



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

2023

Legislative Report

South Carolina General Assembly





Jason Zacher
Executive Director

Each legislative session has a personality of its own. With new Speaker of the House Murrell Smith (R-Sumter) saying he would be the economic development Speaker, we knew the General Assembly would tackle issues of importance to business. The Upstate Chamber Coalition lined up to support Rep. Jay West (R-Belton) who was tasked with kicking off the effort.

A major bill to streamline our workforce efforts under the Department of Employment and Workforce was first out of the gate. This legislation consolidates workforce training under DEW and requires them to re-evaluate the effectiveness and the targets of those programs.

Another bill we championed will prevent the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation from automatically disqualifying people from getting occupational

licenses simply because of a criminal record, provided the record does not directly relate to the application in question. Nearly 1 in 5 men who are not in the workforce in our state cite a criminal record as a barrier to getting back to work.

Both chambers failed to come to terms on a bill to expand tax credits for hiring apprentices. Given the aging workforce for skilled workers, it is vital that we expand apprenticeship opportunities for these important and lucrative jobs.

The Senate kicked in legislation that will give local governments additional access to resources for workforce housing — a major challenge in our larger municipalities. With so much of our economy reliant on hospitality workers who may not be able to afford to live in the communities where they serve, this legislation can help bridge that divide.

These bills will set new groundwork for getting our friends and neighbors back to work in quality jobs while getting them the housing and training they need.

As we say here every year: Advocacy doesn't end during the off session. The work isn't done. This summer, we'll be working on the significant challenge of workers' access to affordable childcare. We're encouraged by overtures from legislative leaders on the issue.

Our state will host the presidential preference primaries in early 2024 and we encourage everyone to get out, meet the candidates, and ask them about the issues important to business, important to growing our economy, and important to creating the next generation of jobs in our state.



Nikki Huber
Legislative Director

“*These bills will set new groundwork for getting our friends and neighbors back to work in quality jobs while getting them the housing and training they need.*”



WORKFORCE REFORM PASSED

H. 3726

The General Assembly passed a major workforce reform package in 2023 that will set the stage for a more efficient, streamlined workforce training process. The proposal streamlines our state's scattered workforce training programs under the Department of Employment and Workforce. In addition, it creates new accountability for the programs and ensures DEW is providing the correct training for high-need careers. In addition, this creates a new hub for those seeking employment to find jobs, skills needed, and where to obtain those skills.

40,000

Number of workers targeted to re-enter the workforce by economists.

9

Number of airports in the Upstate

AERONAUTICS REGULATION KILLED

We were instrumental in delaying consideration of a regulation that would have inserted the unelected S.C. Aeronautics Commission into local land use decisions in the vicinity of state airports. The Commission pulled the regulation and will re-negotiate with more input from the municipalities, counties, and business community in late 2023.

REGULATION

LICENSING REFORM PASSED

H. 3605

We championed this legislation for several sessions. This procedural change will prevent LLR from denying a professional license simply because of a felony conviction. (Exceptions are made if the felony directly relates to the license in question.) The Senate added a provision to include state apprenticeship programs, expanding the reach of the bill. With so many men outside the workforce claiming a prior criminal conviction prevents them from working, we believe these reforms will help increase our workforce participation rate.

19%

The number of unemployed men in a DEW study who said a former criminal conviction keeps them from getting a job.

\$800M

The total amount of American Rescue Plan Act funding allocated in 2023.

ARPA FUNDING PASSED

This legislation appropriates remaining ARPA funds to the Rural Infrastructure Authority to distribute for the use of transformative infrastructure projects, and allocates money to the Department of Commerce for economic development projects. The Chamber is supportive of the use of these funds on water, sewer, broadband, and other infrastructure projects.

