

South Carolina Association of Taxpayers (SCAT)

TAXWATCH NEWSLETTER

Winter 2023



Since 1982 we have been gathering information about state taxes and spending, and delivering it to our members, to state government officials and to the public.

We are an independent, privately funded research group whose purpose is to encourage government to work more efficiently.

We study the way South Carolina Officials spend money and formulate tax policies. We keep track of bills being considered by the Legislature that relate to fiscal policy and urge lawmakers to either support or oppose them.

Winter 2023 Newsletter

SCAT Officers

Don Weaver
President

Edward Yates
Vice-President

Mark Johnson
Treasurer

Katherine Robinson
Executive Assistant

SCAT President, Don Weaver, Elected to Richland County Council



On November 8th, only one Republican candidate with a democratic opponent won in Richland County, and it was Don Weaver. With a message of accountability and transparency, Mr. Weaver spent the last few months working a grass roots campaign connecting with his constituents. He walked door to door, attended neighborhood meetings, and made countless phone calls to voters across the county. In the midst of his campaign, the current Richland County Council voted to increase their salary by 45%. On November 3rd, just days before the election, Mr. Weaver held a press conference at Republican headquarters. He pledged that if elected, he would not accept the increase and would donate his portion to charity or return it to the tax payers. With a 57% win over his opponent, Mr. Weaver was sworn in to the District Six seat in early January. As a member of SCAT, Mr. Weaver has proven that being a taxpayer watchdog is essential when it comes to making sure our elected officials are held accountable. Mr. Weaver is ready to ask the tough questions when it comes to the Richland County Penny Tax. We are excited to see what he can accomplish as an elected official.

Congratulations to Mr. Weaver.

Monthly Meetings

Monthly Meetings are held normally on the 3rd Saturday of the month at 10:00 AM at:
Prime Financial Services
4001 Rosewood Drive
Columbia, SC 29205

Please join us!

Who's New in the State House

We are thrilled to introduce 4 new house members who are also new **NO NEW TAX** pledge signers. These 4 new members join 16 other signees who will return to the State House for another term.

For the full list of signees – please go to <https://scat1982.org/scat-no-new-tax-pledge/>

Fawn Pedalino – District 64 Clarendon and Sumter Counties



Fawn is a proud Native American who is a member of the local Natchez-Kusso Tribe (also known as the Edisto Indians), She was born a South Carolinian and graduated from the public school system at Summerville High School. She was raised in a middle class home that had biblical values and the expectation to work hard and accomplish my dreams. She went into public service as an Emergency medical technician for the 911 system and eventually a private company transporting critical patients to trauma centers. She and her husband own an Information Technology business in Manning, SC and have 2 beautiful girls who they are raising in Clarendon County.

Matt Leber – District 116 Charleston and Colleton Counties



Matt served his country between 1991 and 1998 as a paratrooper and in the 10th Special Forces Group. He is a decorated combat veteran who was awarded the Army Commendation Medal after 5 years in Germany and Bosnia.

After earning his degree in Business Management and because of the events of 9/11, Matthew continued his service to our nation by working for multiple Federal Agencies until 2011. He and his wife, Michele, operate a rental business with homes in South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. They recently resized their business so Matthew could turn his complete attention to serving his beloved home state of South Carolina.

Matt, his wife, and three children live in Johns Island.

Kathy Landing – District 80 Charleston County



Kathy is a successful job-creating businesswoman, financial planner, community leader, public servant, military wife and proud mother with the education and experience to tackle complex problems facing our community and state. As a South Carolina State House Representative, she will be a strong advocate for common sense, conservative solutions.

With regards to taxes, Kathy has been a strident voice at the local level to keep our taxes and fees low. Without her advocacy and votes on Council, the Town of Mount Pleasant would have likely had both tax and fee increases multiple times. Her belief is that there always exist other areas of government bloat that can be cut before any suggestions of tax or fee increase should occur.

Thomas Hartnett – District 110 Charleston County



He grew up in Mount Pleasant and married his college sweetheart, Alison. They have been married for 24 years and reside in Mount Pleasant. They both graduated from College of Charleston. Alison is a public school teacher. They have 3 sons. They are active members of Christ Church in Mount Pleasant. He volunteers his time in the community and with his children in various ways. He coached through the Mount Pleasant Recreation Department and served as a Den leader in the Cub Scouts. He has volunteered in the public schools through his boys' sports teams. He is an active member of the Charleston County Republican Party. He is a member of the Charleston Trident Association of Realtors, The Hibernian Society and a Board Member of Mount Pleasant Cotillion. In his free time, he likes to enjoy the lowcountry woods and waterways through hunting, boating, and fishing with his family.

IS YOUR REPRESENTATIVE A SIGNER OF THE NO NEW TAX PLEDGE?



TAX REBATE – WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW?

The SC Department of Revenue (SCDOR) says it has finished issuing more than a million rebates from returns filed before an October deadline.

The Department said over \$942 million worth of rebates had been issued over a span of four weeks as part of a series of rebates. The rebates were issued to eligible taxpayers who filed returns by October 17, 2022.

