



“To those of you who have Journey tickets, I would tell you ‘don’t stop believing’, but it’s probably time to stop believing.”

—Speaker of the House Jay Lucas to House members indicating they would probably have a late night , which was the same night as a Journey concert in Columbia.

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SC House Gives State Budget 2nd Reading

The South Carolina House of Representatives voted to give second reading to the state budget on Thursday night after a long debate dragged out the process. Most of the debate centered around whether the Legislature should approve a proposed bond bill. The bill, which would have borrowed nearly a half billion dollars, would have focused on providing funding for buildings on college campuses, training facilities at technical schools, and a children’s hospital at MUSC among other projects. Even after a move to cut the amount that would be borrowed in half, the House still voted to kill the bond proposal. Governor Haley has previously come out in opposition of the proposed borrowing plan and had said she would veto the bill if it made it to her desk. Many on both sides of the aisle were critical of how the Governor handled the budget process this week after taking to Facebook to criticize the manner in which the House was operating and criticizing the leadership for not holding roll-call votes on sections of the budget that had no opposition. The budget is expected receive third reading on Tuesday and will then be sent to the Senate to be further debated.

Common Core

After nearly a year of debate, the Palmetto State is moving beyond the Common Core education standards, but some are skeptical the new guidelines won’t change much in the classroom next year. The State Board of Education voted unanimously last week to approve new standards for English and math, replacing the Common Core State Standards with state-developed guidelines. These changes come after a law passed the General Assembly last year that repealed Common Core, which was originally adopted in 2010. South Carolina was among more than 40 states that decided to adopt Common Core standards, but opponents have criticized Common Core as a nationalization of education. The Common Core standards were fully implemented this school year, but now school districts and teachers must be ready to use the new standards by the fall. According to the state Department of Education, the new standards are more strict than the ones they will replace.

Powdered Alcohol Ban

While the House was busy on the budget last week, the South Carolina Senate voted to pass a bill on Thursday that would ban the sale of powdered alcohol in South Carolina. The ban comes in the same week the federal government approved its sale after lengthy deliberation on the issue. Senator Larry Martin, the sponsor of the bill and Judiciary Committee Chairman said the potential for abuse is too high to allow the powder to be sold in South Carolina. He noted the issue could possibly be revisited in a few years after other states have gained some experience in regulating the product. Powdered alcohol, created and manufactured by New Mexico Company “Palcohol”, currently comes in rum, vodka, Cosmopolitan, and Powderita flavors and is generally mixed with water to create an alcoholic beverage. The bill will now face the committee process in the House.