S. 604

		H. 3726 DEW Streamlining (Vote #358)	H. 3605 LLR/ Records (Vote #176)	S. 576 Alien Land Ownership (Vote #152)	S. 284 Workforce Housing (Vote #170)	S. 604 ARPA (Vote #29)	H. 4300 Appropriations (Vote #421)	H. 3890 Youthful Offenders (Vote #338)	S. 557 Apprenticeships (Vote #158)	S. 124 Teacher Certification (Vote #93)	S. 138 LIFE Scholarships (Vote #109)	S. 459 Airport Alcohol Sales (Vote #122)
COALITION POSITION		YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Alexander, Thomas	R-Walhalla	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA (S)	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY
Allen, Karl	D-Greenville	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	A	YEA	YEA	YEA
Cash, Richard	R-Piedmont	NAY	YEA	YEA (S)	YEA	YEA	A	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY
Corbin, Tom	R-Travelers Rest	NAY	YEA	YEA (S)	A	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY
Gambrell, Mike	R-Honea Path	YEA	YEA	A	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Garrett, Billy	R-Greenville	YEA	A	YEA (S)	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY
Kimbrell, Josh	R-Spartanburg	YEA	YEA	YEA (S)	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA (S)	YEA	YEA	YEA
Loftis, Dwight	R-Greenville	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	A	YEA	NAY
Martin, Shane	R-Pauline	YEA	YEA	A	NAY	YEA	A	NAY	YEA	YEA	A	YEA
Peeler, Harvey	R-Gaffney	YEA	YEA	YEA (S)	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA (S)	YEA	YEA	NAY
Rice, Rex	R-Easley	YEA	YEA	YEA (S)	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Talley, Scott	R-Spartanburg	YEA	A	A	A	A	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	A
Turner, Ross	R-Greenville	YEA	YEA	YEA (S)	YEA (S)	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA (S)	YEA	YEA
Verdin, Danny	R-Laurens	YEA	YEA	YEA (S)	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	A	YEA	YEA	NAY

X Did not vote A Excused Absence (S) Denotes Primary Sponsor

2023 LEGISLATIVE WINS

H. 3726 — DEW STREAMLINING

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

This legislation creates a coordinated effort addressing workforce development issues in SC. The legislation streamlines disparate workforce training programs under the Department of Employment and Workforce. In addition, it creates new accountability for the programs and ensures DEW is providing the correct training for high-need careers. In addition, this creates a new hub for those seeking employment to find jobs, skills needed, and where to obtain those skills.

H. 3605 — LICENSING REFORM

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

This bill prevents a prior felony conviction from being the sole deterrent to professional license IF the conviction does not directly apply to the license in question. The Senate amended the bill to include state-licensed apprenticeship programs. According to a study by the Department of Workforce and Employment, 19% of men not participating in the labor force cite a prior criminal conviction as the primary reason they're not seeking employment. We championed this bill last session, and worked with leadership in the House and Senate to get it across the finish line this year.

H. 3014 — HATE CRIMES

Last: **Passed the House 84-31.**
Blocked in Senate by Sens. Loftis (R-Gville) & Cash (R-And)
Coalition Position: **Support**

This bill creates additional penalties for a person who commits hate crimes when the victim is selected based on perception of the victim's race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, or physical or mental disability. South Carolina remains just one of two states without a hate crimes statute. We thank the House and the Senate Judiciary Committee for advancing this legislation.

S. 284 — WORKFORCE HOUSING

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

This legislation gives local governments the ability to apply 15% of their local accommodations tax funds towards workforce housing projects. The legislation sunsets in seven years and requires a report on the effectiveness of the program before the General Assembly can consider an extension. This legislation was championed by several senators from tourism-reliant areas. Housing groups, hospitality groups and the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism worked together to reach this compromise.

