

Palmetto Liberty

2012 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. **Solar energy tax credit.** Remember Solyndra? Taxpayers should not be subsidizing any sector of the economy and the government shouldn't be distorting the free market by taxing one sector differently from another. This bill is economic central planning. It didn't work for the Soviet Union. It won't work for South Carolina.

H3346 passed the House 100 – 10 on April 28, 2011.

- ✓ – voted against central planning of the economy
- ✗ – voted for central planning of the economy

2. **Land Conservation Bank.** Land in South Carolina should be preserved by those private parties that are interested in its preservation. This is not a core function of government. The Conservation Bank was set to expire in 2013. This bill extended it until 2018.

H3083 passed the House 95 – 16 on May 18th 2011.

- ✓ – voted against extending the Conservation Bank
- ✗ – voted for extending the Conservation Bank

3. **International Energy Conservation Code.** When legislators blindly follow international standards we lose the ability to determine what is best for South Carolina. With H4639, the House adopted the IECC as the energy standard of the state. Part of this standard mandates the use of compact fluorescent lights and bars the use of regular incandescent lights.

H4639 passed the House 104 – 0 February 22nd 2012.

- ✓ – voted against the IECC
- ✗ – voted for the IECC

4. **Banning cell phones.** Most folks agree distracted driving can be dangerous. But picking just one distraction to ban is not smart. And trying to enumerate every distraction is impossible. That's why we already have laws against reckless driving and operating a vehicle in an unsafe condition. These give law enforcement the tools necessary to deal with dangerous driving. This bill makes little sense even in its attempted implementation. It bans hands free devices in some cases, and permits hands on devices in other cases.

H4451 passed the House 93 – 15 on March 7th 2012.

- ✓ – voted against bad cell phone law
- ✗ – voted for bad cell phone law

5. **Barber licensing.** This bill codifies new regulations on the barber trade. These new regulations approve licensing fees for barbers. While doing nothing to help ensure properly trained barbers, they make entry into the field more difficult and reduce competition.

H4928 passed the House 106 – 0 on March 7th 2012.

- ✓ – voted against codifying new regulations
- ✗ – voted for codifying new regulations

6. **Targeted tax break.** Let's cut taxes. But let's cut them for everyone equally. This bill would lower income tax rates on some, but not all, small businesses. This is another example of preferential tax treatment when we need to be reducing the tax burden on

all companies equally.

H4996 passed the House 104 – 3 on April 24th 2012.

- ✓ – voted against preferential taxation
- ✗ – voted for preferential taxation

7. **Strengthening FOIA.** This bill would have removed the legislature's exemption to the Freedom of Information Act. Additionally, it would prevent agencies from charging exorbitant fees for information and from making endless delays before delivering the requested information. It limits the fee charged to the "market rate" for copies and gives a deadline for making the information available.

H3235 passed the House 101 – 1 on April 26th 2012.

- ✓ – voted for strengthening FOIA
- ✗ – voted against strengthening FOIA

8. **Hybrid car tax credit.** Taxpayers shouldn't be subsidizing any particular sector of the economy. Further, the government shouldn't be distorting the free market with taxpayer funded subsidies. This is yet another example of our state government central planning our economy.

H3059 passed the House 53 – 48 on May 1st 2012.

- ✓ – voted against central planning of the economy
- ✗ – voted for central planning of the economy

9. **Corporate economic incentives.** This bill is an example of government picking the winners and the losers. It will exempt 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 for two Greenville based companies.

H3720 passed the House 104 – 2 on May 2nd 2012.

- ✓ – voted against central planning of the economy
- ✗ – voted for central planning of the economy

10. **Governor and Lt. Governor on the same ticket.** With the Lt. Governor elected separately from the Governor we often have a disjointed and dysfunctional executive branch. H3152 proposes a constitutional change that would require the Governor and Lt. Governor to be elected together as a team. Under the current system, the Lt. Governor's only real duty is to preside over the Senate. We hardly need a constitutional officer for that.

H3152 passed the House 97 – 16 on May 16th 2012.

- ✓ – voted for constitutional change
- ✗ – voted against constitutional change

11. **Tim Tebow equal access act.** This bill made extra-curricular activities available to kids who are not attending public school but are in the school's attendance area. There was an attempt to weaken the bill with an amendment that would require home schooled students to submit attendance and grade transcripts to the public school in order to participate. The amendment was defeated with a motion to table and the strong version of the bill was preserved.

Amendment 3 to S149 was defeated 66 – 38 on May 30th 2012.

- ✓ – voted against amendment 3
- ✗ – voted for amendment 3

12. **SCRA board change.** S1331 puts the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee on both the board of trustees and executive committee of the South Carolina Research Authority, a state-owned and state-

controlled technology and real estate company. It does the same for the House Ways and Means chairman. Given that the Research Authority's purpose is to support specific private companies with public resources, the law virtually guarantees more legislative conflicts of interest.

S1331 passed the House 79 – 10 on May 31st 2012.

- ✓ – voted against future conflicts of interest
- ✗ – voted for future conflicts of interest

13. **Tax credits for tire manufacturers.** Lawmakers used H3506 to dole out tens of millions of dollars in tax credits to three specific companies, not in an effort to bring them to the state – they were already here – but simply as a favor, courtesy of the South Carolina taxpayer. This last minute deal was made by taking a bill that had already passed both the House and Senate, and replacing the entire text of the bill with this sweet deal. Neither chamber could give the bill a fair hearing on its merits. In order to make this quick change, they had to use a procedural vote to give a conference committee "free conference powers".

A tax credit amendment to H3506 was enabled by giving "free conference powers" to a conference committee by a vote of 97 – 0 on June 7th, 2012.

- ✓ – voted against the targeted tax credit
- ✗ – voted for the targeted tax credit

14. **State retirement reform gone bad.** H4967 does phase out the greatly abused TERI system which allows government employees to retire and then get re-hired while still receiving retirement benefits. It also prevents new retirees from counting unused annual leave in determining retirement compensation. But, the Senate amended the bill on an unrecorded voice vote so that it creates a new agency, the South Carolina Public Employee Benefit Authority, tasked with managing the state retirement system and making it solvent within 30 years, a ridiculously long time. The Authority's paid board members include retirees – i.e., beneficiaries – virtually guaranteeing that the bill's solvency time-frame will be soon forgotten.

H4967 passed the House 88 – 9 on June 21st 2012.

- ✓ – voted against new agency managed by its beneficiaries
- ✗ – voted for new agency managed by its beneficiaries

15. **Largest budget in state history.** Last year we had the largest budget in state history. This year's \$23.6 billion budget is \$1.3 billion larger than last year's. So once again, H4813 gave us the largest budget in state history.

Passed the House 89 – 10 on June 28th 2012.

- ✓ – voted against the budget
- ✗ – voted for the budget

An electronic copy of the Palmetto Liberty 2012 House Score Card can be found at:

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