

# What The 1969 Legislature Accomplished

## State Salary Equalization

A \$10 million appropriation will implement a salary equalization plan for state employees. As the governor said in his "state-of-the-state" address, the system "calls for elimination of inequities in salaries for similar jobs in state government. Although this proposed funding does not provide an across-the-board pay raise this year, it does provide the basis for more equitable salary increases in the future." Also provided for is a minimum wage of \$1.60 an hour.

## Insurance

Franchise life and health insurance will provide the benefits of lower premiums to groups of employees or associations not large enough to qualify for group insurance. Group life insurance will be allowed for professional associations with least 25 members.

A legislative committee was created to investigate automobile liability insurance, especially rates.

## Liquor Legislation

Sen. C. Clayton Grimes Jr. of Georgetown began working early in the session on legislation which would provide for a vote on local option on the sale of liquor both by-the-bottle and by-the-drink. He had received conditional support from two prominent ministers as well as Gov. Robert E. McNair. However, as the session closed Grimes dropped his plans for introducing the bill this year. He plans more research to insure the state will not lose revenue under the measure. He hopes to have the bill ready for introduction during the 1970 General Assembly.

## State Appropriation

The General Assembly approved a record \$465.4 million state budget for fiscal 1969-70 which included a \$63 million tax increase. However, veteran legislative leaders are concerned that even the slightest decline in the state's economic growth will bring automatic tax increases next year totaling approximately \$20 million.

## Marine Research

The S. C. Wildlife Resources Commission was allocated approximately \$750,000 for marine research facilities. A half-million dollars is to be used for construction of a research laboratory, with Charleston being given top priority as the site in a study made earlier this year by marine experts. The commission will have \$250,000 for the first year's operation.

## Aid For Private Colleges

Tax-free bonds for the state's private colleges will be issued through the State Education Facilities Authority, a new and additional role for the Budget and Control Board. The bonds issued will not constitute a debt or liability of the state or any political subdivision.

## Grounds For Divorce

Continuous separation for three years has been added as grounds for divorce in South Carolina, with application by either party. Other grounds are adultery, desertion for one year, physical cruelty and habitual drunkenness caused by any narcotic drug.

## Interest Rates

The maximum interest on loans under \$50,000 was raised from seven to eight per cent. On loans of \$50,000 to \$100,000 the ceiling was placed at 10 per cent; \$100,000 to \$500,000 at 12 per cent; and above that, no ceiling.

## Regional Councils Of Government

A bill ratifying an amendment authorizing counties and municipalities to establish regional councils of government remains in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

## Defense Of Indigents

Under the old system in criminal cases, judges appointed lawyers to represent indigent persons without compensation. Under the new system approved this session for criminal cases, state courts would have either a paid public defender or, if lawyers still were appointed, they would be compensated. Federal courts have had a compensation system for lawyers representing persons too poor to pay.

## Punch-Card Voting

Legislation which would have permitted counties to adopt punch-card voting and take ballots away from precincts for computer counting ended up in the House Judiciary Committee after passing the Senate.

## Abortion Legislation

The House could not survive a three-day filibuster on liberalizing the state's abortion laws. At adjournment, the bill kept its place on the calendar for the opening of the 1970 session. Having passed the Senate, it will still be up for second reading in the House.

## Alcohol And Drug Addiction

With an additional 35 cents tax on a case of whisky and creation of a division on alcohol and drug addiction in the State Department of Mental Health, the state is on its way to establishing facilities for the treatment of alcohol and drug addicts.

## Anti-Violence Measures

The legislature spelled out some specific crimes in the wake of campus disorder at Voorhees College and the hospital strike in Charleston. The bans are against displaying firearms on the grounds of schools or public buildings, and destroying records or property belonging to a school or public agency. Possession of firebombs is outlawed. It is a crime to display weapons on the state capitol grounds or to be disorderly or demonstrate inside the State House. Anyone who encourages or entices a child to stay away from school also may be subject to a fine and/or prison term.

## Government Pay Raises

Beginning with the term following the November, 1970, general election, state constitutional officers will get a raise. The governor will make \$35,000; the lieutenant governor, \$15,000; and the secretary of state, comptroller general, attorney general, state treasurer, adjutant general and superintendent of education, \$30,000 each. In each instance it is a \$10,000 raise, except for the lieutenant governor. The present salary for that office is \$7,500.

## Subsistence Pay

The cost of living while legislating resulted in the senators and representatives increasing their subsistence allowance from \$15 to \$25 a day, effective Jan. 1, 1970. South Carolina legislators make \$4,000 a year plus subsistence and mileage.



A MEETING OF MINDS

Senate President Pro Tempore Edgar A. Brown (right) of Barnwell and Speaker of the House Sol Blatt, also of Barnwell, confer as they wait for the end of state-wide business for the legislative session.

