



Greenville Chamber
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
Upstate LGBT+ Chamber

2022

Legislative Report

South Carolina General Assembly





Jason Zacher
Executive Director

The State’s analysis of the end of the 2022 session was accurate: “This year marked a return to the chaos of *sine die* in the Legislature after a break because of COVID-19. Bills that seemed dead were resurrected and sent to the governor or conference committee, while others that seemed on the way to the finish line died instead.”

As the dust settled, that was an accurate look at how the business community fared in Columbia this year. Several items that should have been no-brainer approvals died after months of haggling. Other items cruised through.

The biggest win of the year was the long-awaited reduction in our income tax rates. The cut leaves us tied for the highest income tax rate in the Southeast, but is a major step in the right direction. Of significance to business is the additional cut in the industrial property tax rate from 9% to effectively 6%, which will make us much more competitive for economic recruitment. This has been a long-standing item on the UCC’s agenda, dating back to the founding of the Coalition. In fact, in recent years, we took it off the official agenda because of a lack of momentum at the Statehouse.

The General Assembly also used historically high amounts of one-time budget dollars to make significant investments in roads, broadband, and water and sewer projects. These are major investments in infrastructure that will pay off for our economy for years to come.

There were disappointments at the end when four bills that passed either the Senate or the House overwhelmingly were killed through a single member’s opposition or just plain inaction. A measure that would have allowed nearly 10,000 young immigrants — already allowed to live and work by the federal government — to get state licenses died from personal politics. Another bill that would require licensing agencies to not reject someone purely on the fact that they have a felony conviction did not clear out of the Senate with enough time for the House to consider it. Bills to reform criminal justice that would have reduced punitive sentences for minor drug crimes and enact penalties for hate crimes both could not get out of the Senate.

This year, we also welcomed Taft Matney of TM Public Relations & Governmental Affairs to our team. Taft made a huge impact for us and was invaluable in getting many of our priorities accomplished.

We now enter the 2022 election season. We hope you will continue your activism and use this guide to inform your decisions at the ballot box. Advocacy doesn’t end on *sine die*. Thank you for your continued support of our 14 local, hometown chambers of commerce as well as our Upstate Chamber Coalition.



Nikki Huber
Legislative Director

“ We hope you will continue your activism and use this guide to inform your decisions at the ballot box. Advocacy doesn’t end on *sine die*. ”



INCOME TAX REFORM PASSED

S. 1087

The House's version of the income tax reduction bill was the version ultimately passed, with the House plan cutting the tax rate to 6.5% immediately and creates additional cuts to bring the rate to 6% over the next four years. The bill also includes a manufacturing property tax cut, and the much-touted tax rebate to all state taxpayers. The income tax reduction is a long standing priority of the Upstate's business community.

6.5%

Our state's top income tax for 2023. The old rate of 7% was the highest in the Southeast.

2

The number of states without hate crimes legislation.

HATE CRIME PENALTIES KILLED

The bill to enact new hate crimes penalties passed the House overwhelmingly, but was never debated on the Senate floor. The bill was blocked from consideration by five Upstate Senators: Garrett (R-Greenwood), Cash (R-Anderson), Verdin (R-Laurens), Rice (R-Pickens), and Loftis (R-Greenville). South Carolina and Wyoming are the only states without a hate crimes law.

H. 3620

IMMIGRANT LICENSING KILLED

H. 3243

We struggled to pass this bill that would allow thousands of young immigrants the ability to get state occupational licenses — which they are not eligible for even though they are allowed to work in the United States. The legislation was killed by Sen. Shane Martin (R-Spartanburg) after we worked with Sen. Josh Kimbrell (R-Spartanburg) on compromise language to answer his objections. Thanks to Rep. Neal Collins (R-Easley) for championing this legislation.

Up to 10,000

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

\$1.9 billion

The total amount of American Rescue Plan Act funding allocated in H. 4408. Additional funding will be spent in 2023.

ARPA FUNDING PASSED

When the massive federal COVID relief money was issued, we urged the General Assembly to spend it on lasting, essential infrastructure. The first tranch of the money was allocated to fund water and sewer projects, continue our rural broadband roll-out, and jump-start critical road projects. These are investments that will benefit our state's economy for decades to come.