2023 VOTING RECORD HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



H. 3726 DEW Streamlining (Vote #19)
H. 3605 LLR / Records (Vote #37)
H. 3014 Hate Crimes (Vote #15)
H. 3810 License Fee on Corps (Vote #183)
S. 4300 Appropriations (Vote #342)
S. 284 Workforce Housing (Vote #68)
S. 604 ARPA Funding (Vote #72)
S. 557 Apprenticeships (Vote #65)
H. 3890 Youthful Offender (Vote #163)
H. 4087 Corporate HQ Taxes (Vote #503)
H. 3824 Alternative Fuel Tax (Vote #56)
S. 459 Airport Alcohol Sales (Vote #78)

COALITION POSITION		YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Bannister, Bruce	R-Greenville	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA (S)	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	X	YEA
Beach, Thomas	R-Piedmont	YEA	YEA	NAY	NAY	NAY	A	NAY	A	YEA	NAY	A	A
Burns, Mike	R-Taylors	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	A	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	NAY
Carter, Jerry	R-Clemson	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Chapman, Don	R-Townville	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	X	YEA	YEA
Chumley, Bill	R-Reidville	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	A	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	X	NAY	NAY
Collins, Neal	R-Easley	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA (S)	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Cox, Bobby	R-Greer	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	A	A	YEA	A	YEA	YEA	A	A
Cromer, April	R-Anderson	YEA	YEA	NAY	NAY	NAY	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	NAY	NAY
Dillard, Chandra	D-Greenville	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA (S)	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Elliott, Jason	R-Greenville	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA (S)	YEA	X	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Gagnon, Craig	R-Abbeville	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA (S)	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Gibson, Daniel	R-Greenwood	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY
Gilliam, Doug	R-Union	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY
Haddon, Patrick	R-Greenville	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	X	NAY	NAY
Harris, Rob	R-Wellford	NAY	YEA	NAY	NAY	NAY	NAY	NAY	YEA	YEA	NAY	X	YEA
Henderson-Myers, Rosalyn	D-Spartanburg	A	A	A	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	A	YEA	YEA	YEA
Hiott, David	R-Pickens	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	A	YEA	YEA	NAY
Hyde, Max	R-Spartanburg	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA (S)	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Jones, Stewart	R-Laurens	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	NAY	NAY	X	YEA	YEA	A	NAY	YEA
Jones, Wendell	D-Greenville	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Lawson, Brian	R-Chesnee	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY
Long, Steven	R-Boiling Springs	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY	NAY
Magnuson, Josiah	R-Campobello	YEA	YEA	NAY	NAY	NAY	NAY	NAY	YEA	YEA	NAY	NAY	YEA
McCravy, John	R-Greenwood	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY
Moore, Travis	R-Roebuck	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	A	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Morgan, Adam	R-Taylors	YEA	YEA	NAY	NAY	X	NAY	NAY	YEA	YEA	NAY	NAY	YEA
Morgan, Alan	R-Greer	X	YEA	NAY	NAY	NAY	NAY	NAY	YEA	X	NAY	NAY	YEA
Moss, Dennis	R-Gaffney	YEA	A	NAY	YEA	YEA (S)	YEA	YEA	X	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY
Nutt, Roger	R-Moore	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY
Sandifer, Bill	R-Seneca	YEA	YEA (S)	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Thayer, Anne	R-Anderson	YEA	YEA	X	YEA	YEA	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	X	X	NAY
Trantham, Ashley	R-Pelzer	YEA	A	YEA	YEA	NAY	NAY	NAY	YEA	YEA	NAY	NAY	YEA
Vaughan, David	R-Simpsonville	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY
West, Jay	R-Belton	YEA (S)	YEA	YEA	YEA	A	YEA	YEA	YEA	X	YEA (S)	YEA	X
Whitmire, Bill	R-Walhalla	A	YEA	A	YEA	YEA (S)	NAY	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA
Willis, Mark	R-Fountain Inn	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA (S)	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	YEA	NAY

X Did not vote A Excused Absence (S) Denotes Primary Sponsor

S. 557 — APPRENTICESHIP TAX CREDITS

Last: **Passed Senate 42-0. Passed House 111-0.**
Coalition Position: **Support**

