

Hodges urges lottery plan soon

Governor wants money to go to new programs

BY JESSICA FOY
THE GAMECOCK

Gov. Jim Hodges has one thing he wants to emphasize to emphasize about a lottery spending plan — timing.

Hodges met last week with several newspaper editors from state colleges and universities and said if the legislature does not pass a lottery spending plan by the end of March, students will not know how much money they will receive next school year until it's too late. "I have grown very concerned about the timing," Hodges said.

"My concern is that students will be left trying to make financial arrangements unsure of the scholarships they have."

If a lottery spending plan is passed by the end of March, financial aid packages that go out in April will include lottery money for those eligible. But Hodges is worried that the General Assembly may wait until June to make the plan.

"Unless the General Assembly passes lottery legislation by the end of next month, students may not know how much financial aid will be available to them next year," he said.

He said the more legislators wait, "the more I worry about mischief taking place."

"It's not like there's a lot going on up there," he said of the

General Assembly.

Hodges said the lottery proceeds will provide a "wide range of benefits to a wide range of students."

The legislation to allocate lottery proceeds to education passed the House of Representatives on May 8, 2001.

Since the lottery began on Jan. 7 it has raised about \$74 million. Of that money, \$23 million will go to education.

Hodges emphasized that the lottery money will give to academic scholarship programs as well as need-based funding. "We'd all benefit," he said.

"I make no apologies about the lottery program [being] designed to help students," he said.

He plans to increase the LIFE and Palmetto scholarships and create a Hope scholarship that will

give scholarships to all students with a B average. He will also devote \$61 million for free tuition to technical and two-year colleges.

In addition, he has allotted \$40 million for a program to create a research fund at the state's research universities like USC and Clemson. He said that spending should bring in jobs around the state and better faculty, who would in turn attract more students.

He bases the research portion of the plan on systems like North Carolina's Research Triangle, comprised of North Carolina State University, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Duke University.

He said the money would not go to bring in a "Hungarian literature professor," for example, but that it would focus more on

something like Clemson's proposal for an automotive engineering center.

Hodges said his spending plan is based on the understanding that the money from the lottery will be used to supplement, not to supplant, current education funds. The legislature had feared that the lottery money would be used to supply existing education funds, so the legislation specifically says the money will only supplement them. The provision was included in the legislation to make sure the money was used only for "new, helpful things for the education system."

Hodges said he didn't want to use lottery money "to do things we're already supposed to be doing."

Comments on this story? E-mail gamecockdesk@hotmail.com

Lottery Spending Plan

- ◆ \$61 million for free tuition for technical and two-year colleges
- ◆ \$45 million to increase LIFE scholarships
- ◆ \$4.1 million for HOPE scholarships
- ◆ \$4 million to increase Palmetto Scholars program
- ◆ \$12 million for needs-based grants
- ◆ \$4 million for tuition grants
- ◆ \$5 million for teach training
- ◆ \$40 million for a program to create a research fund at our state's universities

Hopefuls give ideas

Dreiling, El-Ibiary duel for VP position

BY GINNY THORNTON
THE GAMECOCK

Katie Dreiling didn't want to come to USC, but now she can't imagine being anywhere else.

"I'm the baby, so my parents wanted me to stay close," Dreiling said. "I even had my transfer papers ready. But after my first year, I realized I love it here."

As a vice presidential candidate, Dreiling lists money, parking and safety as her main issue concerns. "Parking, that's the biggest issue," Dreiling said.

Dreiling recounted the time her car was towed her freshman year. "I accidentally parked in the wrong space. I had no idea where my car was or where to find it," she said. This incident prompted Dreiling to suggest to Parking Services Director Derrick Huggins that USC should post signs in the garages with towing

company numbers and information. Dreiling said Huggins agreed and that the project is underway.

Dreiling has adopted a project that current Vice President Nithya Bala started: starting a self-defense class for students. "[Nithya] wanted someone who could continue the project after she's gone."

Dreiling said her lack of experience in the Senate won't affect her ability to preside over Senate meetings, the vice president's only duty. She cited her experience in mock trial as good preparation.

Dreiling said she isn't sure whether she would like to run for SG president in the future, but that she plans to remain active at USC "as long as I can feel that I'm making a difference somewhere."

Shereef El-Ibiary said he decided to run for vice president when he realized how many changes USC will be facing in the next year.

"A new president, SDI recommendations, the new wellness center, Greek housing, the basketball stadium... all of these are going to bring up concerns and I'd like to make the best decisions possible on behalf of the student body," said El-Ibiary.

El-Ibiary has served as a senator in the past. Currently, he is the coordinator for Second Serving, a Student Government service program through which students deliver leftover food from campus dining facilities to the Oliver Gospel Mission.

"Basically, I call people and schedule them to take food," he said.

El-Ibiary said academic forgiveness is an issue he is particularly concerned about. An academic forgiveness policy would allow USC students to repeat one or two classes they with no penalty for the first grade.

"If a student does poorly in a course, they can take that course over again and that first time is erased," El-Ibiary said.

El-Ibiary said his vision for Senate is to encourage senators to take an active role and hold them accountable for what they do.

"I really, sincerely feel I can make a difference," El-Ibiary said. "I feel like I can make some changes, and I have strong decision-making abilities."

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Hodges will move to guard college budgets from cuts

Bill will likely meet opposition from legislators

BY JIM DAVENPORT
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

COLUMBIA, S.C. — The governor plans to push a bill that would shield public school and college budgets from midyear budget cuts, an aide told House Democrats on Tuesday.

But that effort, supported by House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Bobby Harrell, R-Charleston, would likely face the same problem it did last year — opposition from Senate Finance Committee Chairman Hugh Leatherman, R-Florence.

Gov. Jim Hodges has not finished drafting the bill, House Minority Leader Doug Jennings, D-Bennettsville, said. Hodges, Harrell and

Leatherman are three of the five members of the State Budget and Control Board that would decide whether the state needs to cut spending to ensure the budget is balanced at the end of the year.

State law requires across-the-board cuts — unless the Legislature grants exceptions. Harrell and Leatherman said they haven't been asked to consider cuts again this budget year after a 4 percent across-the-board cut in October. That cut trimmed \$204 million in state spending.

When the board made budget cuts last May, Harrell pushed a plan to spare education budgets. Leatherman opposed similar efforts in the Senate.

"I wanted to do that last year, I still want to do it," Harrell said. "The holdup last year was the Senate rules allowed one senator to stop it. We knew we couldn't get anywhere with it."

Leatherman said nothing has changed for him.

"You can't do that. ... You can't say you're going to shield this section of government or that section of government," Leatherman said.

While lawmakers want to hold education harmless, the reality is half the state budget is spent on public and higher education and that would create devastating cuts elsewhere, Leatherman said.

Sparing those parts of government from the cuts made in November, for example, would slash other state agency budgets by 10 percent, he said.

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IN THEATRES SPRING 2002
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