H. 4408

		H. 3126 Vaccine Mandates (Vote #677)	H. 4408 ARPA Funding (Vote #686)	S. 1087 Income Tax Reform (Vote #584)	S. 295 Felony Licensure (Vote #629)	H. 3144 SC WINS (Vote #629)	S. 147 COVID Liability (Vote #58)	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 Santeee Cooper (Vote #214)	H. 3017 Palmetto Fellows (Vote #199)
COALITION POSITION		NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Alexander, Thomas	R-Walhalla	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Allen, Karl	D-Greenville	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Cash, Richard	R-Piedmont	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Corbin, Tom	R-Travelers Rest	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	A	YEA	NAY	YEA
Gambrell, Mike	R-Honea Path	YEA	A	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Garrett, Billy	R-Greenville	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Kimbrell, Josh	R-Spartanburg	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Loftis, Dwight	R-Greenville	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	A
Martin, Shane	R-Pauline	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	A	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Peeler, Harvey	R-Gaffney	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Rice, Rex	R-Easley	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Talley, Scott	R-Spartanburg	A	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Turner, Ross	R-Greenville	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Verdin, Danny	R-Laurens	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	A	YEA	YEA	YEA

X Did not vote A Excused Absence

2021-2022 LEGISLATIVE WINS

S. 1087 — INCOME TAX REFORM

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

The final version of this legislation will cut the state's top income tax rate from 7% to 6% over the next five years. The bill also cuts property taxes for industrial property, bringing the manufacturing property tax from 10.5% to essentially 6%, which is a major tax cut for businesses. This proposal also includes a \$1 billion tax refund to individual taxpayers. Income tax reform is a long-standing priority of the UCC, given that our relatively high advertised tax rate made us less competitive with our neighbors.

H. 3144 — SC WINS SCHOLARSHIP

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

This bill creates the SC Workforce Industry Needs Scholarship (SC WINS) as a permanent state scholarship for state residents pursuing a professional certificate, credential, degree or diploma from a technical college in specific career tracks as defined by the State Board of Education. The scholarship can be used to cover tuition, fees and course related materials, up to \$5,000. This bill also codifies the Governor's Workforce Scholarships for the Future program announced late last year.

H. 4408 — ARPA INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

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

This bill outlines the allocation of \$1.9 billion in funds from the federal government as part of the American Rescue Plan funding. The proposal allocates the funding towards transformative infrastructure projects, including water and sewer projects, rural broadband projects, and DOT project acceleration.

H. 3126 — VACCINE MANDATES

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

This bill was gutted from its initial versions and the only anti-business provision left allows workers fired for not taking a mandated COVID-19 vaccine to receive unemployment benefits. Earlier provisions included full prohibitions on a business from having a vaccine mandate, a nine-month look-back period for qualifying for benefits after firing employees, and a \$7,500 per employee per year surcharge on unemployment insurance taxes, equal to ten times the state's highest rate. The Upstate Chamber Coalition opposes any legislation on a federal or state level that interferes with a business owner's ability to manage their operations and make personnel decisions whether that is pro- or anti-vaccine mandate.

2021-2022 VOTING RECORD HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



S. 1087 Income Tax Reform (Vote #2577)
H. 3243 Immigrant Licensure (Vote #1606)
H. 3144 SC WINS Expansion (Vote #1612)
H. 3126 Vaccine Mandates (Vote #1887)
S. 147 COVID Liability (Vote #1669)
H. 4408 ARPA Funding (Vote #1993)
H. 3017 Palmetto Fellows (Vote #1260)
H. 3620 Hate Crime Penalties (Vote #1644)
S. 627 Biz Tax Deductions (Vote #1776)
H. 3590 Teacher Certification (Vote #1598)
H. 3589 Schools of Innovation (Vote #1247)
H. 3623 Drug Weights (Vote #1637)