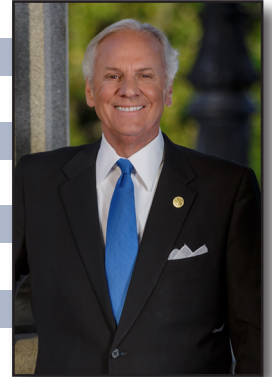
This bill expands the amount and length of time an employer can claim the apprenticeship tax credit for both the adult and youth apprenticeship program. The House added the language from H. 4087 to this bill, and the senate refused to take up the amended version of the bill in the final days of session.

H. 3810 — CORPORATE LICENSE FEES

Last: **Passed the House 103-10. In Senate Finance.**
Position: **Support**

This legislation would cap license fees on first \$50 million of certain capital stock & paid in/capital surplus. This is part of a broader effort to lower uncompetitive businesses taxes on small businesses and start-up companies that are making South Carolina less competitive than other states. Our neighboring states in the Southeast have already enacted similar legislation.

H. 3605	LLR Procedures	SIGNED
S. 604	ARPA Funds	SIGNED
H. 3726	DEW Streamlining	SIGNED
S. 459	Alcohol Sales at Airports	SIGNED
S. 284	Workforce Housing	SIGNED
H. 3890	Youthful Offender Expungement	VETOED (Overridden)
H. 3604	Scout Incentives	SIGNED



Governor Henry McMaster outlined a broad, pro-business agenda during his State of the State address, as he has throughout his term. We worked with the Governor to promoting a number of our agenda items, but we remain concerned that several of his priorities have not gained traction — notably reforms to our state pension system and joint and several reform.

2023 LEGISLATIVE ACTION

H. 3604 — SCOUT INCENTIVES

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

Originally the legislation that would distribute the remaining \$1 billion ARPA funds, the bill was amended in the Senate to be the vessel for the distribution of funds for the Scout Motors project. The Upstate Chamber Coalition supports major economic development projects to help spur growth throughout our state.

S. 138 — LIFE SCHOLARSHIPS

Last: **Passed the Senate 42-0.**
Coalition Position: **Support**

This bill prohibits dual enrollment classes taken in high school from negatively impacting a student's GPA qualification for the LIFE scholarship. We strongly support legislation that will help enhance educational attainment in our region.

S. 124 — NON-CERTIFIED TEACHERS

Last: **Passed the Senate 39-1.**
Coalition Position: **Support**

This bill creates a pilot program to allow certain schools to fill vacant teaching positions with non-certified teachers. Teachers must possess a degree and five years of work experience in the field they are teaching. The bill passed the House and Senate with minor differences last session. The Upstate Chamber Coalition has long supported legislation that makes it easier for people to change careers and teach.

BILLS LOSE, BUSINESS WINS

Business Advocacy is sometimes as much about stopping anti-business legislation as it is supporting our agenda.

AERONAUTICS REGULATION

Last: **Withdrawn by Commission**
Coalition Position: **Oppose**

The S.C. Aeronautics Commission, an unelected body that oversees the state's airports, proposed a regulation this year that would have usurped local control over land use and planning in a radius around the state's airports. This included the Greenville Downtown Airport and the area regulated by the Commission would have encompassed most of the City of Greenville.

We agree that the areas around our state's airports should be protected, the state's investment in our airports respected, and our airports should be considered critical infrastructure. At the same time, our cities and counties should be tasked with coordinating with the state, leaving individual permitting and development decisions to local communities.

After coordinating with municipalities, the Municipal Association, the Association of Counties, and others across the state, we look forward to renegotiating the regulations for 2024.

S. 607 — AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN

Last: **Signed by Governor**

Coalition Position: **Support**

This legislation appropriates remaining ARPA funds to the Rural Infrastructure Authority to distribute for the use of transformative infrastructure projects, and allocates money to the Department of Commerce for economic development projects. Our Coalition is highly supportive of the use of these funds on transformative, water, sewer, broadband and other infrastructure projects that will benefit our state for decades to come.