Officials say that some eligible taxpayers might not have received their rebate yet, depending on bank and mail processing. Check the [SCDOR rebate website](#) to check the status of your rebate

Officials added that eligible taxpayers who filed or will file their 2021 Individual Income Tax return between October 18 and February 15, 2023 will receive their rebate in March 2023.

Here are a couple of ways you can check to see if you're eligible.

You can use the Department of Revenue's [rebate status tracker](#). DOR Spokesman Rob Walden said you'll need your social security number or taxpayer identification number and a copy of your 2021 SC1040 form.

You can also calculate your rebate on your own. Walden said, "Start on Line 10 if there's nothing on Line 10 then you are not eligible for a rebate. If there is an amount on Line 10 then we suggest moving down to Lines 21 and 22. Those are tax credits for the year. Add those two and subtract that total from Line 15. If that amount is more than \$1, you are eligible for a rebate. If its 0 you are not."

Rebates are capped at \$800 so that means, if the amount you calculated is between \$1-\$799, you will receive the amount. Anything greater than or equal to \$800, you will receive \$800.

You will receive your rebate in much the same way you received your refund this year:

If you received your 2021 refund by direct deposit, the state DOR will use the same bank account to issue your rebate by direct deposit.

Paper checks will be issued if:

- You notified us of a change in banking information by November 1.
- You received your 2021 refund by debit card or paper check.
- You received your 2021 refund by direct deposit to a prepaid or pay-as-you-go debit card.
- You had a balance due and did not receive a refund.
- You received your 2021 refund using a tax preparer's account.

Married couples who filed joint 2021 Individual Income Tax returns will receive only one rebate.

State lawmakers agreed to use about \$1 billion for these rebates. This was part of a \$2 billion income tax cut and rebate package.

Walden said they estimate about 1.3 million rebate checks or deposits to be issued by the end of 2023. These will come in bunches so they're not being sent out all at once.



A LOOK AT THE GAS TAX AND WHERE IT'S GOING . . .



In 1987, the gas tax in South Carolina was 16-cents per gallon. Ten years later, it was still 16-cents per gallon, making it the lowest gas tax in the Southeast and fourth lowest in the nation. In addition to the low taxes, the state had a large number of roads and bridges in poor condition. The condition of South Carolina's roads ranked them last in the nation.

The 2017 S.C. Infrastructure and Economic Development Reform Act is working on that ranking, largely by increasing the gas tax. The 16-cents-per-gallon tax enacted that year by lawmakers is already up to 28-cents-per-gallon. By 2028, it will be 50-cents-per-gallon. For comparison, North Carolina's gas tax is 38.5-cents-per-gallon, but North Carolina has a larger population than South Carolina, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, so they can bring in more money.

The 2017 legislation allowed a 12-cent increase over the past six years, and a large focus of the 2017 infrastructure legislation is specifically on roads over bridges.

With an increase in funds, SCDOT has laid out four programs in a 10-year plan, with one of the programs focusing solely on bridge replacements.

Of the 9,395 bridges in South Carolina now, 8,400 are state-owned.

Of the total, 499 are classified as structurally deficient, according to a report by the American Road & Transportation Builders Association. But that's an improvement from the 781 bridges classified as structurally deficient in 2017.

According to an article published by the Carolina News and Reporter and written by Holly Poag,

"South Carolina has one of the largest, one of the most extensive roadways network in the country," said Fabio Matta, a USC engineering professor. "So the state funding has to take care of maintenance and rehabilitation of a major infrastructure network."

For Matta, coastline bridges are a top priority because they often serve as hurricane evacuation routes.

"If one of these bridges goes (out of use), or becomes unusable, then what are the emergency vehicles going to do?" Matta said. "How can we serve people who live in those areas? And by all accounts, we're talking about a lot of citizens."

Florida lived that reality in the aftermath of Hurricane Ian. Sanibel Causeway, a 3-mile, three-part bridge connected by islands, has proven difficult to repair. Temporary repairs re-opened the bridge three weeks after the hurricane.

With half of South Carolina's bridges being in "fair" shape — close to needing immediate repair — "maintenance is so important. These bridges are here to stay," Matta said.

The DOT said bridges typically have a lifetime of 50 years to 60 years.

To read the complete article, please visit <https://carolinanewsandreporter.cic.sc.edu/sc-working-to-improve-roads-over-bridges-after-years-of-neglect/>

Historic Election for Governor McMaster

Gov. Henry McMaster won a historic reelection giving him a chance to be the longest-serving governor the state has ever had. If he completes his second term, McMaster would serve as governor for 10 years, longer than any other executive in the state's history.

McMaster's argument for reelection has been simple — if you like what you've seen so far, I'll give you more. He has touted the booming economy and his willingness to fight Democratic President Joe Biden when needed.

This was McMaster's sixth time asking South Carolina voters to choose him over a Democrat in November. He won his last five elections as Republicans took over South Carolina.

A Democrat hasn't been elected governor in the state since 1998.

"South Carolina is booming and we are going to keep on booming," McMaster said.



Contact Us

Website – www.SCAT1982.org

Email: scat1982.org@gmail.com

Phone Number: (803) 269-5745

Mailing Address: Post Office Box 50799, Columbia, SC 29250

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SCAssociationofTaxpayers>

Twitter: @SCAT82