COALITION POSITION		YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Allison, Rita	R-Lyman	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY
Bannister, Bruce	R-Greenville	YEA	YEA	YEA	A	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	X	YEA	YEA	YEA
Burns, Mike	R-Taylors	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	NAY
Carter, Jerry	R-Clemson	YEA	YEA	YEA	A	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	X	NAY
Chumley, Bill	R-Reidville	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	NAY
Collins, Neal	R-Easley	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	A	YEA	YEA	YEA
Cox, Bobby	R-Greer	A	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY
Cox, West	R-Piedmont	YEA	YEA	YEA	A	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Dillard, Chandra	D-Greenville	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	NAY	X	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA
Elliott, Jason	R-Greenville	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Gagnon, Craig	R-Abbeville	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	X	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	A	NAY
Gilliam, Doug	R-Union	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY
Haddon, Patrick	R-Greenville	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	NAY	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY
Hill, Jonathon	R-Townville	YEA	YEA	NAY	X	NAY	NAY	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY
Hiott, David	R-Pickens	YEA	A	A	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	X	A	YEA	NAY
Hyde, Max	R-Spartanburg	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Jones, Stewart	R-Laurens	YEA	A	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	A	YEA	YEA	YEA	X
Long, Steven	R-Boiling Springs	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY
Magnuson, Josiah	R-Campobello	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY
McCrary, John	R-Greenville	YEA	YEA	YEA	A	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	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	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY
Moss, Dennis	R-Gaffney	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	A
Moss, Steve	R-Blacksburg	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	A	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	A
Henderson Myers, Rosalyn	D-Spartanburg	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	X	X	YEA
Nutt, Roger	R-Moore	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY
Parks, Anne	D-Greenville	YEA	A	A	A	X	YEA	X	YEA	X	A	X	YEA
Robinson, Leola	D-Greenville	YEA	YEA	YEA	X	YEA	X	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	NAY	X
Sandifer, Bill	R-Seneca	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Smith, Garry	R-Simpsonville	A	NAY	YEA	A	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY
Stringer, Tommy	R-Greer	1	YEA	YEA	X	X	1	X	NAY	A	YEA	YEA	NAY
Thayer, Anne	R-Anderson	YEA	A	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	X
Trantham, Ashley	R-Pelzer	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	A	NAY	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	A
West, Jay	R-Belton	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
White, Brian	R-Anderson	YEA	NAY	YEA	A	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	A	YEA	NAY
Whitmire, Bill	R-Walhalla	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY
Willis, Mark	R-Fountain Inn	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY

X Did not vote A Excused Absence
 1 Rep. Stringer resigned in early January and was not present for votes during the 2022 session.

H. 5075 — AFFORDABLE HOUSING CREDITS

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

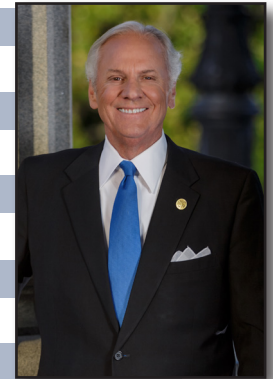
This bill revisits the 2020 Workforce and Senior Affordable Housing Act that created a state tax credit for housing to be used in conjunction with a federal tax credit. Unexpected demand caused the price tag to jump more than 10 times what was predicted. While the need is high, the approval of these credits was paused to ensure fiscal sustainability. This bill sets a \$20 million cap on the tax credit.

S. 147 — COVID LIABILITY PROTECTIONS

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

This provides temporary 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 guidelines. Businesses are protected unless they engage in "reckless or intentional conduct" that must be proven with "clear and convincing" evidence.

S. 1087	Income Tax Reform	SIGNED
S. 3144	SC WINS Scholarships	SIGNED
H. 4408	ARPA Infrastructure Funding	SIGNED
S. 147	COVID Liability Protections	SIGNED
S. 271	Abandoned Buildings Credit	SIGNED
H. 3017	Palmetto Fellows Expansion	SIGNED
S. 627	Pass-Through Income Deduction	SIGNED
H. 3126	Vaccine Mandates	SIGNED
S. 901	Returning Citizens Tax Credit	SIGNED



Governor Henry McMaster outlined a broad, pro-business agenda during both of his State of the State addresses this session. We were able to work with the Governor on promoting a number of our agenda items this session.