# Session Was Productive, Say Veteran Legislators

By JACK ROACH  
Columbia Bureau

COLUMBIA — The first session of the 98th South Carolina General Assembly has been long, tumultuous, controversial, and, sometimes confusing, but it has been productive according to some of the veteran legislators.

More than 1,400 bills have been introduced in the House and Senate since the General Assembly convened on Jan. 14. Some have been killed, some have been relegated to limbo in committees, others have been sent to committees and will be revived next year during the second session of the 98th General Assembly.

Tabulation of just how many have survived the legislative process and were passed will take a few more days.

The session began on a controversial note with the Moody Report — a blueprint compiled by a team of experts — outlining just what the state should do and where it should

go in the field of education, transportation and health.

Gov. Robert E. McNair outlined for the legislators his aims, programs and wishes in his "State of the State" address on the second day of the session.

McNair cited education all the way from a public kindergarten school program to higher education as one of the major problems facing the state. He also recommended increases in certain taxes to take care of the state's rising financial costs.

The governor did not get from the legislators all he wanted in his program. But by his own admission in recent weeks he is more than satisfied with most of the legislation the General Assembly has approved this year.

On kindergarten, the governor wanted \$1.25 million to initiate the program. The General Assembly approved a half million dollars in the general appropriations bill. On tax increases, the

General Assembly finally approved a one cent per pack increase on cigarettes, one cent per can on beer. Sales tax went from three to four per cent and corporate income tax went from five to six per cent.

Compared to other legislative sessions, filibustering, most noticeably in the Senate, was held to a minimum.

But there were lengthy debates on a number of controversial issues. These included milk price control, abortion, interest rates in fishing and hunting licenses, the kindergarten, health and welfare, pollution control and implied consent on drunken drivers.

Perhaps one of the most discussed and controversial issues this year has been the State Department of Juvenile Correction. A lengthy study and investigation of the department has been under way for months and is still continuing into alleged brutality at the state's juvenile correctional schools.

Hunger, poverty, and malnutrition in the Lowcountry counties of Beaufort and Jasper evoked much discussion on the floor of both houses and free food stamp programs were inaugurated in the two counties.

There were the usual number of bills introduced and passed on the hunting of rabbits, squirrels, quail and other game in various counties.

School teacher salaries were hiked in general and the state's employees will now come under a pay equalization and classification program.

The legislators passed a record-breaking \$465.4 million state appropriations bill which included about a \$63 million increase in taxes.

All in all it was a typical legislative year. And House members were especially careful about the legislation the passed particularly in so far as taxes are concerned.

After all, next year is an election year for them.

A separate law provides for unreduced benefits for persons with 35 years of service who retire, or retired prior to age 63.

## Teacher Salaries

A revised state aid salary schedule, effective July 1, 1969, means an average \$800 pay hike for teachers. Actually the raises range from \$600 for a beginning teacher with a bachelor's degree to \$1,071 for the holder of a master's degree with 14 years experience.

## Winthrop College

Winthrop College will award degrees to men on an experimental basis. The legislation requires degree candidates to have registered by Sept. 15, 1969, and to have been a resident of the state one year. A legislative committee will examine any problems arising from the General Assembly's decision and report to the 1970 session of the feasibility of making Winthrop coeducational.

## Gasoline Taxes

Holding its place on the calendar but postponed until next year was a bill which would have added one cent tax to a gallon of gasoline. Half the increase was to be rebated to counties for aid in their highway construction programs. This would assist particularly metropolitan areas, such as Charleston and Columbia, which are engaged in area transportation studies. The other half was to be used by the State Highway Department for use in its road programs.

## Sales Tax

The state sales tax was increased from three to four per cent effective June 1, 1969, with the tax continuing to be earmarked for educational purposes. It is estimated the increase will bring in \$47 million in additional revenue during the year. The increase had been requested by Gov. Robert E. McNair in his "State of the State" address.

## Cigarette Taxes

The tax on a pack of cigarettes was increased from five to six cents. Gov. Robert E. McNair had asked for an increase to eight cents.

## Beer Tax

The beer tax was increased by one-tenth of a cent per ounce. In addition, the state budget bill provides that the municipalities' share of beer and wine taxes be increased from 12 to 18 per cent. The counties' share remains at seven per cent. Both are distributed on a population basis. The remaining 75 per cent goes to the state treasury.

## Health And Welfare Merger

A move to merge the state's departments of health and welfare failed. The new agency would have been known as the S. C. Department of Public Health and Social Services. In the closing weeks of the session the bill was sent to the Ways and Means Committee. However, the proposal still can be brought out of committee when the General Assembly convenes in January, 1970.

