STATE OF THE STATE MESSAGE BY GOVERNOR JOHN C. WEST

January 16, 1973

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the General Assembly, and My Fellow South Carolinians:

It is a matter of special significance that we are this year convening the 100th General Assembly of the State of South Carolina. On March 26, 1776—one hundred days before the Declaration of Independence and 13 years before the Constitution of the United States—the citizens of South Carolina adopted a state constitution and established their first General Assembly free of colonial rule. For almost two hundred years, South Carolinians have jealously guarded and protected the concept of self-rule, and have preserved the strength of the legislative branch as the very keystone of the democratic process. Today—at a time when the General Assembly of this state is more representative than ever before of the interests of all the people of South Carolina—we stand as beneficiaries of a great heritage of self-government and as trustees of a tradition which must be preserved for future generations.

As a Governor who is a product of this General Assembly, I am privileged to be entering the third year of a partnership with the leaders and members of these two houses, and to acknowledge the great benefits which have resulted from that partnership. It has been in a spirit of cooperation and teamwork that we have together been able to move South Carolina to the very brink of the most productive, the most progressive, and the most prosperous period in our state's history. For what we have accomplished in the past, I am grateful; for the opportunity we now have to expand upon these accomplishments and reach out for new levels of excellence, I ask for an even stronger bond of cooperation with you the members of this General Assembly.

The year 1973 is, in many ways, characterized by a special set of conditions in our state. We are today in the midst of a significant period of transition within the structure of the federal system in America, a transition in which the states are assuming more and more responsibility in their relationship with the other levels of government, and in their commitment of service to the people. It is a development
which I not only consider encouraging and welcome, it is one which I feel is absolutely vital to the effective operation of government in this nation. Revenue-sharing is only part of a long-overdue trend toward de-centralization of government. As Governor of a state historically identified with the advocacy of state prerogatives, I acknowledge the fact that the sharing of revenues is matched by the sharing of responsibilities, and I pledge our support of that concept.

In terms of its resources and capabilities, South Carolina has never been stronger. Never before has the economy been healthier; never before have our citizens had more—or better-paying—jobs; never before has the overall standard of living in our state been higher. In short, South Carolina possesses the vitality, and the will to make 1973 the beginning of a new era of excellence for our people.

Our financial picture is in sharp contrast to that which we have confronted in recent years. As you are aware, it was only two years ago that South Carolina, influenced by a national economic slump, faced a deficit situation and was forced to take drastic action to keep the state budget balanced. Last year, my recommendations to you included proposals for a tax increase, which I considered necessary at that time for the expansion of vital programs. No one was more delighted than I that such a tax increase was not necessary, and no one is more pleased now with the prospect that no general tax increases appear necessary in the foreseeable future. Our economic recovery has been of such magnitude that operating surpluses are anticipated to reach more than 47 million dollars by the end of the present fiscal year, including 36.5 million dollars from last year, and 11 million dollars from fiscal 1973. Combined with revenue-sharing funds, these monies give our state some 83 million dollars in surplus funds, completely unprecedented in South Carolina’s history. Thus, in a brief two-year period, we have moved from the danger of an operating deficit to a situation in which we literally have money in the bank. We thus have a unique opportunity with the wise and prudent use of these monies to move our state and its people forward in meaningful ways.

Therefore, as we look toward fiscal 1973-74, it is with the awareness that South Carolina can do more than simply maintain operations at the present level. It can expand its existing capabilities, and it can invest materially in the future. In short, it is no longer valid to dismiss new opportunities or justify old shortcomings.
with the explanation that we simply "cannot afford it." South Carolina can afford to move forward now as never before, and I recommend that we make the most of this day in our history, this opportunity whose time has come.

BUDGET AND CONTROL BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

You will have in the next few days the detailed report and recommendations of the Budget and Control Board for the operating budget of state government for fiscal 1973-74. These recommendations are based upon anticipated general revenues of 738.9 million dollars, providing some 82 million dollars of additional funds this year to be applied toward approximately 168 million dollars of agency requests for budget increases. Included within the new revenues are 30 million dollars of revenue-sharing monies available to the state for the first time as part of its operating budget. It is my recommendation that these new funds be applied primarily toward what I consider to be the two priority needs in our state today—education and health care. Specifically, I suggest that revenue-sharing funds be used to cover the major educational recommendations of the Budget and Control Board, including expansion of kindergartens, vocational and adult education, special classes for the handicapped, and an average increase of $500 per teacher in a revised state aid schedule.