2021-2022 LEGISLATIVE ACTION

S. 1106/H. 3346 — RESERVE FUNDS

Last: On Governor's Desk
Coalition Position: Support

These bills, one a constitutional amendment, one a statutory change, increases the state's budget reserves to 7% from 5%. Our Coalition had an agenda item to "Improve Our State's Fiscal Health" and this will help alleviate the impacts of future downturns on our educational system and workforce preparedness.

H. 3243 — IMMIGRANT LICENSING

Last: Passed by House.
Killed in Senate by Sen. Martin (R-Spartanburg)
Coalition Position: Support

This legislation extends access to professional licenses for certain 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. Killed in Senate by Sens. Garrett (R-Greenwood), Cash (R-Anderson), Verdin (R-Laurens), Rice (R-Pickens), and Loftis (R-Greenville)
Coalition Position: Support

This legislation creates additional penalties for hate crimes committed against people in six federally protected classes plus LGBT residents. The bill was blocked by a group of Upstate Senators after it passed the House and the Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill never received a Senate vote.

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. 3938 — INCLUSIONARY ZONING

Last: Voted Down on House Floor
Coalition Position: Oppose

This bill would allow local government to adopt inclusionary zoning to, in theory, increase the availability of affordable housing. While we strongly support affordable and workforce housing, numerous studies have shown that the usage of inclusionary zoning has a negative impact on development and the availability of affordable housing by pushing up prices and increasing demand for affordable housing.

H. 3590 — TEACHER CERTIFICATION

Last: Added to Budget / Vetoed by Governor
Coalition Position: Support

This bill allows teacher vacancies to be filled by non-certified teachers if a school has vacant positions five days before the beginning of the year. The bill requires those non-certified teachers to enroll in a certification program. The bill also limits the number of teachers allowed in a school. This provides an opportunity for non-traditional teachers to enter the teaching pool as second careers and helps to fill a critical workforce need.

S. 901 — RETURNING CITIZENS TAX CREDIT

Last: Signed by Governor
Coalition Position: Support

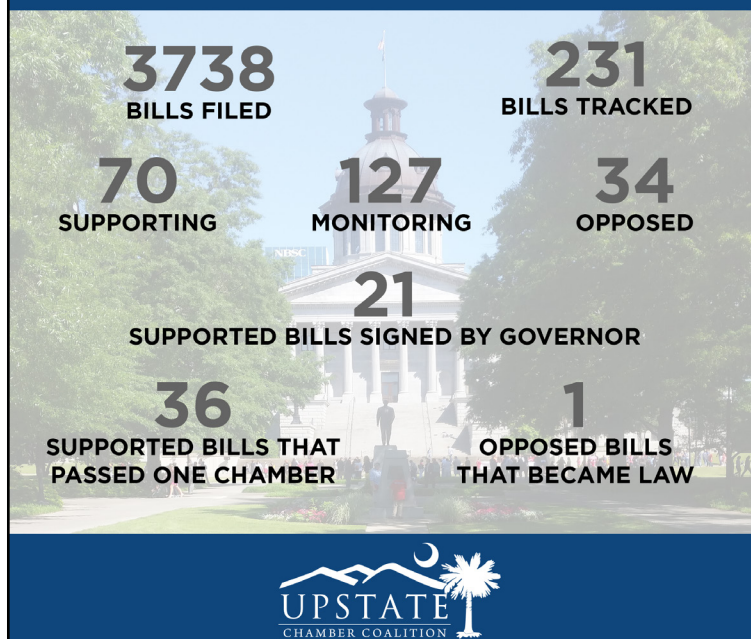
This gives a \$6,000 tax credit to those that employ formerly incarcerated individuals. This bill also includes veterans in the tax credit if you hire them into apprenticeship programs. This mimics an existing federal tax credit.

H. 3589 — SCHOOLS OF INNOVATION

Last: Signed by Governor
Coalition Position: Support

This allows school districts to have multiple schools of innovation, which will give our school districts the flexibility to experiment to meet the needs of our communities and workforce.

2021-2022 LEGISLATIVE SESSION BY THE NUMBERS



WHAT DIDN'T HAPPEN



Three major business priorities barely even scored public hearings this year or weren't debated once while the General Assembly focused on other issues.

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 because they have deep pockets.

S. 176 — PENSION REFORM

Last: Not Considered in 2022 by 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.