H. 3847 — LIFE AND HOPE SCHOLARSHIPS

Last: **In House Ways & Means Committee**

Coalition Position: **Support**

This legislation would increase the maximum amounts of life and hope scholarships by \$1,000. We support the expansion of state funded scholarships so the best and brightest can continue their education in our state. Students from South Carolina who pursue higher education in our state have a greater chance of staying in our state and helping fill the jobs of the future.

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. 533 — S.C. JUSTICE ACT

Last: **Senate Judiciary Subcommittee Hearings**

Coalition Position: **Support**

Joint & Several Liability Bill that apportions fault among all parties in a tort action, not simply those parties that are in the specific lawsuit. We have been pushing this legislation for several years with partners across the state. The bill had several subcommittee hearings in the Senate, but a vote was never taken to advance the bill to the full committee.

H. 3288 — PROFESSIONAL LICENSING

Last: **Passed House Judiciary Subcommittee**

Coalition Position: **Support**

People with current and valid employment authorizations by federal immigration authorities are eligible for professional licensure. Those impacted include victims of sex trafficking, government informants and workers that have been displaced from their home country, and DACA recipients. This bill passed the House last year, and we hope to get it passed again in 2024.

H. 3565 — PENSION REFORM

Last: **Filed**

Coalition Position: **Support**

This bill would close the current pension system and move state employees to a 401(k)-style program. We have long supported closing the pension system to ensure the folks currently in the system receive the benefits promised to them. We also support closing the system to prevent a black hole of potential future tax increases as the state tries to close the estimated \$22- to \$40-billion deficit in the pension system.

2023 LEGISLATIVE SESSION BY THE NUMBERS

2369
BILLS FILED

236
BILLS TRACKED

56
SUPPORTING

155
MONITORING

25
OPPOSED

12
SUPPORTED BILLS THAT PASSED ONE CHAMBER

9
SUPPORTED BILLS
SIGNED BY GOVERNOR

2
OPPOSED BILLS
THAT PASSED ONE CHAMBER

H. 3964 — SMALL BUSINESS HIRING CREDITS

Last: In House Ways & Means

Coalition Position: Support

This bill would give an income tax credit to any taxpayer that contracts with a South Carolina-headquartered small business that results in the small business hiring additional full-time employees. Only applies to employees hired after the law is enacted.

H. 4087 — HEADQUARTER TAX CREDITS

Last: Passed House 84-12.

Coalition Position: Support

This legislation eases tax credit restrictions for attracting headquarter companies. We've been working with economic developers across the state, as well as with the Department of Commerce, to craft the language in this bill. SC remains the only state in the Southeast without a Fortune 500 company headquarters.

S. 459 — AIRPORT ALCOHOL SALES

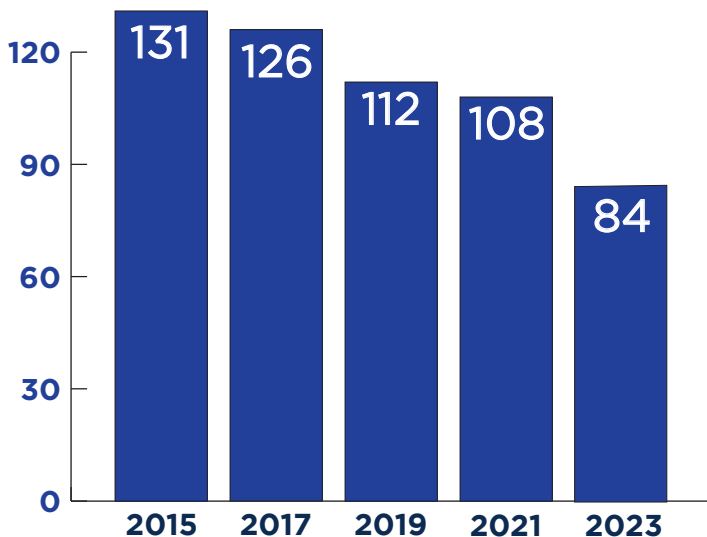
Last: Signed by Governor

Coalition Position: Support

This legislation would allow for the sale and consumption of liquor throughout TSA screened portion of SC airports, beyond designated bar/restaurant areas.

