

New election codes spark controversy in Senate

BY AMANDA SILVA
THE GAMECOCK

A controversial period of question about a new bill proposed by the Elections Committee to amend the election codes dominated student senate's meeting Wednesday night.

The bill is a revision of the current election codes and an attempt by the committee to clarify the current election process.

"I just want the election process to be as fair and precise as possible," Elections Commissioner Angie Alpert said.

The bill was met with heated opposition, and some senators who didn't agree with the wording or the content of the codes suggested several changes.

The meeting threw the fate of the legislation, which is the first to be taken up by the Senate since Sept. 26 and the first binding bill to be considered this year, into doubt.

The main concern surrounded person-to-person campaigning on election day and campaigning in USC buildings.

"Online voting started last year," Alpert said, so one of this year's main concerns is distribution of campaign materials in buildings with computer labs which serve as official polling locations.

The bill wasn't voted on but could potentially be voted on next week if it's reopened by the Senate.

According to Vice President Corey Ford, the Senate must approve the codes as soon as possible in order to get them signed by SG President Jotaka Eaddy and USC President John Palms in time for upcoming elections in February.

Amendments to the codes are done as soon as possible in the first semester in order for them to be enacted by second semester, Alpert said. President Protempore Melissa

Fletcher also said the bill needed to be passed soon.

"I think it is important to clarify the issues surrounding the elections so that they will run as smoothly as possible," she said.

Fletcher said it was also important to discuss any new issues from last year that could affect the elections, such as the computers in the Russell House being used as part of the polling stations.

However, Sen. Michael Kozlarek said he had concerns about the bill's content and the speed the sponsors wanted to move it through the Senate.

In addition to having concerns about the vagueness of some of the bill's provisions, Kozlarek said he opposed a provision restricting person-to-person campaigning to election day and barring such campaigning in any buildings with official polling places.

"What's wrong with people handing out their stuff?" Kozlarek asked in a phone interview after the meeting.

He added that, while he had no problem with banning candidates from polling locations and creating a buffer zone around the locations, he didn't believe a ban on the entire building where a polling place is located was necessary.

At the Senate meeting, Kozlarek proposed that Ford appoint a group of five or six senators to look into revising the bill. Ford rebuffed the suggestion.

Kozlarek said he had concerns with rushing the bill through only to have it contain problems that might draw a veto from Palms.

"I'd rather do it at the front end than wait for him to correct it and send it back," Kozlarek said.

Kozlarek was attempting to meet with Alpert and Fletcher before

the next Senate meeting in order to address some of his concerns. If that doesn't work, Kozlarek said he planned on proposing at least the six amendments he has already drafted.

Eaddy said Thursday she might veto the bill if the restriction on person-to-person campaigning before election day was removed.

Ford said it has been a matter of precedence that the codes are amended every year, and that it's always a controversial issue.

The next Senate meeting will allow for debate on specific content of the revised bill, if it is re-opened.

Absences from the meeting included Sen. Faiyaz Dossaji and Sen. Kenny Hinson.

Brandon Larrabee contributed to this report.

The university desk can be reached at gamecockdesk@hotmail.com.

HEALTH

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"The military retirees were promised health care for life when they initially enlisted," she said. "But after the invention of Medicare, instead of the military paying for their health care, Medicare did. Basically, the military was not keeping their promise to these retirees, and Sen. Hollings has wanted to change that."

Another problem with military retirees' health care being provided by Medicare, according to a Hollings' press release, is there is no prescription drug coverage.

The bill will provide military retirees with two options for purchasing prescription drugs. The retirees will either be able to purchase a 90-day supply of drugs from the National Mail Order Pharmacy for \$8, or they will pay 20 percent of the cost for prescription drugs from the Defense Department's Retail Pharmacy.

"This bill goes a long way toward restoring the promises that the United States made to its military," Hollings said.

"These military retirees were promised health care for life upon twenty years of service, and it is important to me that we keep that promise. It is one of many ways that we should honor these retirees who selflessly laid lives on the line fighting for our nation's values and freedoms," Hollings said.

Hollings has long advocated restoring health care to U.S. Medicare-eligible military retirees.

Earlier this year, he co-sponsored Sen. Tim Johnson's bill to provide military retirees with access to the federal government's health care system, but that bill didn't pass. The bill that passed on Oct. 12 was a compromise proposal.

The city/state desk can be reached at gamecockcitydesk@hotmail.com.

UNIVERSITY CRIME REPORT

Compiled by CHARLES PRASHAW

Wednesday, Oct. 25

• **Illegal use of telephone**, South Tower. Reporting officer R. Shiner spoke with a resident who said an unknown subject who identified himself as David was making harassing phone calls to her room. The victim said she didn't know who David was.