H. 3079 — CHILDCARE AVAILABILITY

Last: Filed
Coalition Position: Support

This legislation would have created a committee to study the availability of high-quality childcare in the state and recommend policies to the General Assembly to support the development of more widely accessible options. This study would have been a placeholder bill for long-term solutions to this vital workforce challenge.

PORTS AUTHORITY EXPANSION

Last: Included in '21-'22 and '22-'23 Budgets

Coalition Position: Support

The Coalition supports these efforts 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.

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. 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: Signed by Governor

Coalition Position: Support

This bill orders the reform of Santee Cooper — our state-owned utility. The House version authorized 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 the sale of Santee Cooper is strongly supported by our members.

S. 233 — COUNTY USER FEES

Last: Ratified

Coalition Position: Support

The original bill is a property tax exemption bill, but language from S. 984 was added to the bill to allow a county to impose user fees. This bill is a result of a state Supreme Court ruling that prohibits a county from imposing such fees, leaving many counties without a dedicated stream of funding for infrastructure.

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. 3623 — DRUG WEIGHTS

Last: Passed the House. Died in Senate.

Coalition Position: Support

The bill reduces penalties for certain 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. 3106 — PENSION CONTRIBUTIONS

Last: Passed the House.

Killed in Senate by Sen. Nikki Setzler (D-Lexington)

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.

S. 295 — FELONY LICENSURE ACT

Last: Passed the Senate. Died in House.

Coalition Position: Support

This bill would prohibit a licensing board from using a person's felony conviction as the sole disqualifier for a license IF that position did not directly apply to the license for which they are applying. The business community has actively advocated for policies that make it easier for formerly incarcerated citizens to return to the workforce in order to reduce our recidivism rates and increase our potential workforce.

The Upstate Chamber Coalition never took a formal position on these three bills, though we fielded numerous questions about these bills throughout the year at our member chambers. While these bills were not legislative priorities for our chambers, they were important pieces of legislation debated by the General Assembly.

S. 2 — SPLITTING DHEC

Last: Passed the Senate. Died in House.

Coalition Position: Monitor

Senator Harvey Peeler (R-Cherokee) proposed legislation that would split the Department of Health and Environmental Control into two agencies — one covering environmental protection and one safeguarding public health. Business groups across South Carolina were broadly supportive of the concept, but some opposed portions of the legislation. While the UCC did not take an official position on the bill, several of our chambers debated a position. The Greenville Chamber opposed the legislation on the basis of duplication of permitting and enforcement.

S. 150 — COMPASSIONATE CARE ACT

Last: Passed the Senate. Died in House.

Coalition Position: Monitor

This bill would have allowed marijuana derivatives to be prescribed in our state. Patients could not smoke marijuana, but could use it in oils, gummies, or similar products. The UCC did not have a