What Was Accomplished?

The General Assembly had several major achievements this year. Combine those with a focus on controversial social issues, and overall ratified acts were down this session from previous years.



H. 3890 — YOUTHFUL OFFENDERS

Last: Vetoed by Governor (Overridden)

Coalition Position: Support

This bill would expand the crimes that would be eligible for expungement by a youthful offender committing their first offense. The Greenville Chamber and Upstate Chamber Coalition have long supported and championed efforts to expand expungement opportunities to non-violent offenders.

H. 3326 — DUAL ENROLLMENT

Last: In House Education & Public Works Committee

Coalition Position: Support

This bill expands dual enrollment eligibility to 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students.

S. 425 — CURBSIDE ALCOHOL DELIVERY

Last: On Senate Floor. Blocked by Sen. Cash (R-Anderson)

Coalition Position: Support

This bill would codify the permitted and popular COVID-19 State of Emergency practice allowing for the delivery and curbside pick up of alcohol. This protection for hospitality businesses was ended when the Governor ended the State of Emergency. The legislation is strongly supported by business groups and business owners across the state.

H. 3241 — COMMERCIAL DRIVERS LICENSES

Last: In House Education & Public Works Committee

Coalition Position: Support

This law would ensure that if you hold a CDL license, it is assumed you are duly certified to operate a commercial vehicle. It is a common headache for businesses to defend in court whether an operator was qualified to operate the truck or commercial vehicle, even if you hold a state license and passed a federally certified CDL exam. This closes that loophole that trial attorneys have opened.

S. 576 — FOREIGN LAND OWNERSHIP

Last: Passed the Senate

Coalition Position: Oppose

This bill prohibits land ownership by a foreign adversary nation as defined by the US Department of Commerce. These countries include China, Russia, North Korea, Cuba and the Maduro Regime. Companies with established operations in our state would be permitted to expand after receiving clearance from the SC Department of Commerce and Governor.

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. 423 — MEDICAL MARIJUANA

Last: Blocked in Senate by Sens. Garrett, Hembree, Loftis
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 so we were officially neutral on the bill.

S. 399 — DHEC SPLIT

Last: Signed by Governor
Coalition Position: Monitor

This legislation splits the Department of Health and Environmental Control into two different agencies dealing with environmental regulation and public health. DHEC is currently the largest state

agency, and many groups have raised concerns about whether DHEC is able to do both environmental protection and protect public health well. Upstate businesses raised concerns were about overlapping permitting and enforcement, which legislative leaders said would not be an issue. The legislation was signed into law, and we will continue to raise the permitting concerns.

S. 164 — CERTIFICATE OF NEED

Last: Signed by Governor
Coalition Position: Monitor

This legislation sunsets the state's certificate of need program, which was created in the 1970s. The initial purpose of the CON law was to promote unnecessary duplication of services in health-care. In recent years, critics have attacked it as an outdated policy that stifled competition and the free market. This version of the bill ends the CON program immediately — except for nursing homes. The UCC did not have an official position on this legislation, but we did keep a close eye on it since the CON statute could have unintended consequences on unrelated business functions.



The 2023 Legislative Agenda was created after months of meetings with constituent groups, capped off with our legislative survey in October. We thank the more than 1,000 leaders from all 14 Upstate chambers who participated in the agenda-creation process. Our 2024 Agenda process will begin in August, so please be on the lookout for announcements of a listening tour stop in your community and please take a few minutes to complete our legislative survey.

