair Share Act"

Address the Pension Crisis

- Close the state pension system to new employees;
- Switch to a defined contribution plan;
- Allow government subdivisions to leave the system so they may pay more competitive salaries; and
- Preserve promises made to those currently in the system.

Boost Post-COVID Economic Development

- Hold businesses' unemployment rates harmless for layoffs from COVID-19 shutdowns;
- Actively target industries in California, New York, and other high-tax states to relocate;
- Increase state investment in tourism advertising;
- Support the development of high-speed broadband infrastructure in cities and rural areas;
- Provide resources to make it easier for employees to work from home;
- Restructure our state's incentives so we may better attract office, headquarter, and R&D jobs that may have a large number of stay-at-home employees;
- Assist high-growth startup companies by making it easier to attract early-stage capital;
- Increase state support for mass transit in our metro areas;
- Dedicate funding to our commercial airports to expand passenger and cargo service;
- Require an economic impact statement for new regulations – not simply a state fiscal impact. Regulations above a certain economic impact should have a waiting period before being approved by the General Assembly.



UCC Member Chamber Presidents/CEOs

- Carlos Phillips**, Greenville Chamber
- Allen Smith**, OneSpartanburg, Inc.
- Pam Christopher**, Anderson Area Chamber of Commerce
- David Merhib**, Greater Greer Chamber of Commerce
- Barbara Ann Heegan**, Greenwood Area Chamber of Commerce
- Amanda Munyan**, Laurens County Chamber of Commerce
- Frannie Stockton**, Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce
- Susan Cohen**, Clemson Area Chamber of Commerce
- Cindy Hopkins**, Greater Easley Chamber of Commerce
- Marnie Swartz-Hanley**, Fountain Inn Chamber of Commerce
- Allison McGarity**, Simpsonville Area Chamber of Commerce
- Vacant**, Oconee County Chamber of Commerce

The Upstate Chamber Coalition formed in 2009 to provide a unified voice on regional, state, and federal policy issues for the Upstate business community. We now have a strong coalition of 13 local chambers of commerce from across eight counties. Our member Chambers have more than 8,000 business members that employ more than 350,000 people.

We extend a special THANK YOU to our 2021 Business Advocacy Partners, who provide strong support for the Coalition's work.

2021 BUSINESS ADVOCACY PARTNERS



Upstate Chamber Coalition

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