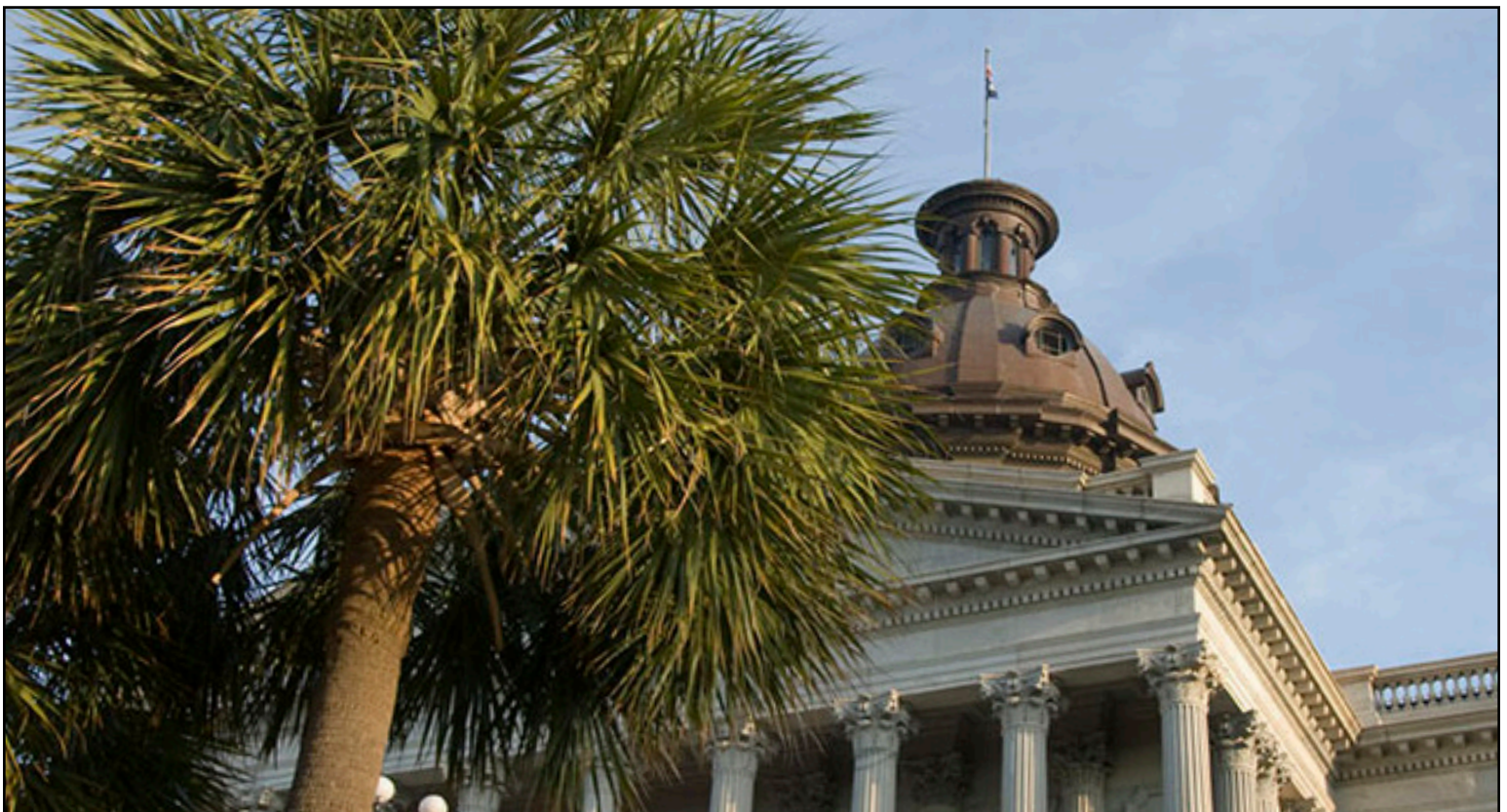
position on this legislation, though we joined other business groups in responding to our investors to ensure that businesses would be allowed to have zero-tolerance policies if they should choose. Those provisions were included in the bill that passed the Senate, so we were officially neutral on the bill.

S. 108 — ELECTION REFORM

Last: Signed by Governor

Coalition Position: None

This legislation was passed by both the House and Senate with strong bipartisan support and the chairs of both parties joined Governor McMaster for the bill signing. The bill places additional checks on the absentee voting protections and creates two weeks of no-excuses early voting for South Carolinians, beginning with the June 2022 primaries. The bill requires post-election audits to ensure against fraud. Additionally, the legislation increases the distance from the polls in which campaign literature or posters can be posted to 500 feet from a polling site, enhances penalties for voter fraud, and bans third-party funding of elections.



The 2022 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 more than 1,000 leaders from all 14 Upstate chambers who participated in the agenda-creation process. Our 2023 Agenda process will begin this August. Look out for announcements of a listening tour and survey.

IMPROVE OUR BUSINESS CLIMATE

- Re-institute joint and several protections for businesses to reasonably reflect fault in tort actions.
- The Chamber supports income tax reform to ensure our income tax rates are in-line with our neighbors in the Southeast and ensure it is more fair, equitable, and competitive.

BOOST ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- Reform our recruiting incentives to make it easier to attract significant investments in knowledge-based and corporate headquarters jobs
- Effectively use ARPA funding on transformative infrastructure projects including:
 - Finishing the expansion of the Inland Port and Port of Charleston,
 - Expanding broadband service throughout the Upstate,
 - Fund water and sewer replacement and expansion projects,
 - Jumpstarting major interstate and road projects, and
 - Building a state electric vehicle infrastructure.
- Increase state investment in tourism advertising, which supports our current hospitality industry and can lead to tourists relocating and becoming employers in South Carolina.

