

Palmetto Liberty

2011 House Score Card

The following is a short description of each vote that was included in the score on the reverse. After each description is an explanation of what each ✓ or ✗ means. Remember, a ✓ is a vote for limited government, the free market, and individual liberty and responsibility.

- 1. Election of the Speaker of the House.** Bobby Harrell was challenged by Ralph Norman. Speaker Harrell has opposed Roll Call voting, advocates for a centrally planned economy (see his voting record on this score card), and runs the House with an iron fist. Representative Norman challenged Harrell in order to bring more conservative leadership to the House.

Harrell was re-elected 112 – 5 on November 17th 2010.

✗ – voted for Bobby Harrell as speaker
✓ – voted for Ralph Norman as speaker
- 2. Amazon sales tax exemption H3488.** Many people were alarmed when they heard that Amazon.com was being offered a sales tax exemption that was not available to other internet sellers with a physical presence in our state. It was rightly seen as another case of the government picking the winners and losers among private businesses.

The sales tax exemption was offered as Amendment No. 1 to H3488 on April 27th 2011. The amendment failed 47 – 71.

✗ – voted for the amendment
✓ – voted against the amendment
- 3. Educational Opportunity Act.** South Carolina has been working for years to restore to parents real educational choice for their children. Never have we come as close as we did on this vote. This failed because of several Republicans that opposed the measure including the “Spartanburg Six”.

H3407, The Educational Opportunity Act, was defeated 60 – 59 on May 25th 2011 on a motion by Representative Brannon to table the bill.

✗ – voted to table H3407
✓ – voted not to table H3407
- 4. Largest budget in state history \$22 billion.** Contrary to the Speaker’s propaganda otherwise, South Carolina did not pass a conservative budget this year. With more than \$8 billion in funds from the federal government including all the mandates and required state spending that comes with those funds, and an additional \$8 billion funded by fees and fines, our total state spending this year is more than ever before. It will be a continuing battle to get our state government to spend less and rely less on funding from the federal government.

House adopted the conference report on budget on June 22nd 2011 by a vote of 57-54.

✗ – voted for the largest budget in state history
✓ – voted against the largest budget in state history
- 5. I-95 Corridor Authority.** Quietly passed by the House and Senate, this bill creates a new government agency with a mandate to implement the 64 recommendations of the I-95 Human Needs Assessment. The mandate gives this agency the authority to manage the economy, education, infrastructure, and even leadership of the 17 South Carolina counties along I-95. This agency is central planning on

steroids; the antithesis of the free market.

The I-95 Corridor Authority Act, S211, passed the House 84 – 17 on May 19th 2011. The Governor vetoed the bill. The House is scheduled to vote on the veto at the beginning of the 2012 session.

✗ – voted for I-95 Corridor Authority
✓ – voted against I-95 Corridor Authority

- 6. Angel Investment Act.** An Angel is a wealthy investor in a high risk startup enterprise. This bill puts the tax payer on the hook for these high risk investments, allowing the Angel a tax credit up to \$100,000 per year. Tax payers are covering the risk for the Angel, but get none of the profit if the investment happens to pay off. That, of course, goes to the Angel.

The Angel Investment Act, H3779, passed the House 78 – 18 on April 13th 2011.

✗ – voted for the angel investment act
✓ – voted against the angel investment act

- 7. Amazon sales tax exemption S36.** After the initial failed vote (see vote 2) to give Amazon.com a sales tax exemption that was not available to other internet retailers who have a physical presence in South Carolina, Amazon announced they would not come to South Carolina. They launched a huge PR campaign backed up by intense pressure by the Lexington County delegation and the Chairman of the Lexington County Republican party. Many House members who originally voted against the unfair tax advantage wilted under the pressure and switched their vote.

The Amazon sales tax exemption passed 90 – 14 on June 1st 2011

✗ – voted to exempt Amazon.com from collecting sales tax
✓ – vote against the sales tax exemption for Amazon.com

- 8. Veto of state health care expansion.** S586 is a bill that not only expands who is eligible to enroll in the state health care plan, but extends incentives to encourage them to do so. Why would we want to encourage people to abandon their private health care plans to enroll in the state plan, especially at a time when budgets are tight and government needs to be contracted rather than expanded?

Governor’s veto of S586, the expansion of state health care rolls, was overridden by a vote of 96 – 12 on May 26th 2011.

✗ – voted to override the veto
✓ – voted to sustain the veto

- 9. 2nd reading of Revitalization Act.** The good news is that the state apparently wants to unload its old property. The bad news is that this bill would give tax credits to developers that rehabilitate “abandoned” government (state and local) properties. “Rehabilitation” includes the cost of virtually everything but the expense of acquiring the property, including the construction of new buildings. “Abandoned” means closed for at least one year, meaning virtually any property could be made eligible for this credit.

The Revitalization Act, H3688, passed its 2nd reading in the House on a vote of 61 – 42 on May 19th 2011. Fortunately, it was defeated on 3rd reading 57 – 59 (see vote 10)

✗ – voted for the Revitalization Act
✓ – voted against the Revitalization Act

- 10. 3rd reading of Revitalization Act.** See vote 9. H3688 was defeated in the House on a vote of 57 – 59 on 3rd reading on May 24th 2011.

✗ – voted for the Revitalization Act
✓ – voted against the Revitalization Act

- 11. Corporate economic incentive.** This bill is another example of legislators trying to centrally plan our economy. It exempts from paying income tax for 10 years certain corporations that move their corporate headquarters to South Carolina or expand an existing corporate headquarters. It has been reported that this bill was written on behalf of two Greenville based companies. This is another blatant example of the state government handing out goodies to favored businesses.

This corporate economic incentive, H3720, passed the house on a vote of 106 – 0 on April 28th 2011.

✗ – voted for the targeted 10 year corporate tax break.

- 12. Retroactive tax incentive.** This tax incentive is the most ridiculous I have ever seen. Normally, our legislature justifies tax incentives as necessary in order to attract new out of state corporations to South Carolina. This one, however, was for the Institute for Business and Home Safety in Chester County, a company that moved to South Carolina years ago. This company ended up with a check for \$1 million from the SC Treasury as retroactive credit for taxes already paid.

This retroactive tax incentive, S533, passed on a voice vote on March 31st 2011 with no one on record opposing it.

✗ – everyone gets an ✗ because no one is recorded as opposing this bill or voting against this bill.

- 13. Roll Call.** This is the bill that forced the legislature to make a public record of how each legislator votes on every new law that is passed and on every section of the budget. It is what made this report card possible. Thanks to everyone who worked to win the three year battle for passage of this bill.

The Roll Call bill, H3004, passed on a vote of 106 – 0 on January 13th 2011.

✓ – voted for mandatory roll calls

- 14. Voter ID.** Just the idea that someone can vote without showing identification is laughable. Yet, this was one of the more controversial bills passed this year. Its fate is not yet decided, with the United States Justice Department opposing it.

The Voter ID bill, H3003, passed the House on a vote of 71 – 36 on April 26th 2011.

✗ – Voted against requiring photo ID to vote
✓ – Voted for requiring photo ID to vote

An electronic copy of the Palmetto Liberty 2011 House Score Card can be found at:

www.palmettoliberty.com/voting-records

You can contact us at:

**P.O. Box 293
Lexington, SC 29071
talbert@PalmettoLiberty.com
803-767-1152**

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