In the event that additional revenues from any source become available before final passage of the General Appropriations Bill, I recommend that priority be given to two areas:

1. An additional increase in teacher pay so that we may realize our goal of reaching the southeastern average of compensation within the next two years, and

2. Additional funding of the tuition grants program so as to provide expanded higher education opportunity for our students and much-needed assistance to our non-public colleges and universities.

The challenge—and the opportunity—of 1973 for this General Assembly goes beyond the planning of an operating budget for the next fiscal year. It involves the wise and judicious investment of surplus and other non-recurring funds in the type of projects and undertakings which can appreciably alter the very living fiber of the people of South Carolina. The recommendations I make to you today for the use of those funds have the unanimous endorsement of the Budget and
Control Board, and represent what I consider to be unprecedented opportunity for human advancement in South Carolina.

It is my first recommendation that the state’s long-range financial stability be protected by the establishment of a 25 million dollar General Reserve Fund, to be funded primarily by the earmarking of the so-called "windfall" tax revenues which will be collected during the last quarter of fiscal 1972-73.

The remainder of my recommendations have to do with our state’s traditional concern for human values. A year ago, I spoke to you in terms of an ideological challenge which seemed to characterize much of what is taking place in South Carolina today. I asked that we work together to free the spirit of South Carolina from the bondage of limited expectations which for generations has limited the vision and stunted the growth of our people. The greatness of South Carolina has been diminished only by the frustration of unfulfilled human promise. By the same token, the destiny of our state in future years will be no brighter than the ability of each individual citizen to fulfill his own aspirations and develop his own potential. The recommendations I make to you today are designed to tap that potential, and to open wider the door of opportunity, to all of our people.

HEALTH CARE

Any consideration of human needs must begin with that most fundamental element—the physical health and well-being of each citizen. Today, we have in South Carolina a crisis in health care delivery, and one in which I ask that you assign priority attention. A year ago, a special study committee headed by Dr. Cathcart Smith, was appointed to study the medical education needs of the state, and its report is expected shortly. I shall await that report prior to any recommendations dealing with that subject.

But medical education represents only a part of the great needs which face our state today—needs which affect the very life and death of our citizens. Our State Health Officer reports that forty per cent of the deaths in the state of South Carolina are either premature or unnecessary. Last year adequate emergency medical care could have prevented 30 per cent of the deaths that occurred from heart attacks. The lives of 25 per cent of those who died in automobile accidents could have also been saved. This combined total means
that last year alone some 2,500 South Carolinians died who would be alive today, if proper medical care had been available.

In response to these alarming facts, I propose a two-phase approach to this problem, requiring a total expenditure of $13.2 million dollars.

Phase One is an intensive program designed to upgrade the delivery of family health care, particularly in those non-metropolitan areas affected most seriously by health care deficiencies. Specifically, I recommend:

(1) The establishment of a statewide system of residency programs utilizing community-based hospitals. Such a program would be an expansion of the present residency program which the Medical University now operates in conjunction with several of the state's larger hospitals, and would also require stepped-up recruiting efforts in bringing young graduates into the practice of family—or primary—medicine.

(2) The establishment in each of the state's 10 regional planning districts of health care units comprised of physicians, paramedical personnel and other staff required to extend services into those rural areas now most seriously affected by existing deficiencies. The setting-up of such a program will require that the State Board of Health work in concert with hospital and medical organizations to provide outreach services in the state's less populous areas.

Funding for this phase of the program would amount to $10 million dollars, and would be allocated to the Medical University and the State Board of Health.

The second phase of our approach to the crisis of health care delivery in South Carolina involves the establishment of an emergency medical program which will be designed to make emergency assistance no more than 30 minutes away from any citizen of this state. I am confident that the development of this type of system will translate directly into the saving of hundreds—and perhaps thousands—of lives of South Carolinians, and I recommend the allocation of $3.25 million dollars to the State Board of Health for that purpose.

Two additional areas of special concern at this time represent priority items in the consideration of the total health needs of our state. I refer to mental health and mental retardation, where so much excellent work is being done today, and where the investment in additional physical facilities will so measurably improve the quality of that work.
There are today in literally hundreds of homes throughout the state mentally handicapped persons awaiting admission to state facilities. Many have been waiting for years, and the frustration, heartache and grief of these families underscores the urgency of our needs today. In the past, of course, "emergency" cases have quite properly taken precedence; but in my opinion, every case where a person needs admission and treatment constitutes sufficient emergency to warrant immediate action.

