

Office of the Speaker  
SOUTH CAROLINA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Greg Foster

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(803) 734-3125

fosterg@scstatehouse.net

House Unanimously Re-Elects Harrell Speaker  
Officers elected, Rules adopted in first day of Organizational Session

(Columbia, SC) – Today, the South Carolina House of Representatives concluded the first of its two-day Organizational Session. Members took the Oath of Office, elected Officers and adopted rules governing the actions of the House. Tomorrow, the Speaker of the House will assign each member to serve on one of the House's six standing committees and those committees will meet afterward to elect a chairman.

Election of Officers:

Bobby Harrell (R – District 114) was unanimously re-elected Speaker of the House after newly-elected Majority Leader Kenny Bingham (R – District 89) nominated him for the position (Please find Speaker Harrell's complete acceptance speech attached to this email).

House Speaker Bobby Harrell said, "I want to thank all my fellow House members for the honor and trust they have given me by allowing me to be their Speaker. Leading this body is not something that comes without effort and assistance. The most important thing I have learned during my time as Speaker is to listen to our members and try my best to be fair in the decisions I make. This year, we will be dealing with some serious issues, and I look forward to working with each member of this body to continue our efforts to improve South Carolina."

Also, Harry F. Cato (R – District 17) was elected Speaker Pro Tempore, Charles F. Reid was elected Clerk of the House, James "Bubba" Mann, Jr. was elected Reading Clerk, Mitchell G. Dorman was elected Sergeant at Arms and Charles E. Seastrunk, Jr. was elected Chaplain (all other nomination and acceptance speeches can be found in today's House Journal located on the State House website [www.scstatehouse.gov](http://www.scstatehouse.gov)).

Adoption of Rules:

The first order of business the House takes up at the beginning of every session is the adoption of rules. This year, in adopting rules to govern the actions of the House, members added a rule that addresses how the House records votes. The new rule was a collaborative effort among House and Senate Leaders and was added to bring more transparency to the operation of state government and to make it easier for citizens to see

how their elected officials voted on all bills and amendments. The Senate plans to address this issue they were instrumental in drafting when they reconvene in January.

House Speaker Bobby Harrell and Senate President Pro Tempore Glenn McConnell issued the following joint statement about the new rule:

“Making every vote we take a recorded and identifiable vote, is the farthest reaching transparency and accountability measure ever proposed by the General Assembly. We have always supported the idea of requiring more on-the-record voting. It is important to address the concerns about making our elected officials accountable for every vote they cast by making every vote on a bill or amendment a recorded vote. Failure to address substantive amendments when talking about requiring more on-the-record voting is a failure to address accountability. Far too often – with issues like tort reform, workers compensation reform, illegal immigration reform – we have seen bills easily pass on a final vote only after facing a barrage of amendments aimed at watering-down and hollowing-out our true efforts of reform. Amendments are the trenches where reform battles are fought. If you want to see where someone really stands on an issue, make them accountable for their votes on amendments. That is why we could not ignore the crucial votes taken on substantive amendments in our effort to provide true transparency.”

Senator Glenn McConnell added, “I want to congratulate the House for adopting this major move for transparency in their body, and I look forward to the Senate adopting a similar rule thus having the public better informed about how their elected representatives vote on every measure in the Senate and House. I enjoyed working with the Speaker on a new rule for both Houses. I believe that these changes must be embodied in rule changes and not in a statute.

House Speaker Bobby Harrell added, “I must particularly thank Senator McConnell for all the work he has put into this on-the-record accountability rule and for his willingness to share his ideas for Senate rules with the House leadership. While the House is the first body to organize and therefore the first to pass this new measure, I must also give the Senate credit for addressing this issue directly.”

The new rule adopted today by the House will require an automatic roll call vote on:

- Bills increasing or decreasing the salary, benefits or retirement benefits of members of the General Assembly, Constitutional Officers, or members of the Judicial Branch
- Amendments to the Budget that spend \$10,000 or more
- Amendments to the Budget that create or increase a tax or fee \$10,000 or more
- Adoption of the Budget
- Any bill establishing a fee or tax of any amount
- Any bill reducing a fee or tax by any amount
- Any bill amending the Ethics and Accountability Act or the Campaign Finance Act
- Any change to our state’s Constitution
- All vetoes from the Governor
- All contested elections by the General Assembly

- Adoption of a state or congressional reapportionment plan
- Any question for which the state Constitution requires a roll call vote

All other bills and amendments where a voice vote is called for and the measure passes will be recorded in the House Journal as follows:

- A member who has not been granted leave shall be considered to have voted “yea” on the measure. Members voting in opposition to the measure may inform the House Clerk that they want their vote to be recorded as “nay”, and it will be written in the House Journal.

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