## Pollution Control

A proposal to transfer the S. C. Pollution Control Authority from the State Board of Health to the S. C. Water Resources Commission failed.

## Florence College

The General Assembly created a four-year col-

lege at Florence to be known as the Marion State College. It is now a two-year branch of the University of South Carolina. The College will continue as a regional facility of the university until July, 1970.

The four year college will have a new board of trustees, and that board also will serve as the governing body of any future state-supported, four-year colleges.

## Medicaid

A \$6.6 million recommendation for Medicaid, approved by the Budget and Control Board, was cut back to \$3.8 million in the final version of the money bill. Medicaid provides medical assistance to persons on welfare rolls.

## Twin-Trailer Trucks

A bill which would have permitted twin-trailer trucks on four-lane highways in the state was killed in committee. Proponents saw the tandem trailers as a means for the state to exploit to the fullest the transportation potential of the interstate highway system. Opponents saw them as a safety threat to motorists and generators of noise, fumes and congestion.

## Regional Campuses

A proposal to sever the University of South Carolina and Clemson University from their two-year regional campuses and place the 10 regional campuses, along with Winthrop and S. C. State College, under a separate board of trustees was defeated. The proposal had the backing of the governor, and the Higher Education Commission.

## School District Aid

The Assembly approved a measure making the pupil-teacher ratio in S. C. schools a uniform 26-1. Before, the high school ratio was 26-1, but the elementary school ratio was 30-1. The change allows districts to get more funds for paying teachers.

Another aid to school districts was a measure upping state allocation for school buildings from \$25 per pupil to \$30 per pupil.

## Bail For Prisoners

A prisoner unable to raise bail need no longer be denied release on bond. Sen. Gordon H. Garrett of Charleston introduced the successful legislation which would allow the courts to decide whether a man should be released on his own recognizance or promise.

## Milk Price Control

Bills limiting or abolishing the price control authority of the S. C. Dairy Commission still languished in committee when the legislators went home. Opponents contended free-market milk prices would put the small producers out of business.

## Electric Co-Op Taxation

South Carolina's electric cooperatives will begin paying essentially the same state and local taxes as the private power companies, except for income tax from which they will continue to be exempt. The legislation had the support of both groups.

## Corporate Income Tax

The state's tax on corporations was raised from five to six per cent. Recommended by Gov. Robert E. McNair, the increase is expected to bring in \$7 million.

## Hunger And Malnutrition

A special committee was created and it went right to work. Dubbed the committee to devise a state action program to deal with problems of hunger and malnutrition in South Carolina, it is headed by Sen. James W. Waddell Jr. of Beaufort.

Members were appointed by Gov. Robert E. McNair, Lt. Gov. John C. West and Speaker of the House Sol Blatt.

## Organ Transplants

Legislation paves the way for the transplantation of human organs in South Carolina. It provides for "the gift of all or part of a human body after death for specified purposes." These include education, research, advancement of science and transplantation.

## Women's Suffrage

The General Assembly was 50 years late but on July 1 it ratified the 19th Amendment to the U. S. Constitution which gave women the right to vote. The necessary two-thirds of the states ratified the amendment in 1919 but the S. C. Legislature remained unconvinced. In 1969 the legislators have "redeemed their reputation for chivalry."

## Riveted Leg Irons

A bill banning the use of riveted leg irons on inmates in county prison camps remained bottled up in a House committee. It may be considered next session.

## ABC Commission

The ABC board had its funds slashed to the extent that it lost 10 of its liquor law enforcement agents. The funds were transferred to Gov. Robert E. McNair's jurisdiction so he could add 10 agents to the State Law Enforcement Division although not necessarily the same 10 who left the ABC Board. In addition, McNair replaced Otis W. Livingston who headed the ABC Commission since its inception two years ago with Walter W. Lewis as chairman. However, Livingston still remains a member of the commission.

It was disclosed that several of the ABC agents had been guilty of misconduct. Also complaints of uneven liquor law enforcement had been received. McNair emphasized in the future there will be uniform liquor law enforcement throughout the state under SLED.

## Business Licenses

The House Labor, Commerce and Industry Committee continued until next year consideration of the Senate-passed bill relating to business licenses. It would eliminate the \$2,500 license ceiling in cities over 70,000 population. Introduced by Richland County senators, it would apply only to Columbia and Charleston.

## Full-Slate Law

A bill introduced by Charleston's four senators to eliminate the state's full-slate election law, was still in the Senate Judiciary Committee at the end of the session. A similar bill was tabled in the House Judiciary Committee.

## Osteopaths

Doctors of Osteopathy will be licensed to the full practice of medicine in South Carolina. The legislation, a compromise with the S. C. Medical Association, makes South Carolina the 46th state, along with the District of Columbia and all federal agencies, to recognize osteopathic physicians.

Compiled And Written

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