



# STATE LEGISLATIVE SCORECARD 2016

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## Introduction

The Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce is committed to keeping our region competitive and improving the business climate. Through the legislative process, the Chamber works on behalf of its members to advocate for policies that contribute to the growth and prosperity of Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester counties.

This year, we focused on the following key areas at the State House:

### **Infrastructure and Transportation**

### **Economic Development and Talent**

### **Military Base Retention and Expansion**

The Chamber's advocacy efforts at the State House are led by Chamber Lobbyist George Ramsey who is at the State House each day the legislature is in session, advocating on behalf of the region's business community.

The 2016 session, the second of a two part session, ended in June 2016.

For more information or to view the full Legislative Agenda and Guiding Principles, visit [www.charlestonchamber.net/advocacy](http://www.charlestonchamber.net/advocacy).

- Support a long-term comprehensive infrastructure funding solution for our state's decaying infrastructure

The SC Department of Transportation estimates that more than \$42 billion is needed to repair and address South Carolina's road and bridge infrastructure. Chamber members consistently point to infrastructure as one of the top priorities and areas of focus for the Chamber. The Chamber's Infrastructure Visioning Task Force has identified 15 infrastructure priorities for our region.

After two plus years of intense effort by the South Carolina's largest metro chambers and alliances (the South Carolina Chamber, The South Carolina Trucking Association, South Carolina Alliance to Fix our Roads among others) to pressure the General Assembly to identify a new, dedicated funding stream to address the \$42 billion need, the Senate and House agreed on SCDOT restructuring and the Senate Finance Committee developed a plan to bond existing and redirected revenues totaling \$4.2 billion over the next 10 years to be used on interstate improvements, the primary road system and replacement of all substandard bridges statewide in Act 275.

Though the \$4.2 billion is a step in the right direction, finding a long-term funding solution for infrastructure will be the top priority for the Chamber in the next two-year legislative session.

### Regional Advocates for Infrastructure Funding in South Carolina Senate:

Sean Bennett  
Paul Campbell  
Chip Campsen  
Ray Cleary  
Larry Grooms  
Marlon Kimpson  
John Matthews  
Clementa Pinckney  
Paul Thurmond

### Regional Advocates for Infrastructure Funding in South Carolina House:

Robert Brown  
Joe Daning  
Wendell Gilliard  
Stephen Goldfinch  
Jenny Horne  
Joe Jefferson  
Chip Limehouse  
David Mack  
Peter McCoy  
Jim Merrill  
Chris Murphy  
Samuel Rivers  
Mike Sottile  
Leon Stavrinakis  
Mary Tinkler  
Seth Whipper



### Regional Senate Members on Finance Committee:

Paul Campbell  
Ray Cleary  
Larry Grooms  
John Matthews  
Clementa Pinckney

### Regional House Members on Ways and Means:

Chip Limehouse  
Jim Merrill  
Leon Stavrinakis

- Support of the Aeronautical Training Center at Trident Technical College to expand the aerospace industry cluster in South Carolina

The SC General Assembly approved the final \$16 million for the funding of the \$79 million training campus in the General Appropriations Bill H. 5001 and the Capital Reserve Fund H.5002. In 2015, the South Carolina Legislature appropriated \$20 million dollars, Charleston County Council approved \$18,750,000 and the City of North Charleston approved \$1 million. Trident Technical College is seeking final state approvals to move the project into final design and the construction bid process.

The 215,000-square-foot training hub will provide training in aircraft assembly, aircraft maintenance and avionics, expanding the two-year college's aeronautical curriculum. Trident Tech currently offers four airplane-related degrees or certificate tracks – aircraft maintenance technology, aircraft assembly technology, avionics maintenance technology and basic industrial work skills. All programs are operating at capacity with waiting lists for students to enter the programs. With the growing aeronautics cluster in South Carolina, the training campus is urgently needed to provide the needed skilled workforce.