I, therefore, recommend that nine million dollars be allocated to the Mental Retardation Commission for the purchase of two existing facilities which can be made part of the state system, as well as other construction and renovation at existing centers. Through these actions, South Carolina can achieve its long-standing goal of eliminating the current list of those waiting for admission to Mental Retardation institutions.

Also consistent with our efforts to translate new knowledge and technique into human service, I recognize the growing needs of the Department of Mental Health to expand its progressive and enlightened concept of treatment through regional village-type centers. Because of the growing population at our central institutions in Columbia, and because of the improved level of service which can be made available through these new village units, I recommend the expenditure of $12 million dollars for the construction of two additional such villages.

Funding of these four health-related projects will require 34.4 million dollars. These admittedly, are but a few of the urgent needs facing South Carolina in the field of health care delivery, but they are ones which I feel address the most immediate and urgent needs. In the long run, however, it is necessary that we provide a means by which we can take full advantage of the limited resources for these purposes. Today, I am pleased to announce a major step toward the full coordination and maximization of funds and efforts in this state in the area of health care delivery. I have created by Executive Order the South Carolina Health Policy and Planning Council, a broadly-based organization of citizen and governmental leadership which will assure that all public funds—state and federal—invested in health care delivery in our state will be applied toward a common set of statewide goals and objectives. It will essentially provide a management structure designed to stimulate public and private cooperation within the health
field and to encourage local discretion in the development of programs and the allocation of funds. While the council will establish policies and program priorities, detailed planning, program development and implementation will be contracted with other state and sub-state agencies, where appropriate.

From the beginning, the creation of this council has been accomplished in close working cooperation with the Office of Health, Education and Welfare Secretary Elliott Richardson, and last week I received from Secretary Richardson his written support and endorsement of the council, which will be the first of its kind in the nation. In his letter, the Secretary said, "I should like you to know that I fully support your general objectives in this area and have instructed the Office of the Assistant Secretary to cooperate fully in helping the State of South Carolina implement this new and exciting approach."

For my part, I consider the creation of this council to represent a new spirit of cooperation between state and federal governments, and an opportunity to provide a new level of excellence in serving the people in this most urgent area of need.

**EDUCATION**

South Carolina has traditionally looked upon health and education as going hand-in-hand as matters of highest priority for our people. In that spirit, I recommend the funding of major projects which I feel will move our state appreciably toward its long-standing goal of quality education for every citizen. Specifically, I recommend the allocation of 17.6 million dollars for education, much of which would be applied toward the furtherance of the goals and objectives of the State Department of Education's excellent five-year plan.

Among the major educational recommendations are the following:

--$3.3 million to strengthen child development and pre-school education programs, including $1.5 million to expand kindergarten and other pre-school programs in the public schools system, $1 million to expand child care programs, and $800,000 to strengthen training programs in technical and higher education institutions for early childhood education;

--$2 million to provide equipment and facilities for education of handicapped persons in public schools, carrying out the mandate of legislation last year which guaranteed to handicapped citizens full educational opportunity in South Carolina;
--$5 million for the expansion of the area vocational school system; 
--$4.75 million for the expansion of the technical education system.

The rest of the educational funds would go for a number of priority items facing our state's public education system, including further study and expansion of the extended school-year demonstration programs, the construction of a facility for training of the state's firemen, renovation of the John de la Howe School, construction of a new infirmary at the School for the Deaf and Blind, and expansion of the experimental school coordinated by the School of Education at the University of South Carolina. Aside from my financial recommendations, I should also like to call attention to what I consider a matter of vital concern to the educational community. I refer to the means by which teachers are evaluated for certification purposes, and I propose a study to determine the validity of the use of the National Teachers Examination as a measurement of a teacher's worth and pay.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

I have, so far, addressed myself to needs which have traditionally occupied positions of urgency in South Carolina—health and education. I should now like to direct your attention to a need which has not received the kind of priority treatment it has needed or deserved. I refer to the continuing and increasing need to upgrade facilities at our South Carolina Department of Corrections, and, specifically, the Central Correctional Institution here in Columbia, where inmates are still housed in a 114-year old building once used to shelter horses during the War Between the States. We are long overdue in removing this blight from our state, and in removing this impediment from our otherwise progressive program of corrections. I recommend therefore the allocation of $10.3 million for the upgrading of correctional facilities. This expenditure will permit us to continue our efforts toward the elimination of Central Correctional Institution as part of our statewide system and will provide for the gradual de-centralization of the entire system.