INCREASE EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND TALENT ATTRACTION

- Implement teacher pay bands to allow districts to better attract high performing teachers.
- Make it easier for mid-career professionals to switch to teaching, specifically in STEM fields.
- Seek solutions to expand the accessibility and the affordability of childcare to ensure working parents may fully participate in the workforce.
- Support continued investment in state colleges and universities, including critical infrastructure needs, to mitigate the tuition burden for South Carolina Students.
- Expand funding the free tuition programs for technical college students.
- Support policies that will increase educational attainment of our students and workforce.

BOOST ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- Reform our recruiting incentives to make it easier to attract significant investments in knowledge-based and corporate headquarters jobs.
- Ensure the remaining ARPA funds are used on transformative infrastructure projects.
- As we advertise and promote our state's natural areas, we must increase state investment in our parks and recreation areas to ensure they can meet visitor demands and remain preserved for future generations.
- Increase state funding for transit operations to enhance mobility for education, healthcare, and jobs.
- Remove barriers and provide new incentives in partnership

with local governments to develop workforce and affordable housing projects.

- Improve access to capital for small businesses and entrepreneurs in our state.

IMPROVE OUR BUSINESS CLIMATE

- Re-institute joint and several protections for businesses to reasonably reflect fault in tort actions.
- Continue work on 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 for the business community.
- Support policies to make our state a more welcoming state for business growth and talent attraction and retention.

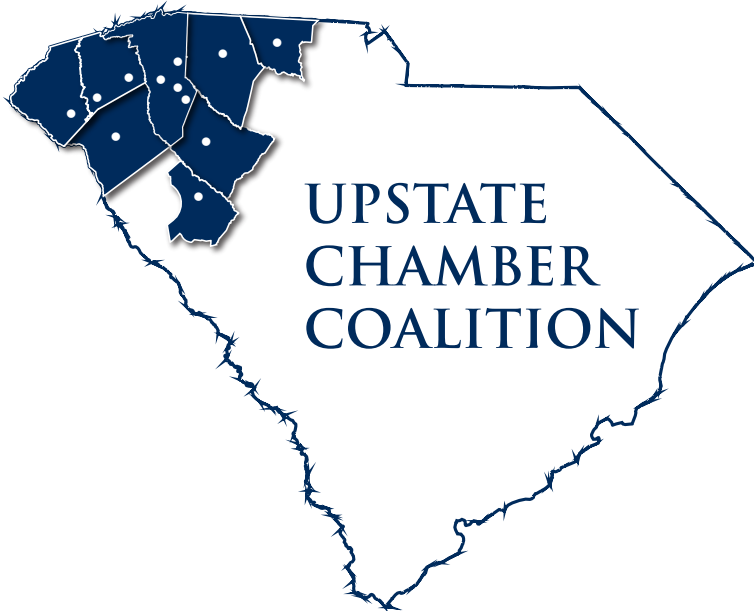
REFORM OUR CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

- Continue to review state laws to expand the expungement opportunities for non-violent offenses, prepare returning citizens for high-demand job opportunities, and reform occupational licensing for citizens with non-violent criminal records.

IMPROVE OUR STATE'S FISCAL HEALTH

- The General Assembly must close the South Carolina Retirement System to new employees and move to a defined contribution plan to better serve new employees, preserve the system for current retirees, and protect taxpayers from the deepening fiscal hole.





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
- Trentsie Williams**, Greenwood Area Chamber of Commerce
- Amanda Munyan**, Laurens County Chamber of Commerce
- Frannie Stockwell**, Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce
- VACANT**, 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 7,000 business members that employ more than 350,000 people.

We extend a special THANK YOU to our 2023 Business Advocacy Partners, who provide strong support for the Coalition's work throughout the year.

2023 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

Lily Franklin | Carly Alexander

2022-2023 Advocacy Interns



upstatechamber.org



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