The college's new facility is planned to be housed on part of 25 acres adjacent to its main campus on Rivers Avenue. The project is planned to be completed in 2019.



# H.3147

## MILITARY BASE RETENTION AND EXPANSION

- Support the exemption of military retirement income benefits from the South Carolina income tax

The Chamber serves on the South Carolina Military Base Task Force's Executive Committee. Each year, the Task Force identifies legislation to support the military and their families as one way to demonstrate to the Department of Defense, South Carolina's strong support of the state's four military communities.

This year the top priority for the Military Base Task Force was the exemption of military retiree benefits from the state income tax. H.3147 was introduced in 2015, the first year of the two-year legislative session; the bill passed the House last year but did not receive committee hearings until 2016 in the Senate. In the Senate, the bill was amended from a full exemption of retiree benefits to significantly increasing the tax deductions on military retirement benefits. The amended legislation increased the state tax deduction for those 64 years old and younger from \$3,000 to nearly \$18,000. For those over the age of 65, the deduction increases from \$15,000 to \$30,000. The deductions will be phased in over the next five years to limit the fiscal impact to the General Fund. The legislation passed unanimously in both the House and Senate.

Though not a complete exemption of the military retiree benefits, this is a significant first step for South Carolina to remain one of the most military friendly states in the United States. The Chamber along, with the Military Base Task Force, will continue to push for complete exemption of retirement benefits in the next legislative session.

Regional Sponsors  
of this Legislation:  
*Representatives*  
Leon Stavrinakis  
Stephen Goldfinch  
Chris Murphy



**Key:**

Y – voted with us  
N – voted against us  
NV – did not vote  
NV / A – did not vote  
excused absence

**SENATE**

Sean Bennett	Y	Y	Y
Paul Campbell	Y	Y	Y
Chip Campsen	N	NV	Y
Ray Cleary	Y	Y	Y
Larry Grooms	Y	Y	Y
Marlon Kimpson	Y	Y	Y
John Matthews	Y	Y	Y
Margie Bright Matthews	Y	Y	Y
Ronnie Sabb	Y	Y	Y
Paul Thurmond	NV / A	Y	Y

**HOUSE**

Robert Brown	Y	Y	NV
Bill Crosby	Y	Y	Y
Joe Daning	Y	Y	Y
Wendall Gilliard	Y	NV	Y
Stephen Goldfinch	NV	NV	NV / A
Jenny Horne	NV	Y	NV
Joe Jefferson	Y	Y	Y
Patsy Knight	Y	Y	Y
Chip Limehouse	Y	Y	Y
David Mack	Y	Y	Y
Peter McCoy	Y	Y	NV
Jim Merrill	Y	Y	Y
Chris Murphy	NV	Y	NV
Samuel Rivers	Y	Y	Y
Mike Sottile	Y	Y	Y
Leon Stavrakis	Y	Y	Y
Mary Tinkler	Y	Y	Y
Seth Whipper	Y	Y	Y

**S.1258**  
**SCDOT Restructuring**  
**and Road Funding Bill**  
Final Reading

**H.5002**  
**Capital Reserve Fund**  
Conference Report

**H.3147**  
**Military Retiree**  
**Pay Tax Deduction**  
Final Reading

# CHARLESTON METRO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ADVOCACY TEAM

The Chamber's business advocacy team is your voice in the halls of government, representing you at the local, state and federal levels. Our professional team, including our full-time state lobbyist, George Ramsey, has strong relationships with all our elected officials, from the school board to the United States Senate. They are working every day to ensure our operating climate is supportive of your business.



**Mary Graham**

*Chief Advancement Officer*

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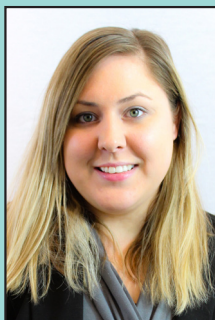


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