Specifically covered in the recommendation are (1) the completion of a 416-man maximum security facility to relieve overcrowded conditions at CCI; (2) construction of five community pre-release centers which will house 60 inmates each; (3) completion of the institution for women inmates now under construction; (4) construction of an annex to the department's administration
building; (5) payment of bonded indebtedness on the central laundry, and
(6) construction of an additional dormitory at Givens Youth Correction Center.

As a further means of strengthening our state's overall system of criminal
justice, I recommend that we move immediately to improve the level of compen­
sation and benefits for law enforcement and corrections officers. The time has
long passed when we could ask men to risk their lives in the interest of public
service for wages which in some cases may be barely above the subsistence level.
I therefore recommend the establishment of a minimum salary of $6,500 per
year for all certified police and correctional officers who have completed
minimum background and training requirements. In order to provide a short­
term source of funds for state and local agencies which may not be able to afford
such minimum salaries at the present time, I propose the allocation of $1.9
million to implement the provisions of this recommendation. In the case of local
communities needing assistance for this program, I propose the establishment
of a funding arrangement which would provide financial assistance to the local
governments on a diminishing scale for a three-year period from state and
Law Enforcement Assistance funds. I further urge that the members of the
General Assembly encourage their local government units to extend full state
retirement benefits to their law enforcement officers.

ADDITIONAL CAPITAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Any consideration of major needs in South Carolina must also recognize
the continuing requirements of our institutions of higher education and the
growing dependence which these institutions have upon state government for
their facilities requirements. In recognition of these needs, I make the following
recommendations for projects which I feel will translate directly into better
educational service to the people of this state:

—15 million dollars to provide a permanent home for the S. C. Educational
Television Network and a much-needed performing arts center which can be
jointly used by ETV, the University of South Carolina and the South Carolina
Arts Commission. The conditions of the present ETV facilities, plus the
immediate problem of leasing arrangements on that property, make it necessary
that we give priority attention to that problem. By combining this project with
an auditorium facility with USC, we provide the economy of joint usage of a facility which has long been needed at our largest state university.

--Six million dollars to provide for the construction of a continuing education center at Clemson University. It is my recommendation that this center be so designed and planned that it would free the Clemson House structure so that it might be converted into dormitory space for married students.

The remainder of my higher education recommendations provide for assistance for a law school library at USC, the establishment of an Institute for the Aging at Clemson, a forestry and research program at Clemson and renovation of the heating system at The Citadel. Total higher education recommendations amount to $22 million.

Aside from those needs relating to health, education and criminal justice which I have just outlined, I call your attention to the general field of human resource and economic development, where I feel the investment of state funds at this time is critically required. Major needs at this time include $2.5 million for the construction of a training center for the Commission for the Blind and $1 million for the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation to compensate for the unexpected withdrawal of federal funds which had already been approved by the Congress. In addition, I further recommend $1.25 million for a number of specific agency requirements, including laboratory construction for the Department of Agriculture, a revolving fund for preliminary engineering work in water pollution, working capital for the Public Railway Commission, equipment for the State Development Board, a feasibility study for a rural transportation system and the establishment of a grant to stimulate the sponsorship of non-profit housing.

My final recommendation relates to the growing need for state government, including the General Assembly, to develop adequate working space for the discharge of its increasing duties and services to the people. As part of the long-range plan for development of adequate office space within the Capital Complex, I recommend $3.8 million for the construction of an additional state office building which—along with the addition of staff personnel—will greatly assist this General Assembly in representing the needs and interests of the people of South Carolina.
I present this package of financial recommendations in the spirit of a state which over the years has accumulated a vast backlog of urgent needs which have—by necessity—had to go unfulfilled. We have, in a sense, had our own waiting list of requirements which we all acknowledged as urgent, but for which there simply was not the necessary funding available. Today, however, our economic condition is such that we can meet those needs without a tax increase and within the context of this state's traditional fiscal responsibility. The total cost of recommendations which I make to you today is $95.15 million.

After the set-aside of windfall moneys and other funds necessary to establish the $25 million General Reserve Fund, our anticipated surpluses at the end of fiscal 1973 will total $58.5 million, including the accumulation of $36.5 million in revenue-sharing funds. I recommend that those cash moneys be applied toward the projects outlined here today, and that the remaining $36.65 million required to cover these projects be funded through the issuance of General Obligation Bonds. The state's bonding capacity should be used primarily toward meeting needs in the areas of education, health and corrections, and I further recommend that final authorization for the issuance of these bonds be left to the discretion of the Budget and Control Board.

