



December 4, 2020

SC HOUSE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:

This week, the South Carolina House of Representatives met for two days at the State House to organize our body in preparation of the 124th Legislative Session to begin January 12, 2021. This “re-organization” session is held after an election year to allow House members to be sworn in to office, elect leadership officers, receive committee assignments, and adopt House procedural rules for the upcoming two-year session.

Beaufort County saw the return of our entire delegation and strong committee assignments covering almost every House standing committee. Bluffton-area Representative Bill Herbkersman, District 118 and I (Beaufort District 124) retained our seats on Ways & Means; Representative Weston Newton (Bluffton District 120) will serve another term on the Judiciary Committee; Representative Jeff Bradley of Hilton Head District 123 earned a seat on the Labor, Commerce & Industry Committee; Representative Michael Rivers, Sr. of District 121 will serve on Education & Public Works; and District 122 Representative Shedron Williams will represent us on the Agriculture, Natural Resources & Environmental Affairs Committee.

Additionally, four of our six member Beaufort County House members were appointed to auxiliary standing committees. Representatives Newton and Rivers were assigned to the Legislative Oversight Committee, where Mr. Newton was re-elected Chairman. Representative Bradley and I have been re-appointed to the Regulations and Administrative Procedures Committee. These assignments mean a majority of the House members who represent Beaufort County are leaders and members of integral committees, ensuring our county is well & fully represented in Columbia with seniority and key committee roles.

Our official two-year session will begin January 12, 2021 but committee work, especially Ways & Means budget planning and Legislative Oversight audits never stop. Formal session will start out as we often do, by choosing candidates to fill a number of state judicial seats, as well as college and state agency boards and commissions. Once those elections are behind us, we will be deep into crafting and adopting the 2021-2022 state budget, which may be challenging due to on-going COVID-19 pandemic needs and projected reduced revenues from the slower economy.

As you know, we were not able to complete and adopt a state budget for the 2020-2021 fiscal year as the General Assembly was forced to adjourn at the beginning of the COVID outbreak. State government has been operating on continuing resolutions and special authorizations, using the prior year’s budget for the spending framework. We may have to pass additional authorizations to help carry state government over to the next fiscal year, which will begin on July 1, 2021 but we will work to pass a complete annual budget this spring.

Another hurdle caused by the shortened legislative session this year was that a lot of legislation did not make it through the complete legislative process. Much of it will have to start over from scratch next year. Bills regarding education reform, teacher pay increases, military retirement pay, Santee Cooper and so much more are critical pieces of unfinished business that we resume work on. With these unusual circumstances, COVID and a tough financial outlook, the upcoming session could prove to be another challenging year for the General Assembly.

As always, thank you for allowing me to serve and taking time to read my updates. If you have any questions or need assistance navigating state government, please contact me by phone at 843-263-1867, by email at repshannonerickson@gmail.com or through our Beaufort County Legislative Delegation Office Liaison, Mrs. Cindy Maxey at 843-255-2260. You can also access a great deal of information about the SC General Assembly at www.scstatehouse.gov.

Please continue to stay safe and have a great South Carolina day!

Here if you need me,
Shannon

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