• **Auto break-in, larceny of CD player**, Roost parking lot. Angela Malek said unknown person(s) gained access to her vehicle through the passenger's side front door and removed the Pioneer CD player from her car. The reporting officer was C. Morales, and the estimated value is \$150.

• **Water damage/Malicious**, Snowden dorm. Student Douglas Shearer told reporting officer R. Osborne that unknown person(s) by unknown means damaged the fire hose and sprayed water from the hose, causing damage to the residence hall.

• **Trespassing after notice**, Byrnes Center. Reporting officer M. Moore observed Derek Neal, 38, picking through an ashtray outside of the above location. The reporting officer stopped Neal, who gave the false name Arnold Jackson to the officer. After a NCIC check, it was confirmed he had an outstanding city of Columbia warrant for forgery.

Tuesday, October 24

• **Auto break-in**. Complainant said

unknown person(s) broke out the driver's side-front window and removed between one and 22 CDs from his car. Also taken from the car were two 12" kicker speakers, one speaker box and a CD player.

• **Found property**, 1200 Heyward St. Reporting officer L. Forte spotted a bicycle lying in the grass beside the road. A search of the surrounding area for an owner was conducted with no contact. Forte brought the bike back to the station for safekeeping. Police are willing to give the bicycle to its proper owner upon a complete description of bicycle.

COLUMBIA CRIME REPORT

Compiled by JOHN HUIETT

Thursday, October 26

• **Malicious injury to real property**, 3000 Two Notch Road. The complainant, a worker for Enterprise Rentals, said he was operating a company vehicle at the incident location when an unknown subject used unknown means, possibly some type of firearm, to shatter the left-side rear glass window of the vehicle. The complainant was unable to provide any further details. However, he said he smelled an unusual sulfuric scent after the window shattered. Estimated damage is \$200. Reporting officer was J. Whittle.

• **Disregarding red light, driving under suspension**, 3100 Two Notch Road. The suspect, Jermaine Davonn Allen, was stopped for running a red light at the incident location. Allen said his license was

suspended, which was confirmed through dispatch. Allen was arrested and taken to Richland County Detention Center. Reporting officer was J. Fisher.

• **Trespassing in an unsafe building**, 2112 Sumter St. While checking property at the incident location, reporting officer Laney found the suspect, Clifford Rawls, inside. The Columbia Inspection Department had previously posted several "No Trespassing" signs in locations around the building. The property has been declared uninhabitable.

Wednesday, October 25

• **Petit larceny**, 360 Harbison Blvd. The victim, Marcella Shirey, said that an unknown subject stole her navy blue leather purse out of her grocery cart buggy. The purse contained a South Carolina driver's license, a Wachovia checkbook and \$22 cash. Estimated value is \$74. Reporting officer was W.L. Buffington.

• **Petit larceny**, 401 Columbiana Drive (Columbiana Ridge Apartments). The complainant, Hyacinth Salmon, said her son left her cellular phone unattended in the breezeway of her apartment building. During that time, an unknown suspect stole the phone, a black SunCom model. The serial number is unknown. Estimated value is \$180. Reporting officer was W.L. Buffington.

• **Simple assault**, 4311 Grand St. The victim, Karen Stanley, said an unknown black female subject hit her on her hand, head and back with a stick. Reporting officer Carillo couldn't see any visible signs of injury.

HODGES

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South Carolina," he said.

Reflecting on this statistic, Hodges mentioned the focus on teacher salary in South Carolina. He voiced his support of raising pay dramatically.

Hodges has proposed raising salaries for the state's teachers to the national average.

"While it didn't seem to matter too much in the past, salary must now be carefully considered," Hodges said. "Within six years we want to move toward the national average of \$43 thousand to \$44 thousand."

Hodges also advocated an increased concentration on classroom discipline and teacher-training programs so more learning can take place.

"We are concerned with what can be done to better prepare teachers for the classroom," he said.

The governor also addressed an attempt to lower class size to 15 students per room.

"We need to immediately begin from pre-kindergarten to college, an educational system that addresses all aspects. The goal is for South Carolina to be a national leader in education."

The city/state desk can be reached at gamecockcitydesk@hotmail.com.

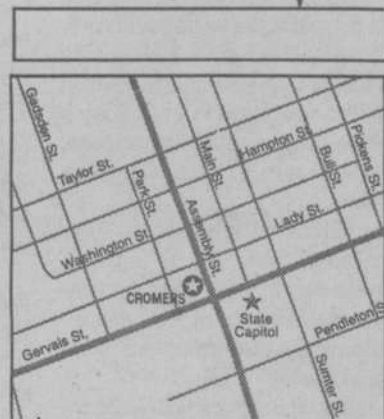
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