INCREASE EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND TALENT ATTRACTION

- Increase teacher pay to the national average.
- Seek solutions to expand the accessibility and the affordability of childcare to ensure working parents may fully participate in the workforce.
- Pass policies that will increase educational attainment of our students and workforce.
- Support the Higher Education Finance Act and the Higher Ed Efficiency Act to both support innovation in our state colleges and universities and relieve the tuition burden for South Carolina students.

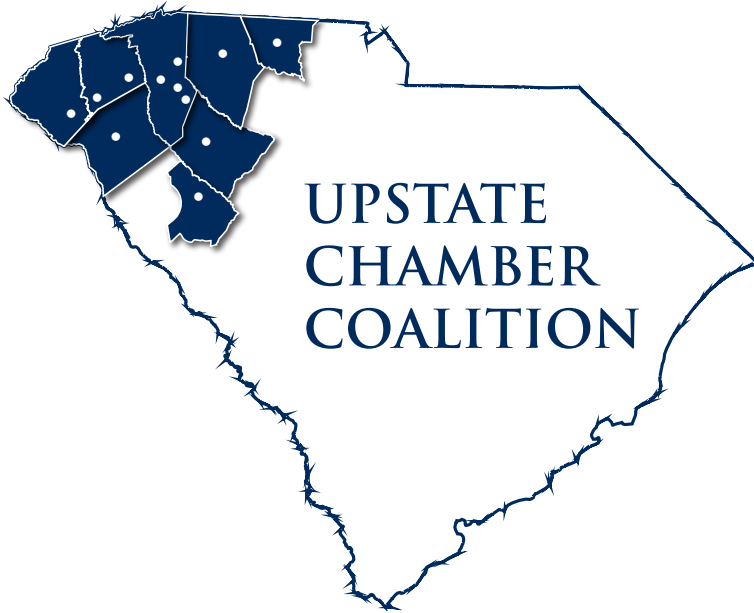
REFORM OUR CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

- Review state law to expand the non-violent felony offenses for expungement and prepare inmates for high-demand career opportunities. These provisions include: reforming civil asset forfeiture laws, passing a hate crimes penalty enhancement, assisting returning citizens with vital records, and pass a state tax credit for hiring returning citizens.

IMPROVE OUR STATE'S FISCAL HEALTH

- Close the South Carolina Retirement System to new employees and move to a defined contribution plan to better serve new employees and preserve the system for current retirees.





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
- Vacant, Greenwood Area Chamber of Commerce
- Amanda Munyan**, Laurens County Chamber of Commerce
- Frannie Stockwell**, Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce
- Merritt Rechichar**, Clemson Area Chamber of Commerce
- Cindy Hopkins**, Greater Easley Chamber of Commerce
- Marnie Schwartz-Hanley**, Fountain Inn Chamber of Commerce
- Allison McGarity**, Simpsonville Area Chamber of Commerce
- Dari McBride**, Oconee County Chamber of Commerce
- Mandy Chapman-Crain**, Greater Travelers Rest Chamber of Commerce
- Nathan Brown**, Upstate LGBT+ 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 14 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 2022 Business Advocacy Partners, who provide strong support for the Coalition's work throughout the year.

2022 BUSINESS ADVOCACY PARTNERS



Upstate Chamber Coalition

550 S. Main Street, Suite 550
Greenville, SC 29601

Jason Zacher

Executive Director
jzacher@greenvillechamber.org
864.239.3718

Nikki Huber

Legislative Director
nhuber@greenvillechamber.org
864.239.3748

Taft Matney

Contract Lobbyist
TM Public Relations & Governmental Affairs
taft@taftmatney.com

Hannah Gertz | Evie Robinson | Julia Ellen

2021-2022 Advocacy Interns



upstatechamber.org



[UpstateChamberCoalition](https://www.facebook.com/UpstateChamberCoalition)



[@UpstateChamber](https://twitter.com/UpstateChamber)



[UpstateChamberSC](https://www.instagram.com/UpstateChamberSC)