In making these recommendations, I am confident that we have within our grasp—within our immediate capability—the opportunity to make the greatest investment in this state's human needs in our history. And yet, in terms of benefits and assistance to those who need help the most, it is a small price. For those citizens who have had to wait their turn, the opportunity of 1973 has been a long time in coming. Now, as a state which has lived in the shadow of economic inadequacy, we have for the first time the capacity and means to translate the good intentions of our spoken commitments into the reality of action and fulfillment. Where there is human need, where there is human suffering, and where there is the will and the capability to respond, we must do so. I consider these expenditures to be an investment of the finest kind in South Carolina, an investment in human capital. Out of these investments will come not only the normal type of self-generating financial dividends, but also the even more important dividend which our state receives in terms of social and economic progress.
Opportunities connected with financial investment, of course, represent only part of the challenges facing this 100th General Assembly. I should therefore like to recommend to you briefly items requiring high priority treatment during this session of the General Assembly.

**AUTOMOBILE LIABILITY INSURANCE**

For the last two years, we have witnessed a general deterioration of the situation with regard to automobile liability insurance in South Carolina. In order to improve this situation, and in order to provide coverage for all citizens of South Carolina at reasonable rates, I therefore recommend the creation of a state-operated plan to provide insurance for motorists not able to obtain coverage on the voluntary market. I emphasize that such a plan would in no way compete with private enterprise and that coverage from the state plan would be offered to a motorist only after he had been rejected in the voluntary market. Under such a plan, of course, insurance would then become available to all motorists. I therefore recommend that basic liability coverage be made mandatory and that a special section be set up within the Highway Department to pick up the licenses of all uninsured motorists immediately after notification by the companies.

I further recommend that each automobile liability insurance policy be required to include no-fault economic loss coverage amounting to at least $2,500 for a driver, his passengers and pedestrians. Such coverage would pay on a first-party basis for medical expenses and the loss of wages resulting from an accident. Studies show that in 96 per cent of all accidents, coverage of $2,500 will cover all economic loss to individuals. Let me emphasize, however, that the $2,500 figure is not a threshold as is found in some no-fault plans. It is purely the minimum first party coverage. The requirement of such insurance would in no way affect the traditional tort system and the basic right of an individual to sue.

In a related area, I recommend the establishment of an arbitration commission, with procedural authority similar to that of the Industrial Commission, to deal with small claims arising from automobile accidents. In order to be consistent with the South Carolina and the United States Constitutions, I recommend
that the parties involved in an accident retain the discretion to submit to arbitration or to enter the court system. If arbitration by the commission is chosen by the parties, however, it would be considered binding, with no option to appeal.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

The purpose behind any effort at upgrading highway safety, of course, is the protection of human life. In many cases, new laws or regulations are based upon theory or speculation that they may save lives. Rarely do we have the opportunity of actually examining a new procedure before we put it into effect. Last year, however, we did have that opportunity in one county of the state. As many of you may know, traffic deaths continued to rise in the state last year, once again exceeding the tragic 1,000 figure. In this one county, however—Richland—traffic deaths were down by some 33 per cent, with the total number of fatalities 23 below the 1971 figure.

I attribute that success in large measure to the Alcoholic Safety Action Program (ASAP) which directly attacked what we all acknowledge to be the greatest hazard on our streets and highways today—the drinking driver.

Based upon the experience in this county, I therefore recommend that the ASAP program be expanded statewide in the hope that the experience of Richland County can be applied throughout South Carolina, and that lives of our citizens can be saved accordingly. To fund this expansion, I recommend the use—at least for the first year—of moneys accumulated in the Uninsured Motorists Fund, recognizing the fact that should compulsory automobile liability insurance be enacted by this year’s General Assembly, additional sources of funding will be required after fiscal 1974.

I also recommend that the General Assembly continue its efforts to modernize traffic safety laws and to move toward compliance with federal regulations, particularly with regard to emphasis items to which the Department of Transportation has assigned top priority. Specifically, I propose the following: (1) Classification of drivers licenses; (2) blood tests for victims of fatal accidents; (3) adoption of the Uniform Vehicle Code; (4) proof of date and place of birth in obtaining original drivers licenses; (3) establishment of traffic courts as part of the new unified court system; and (6) enactment of a Habitual Offenders Law.
CONSTITUTIONAL REVISION, AMENDMENT

Consistent with the decision of South Carolina voters in last November's election, I recommend the immediate ratification of all constitutional amendments approved in that referendum, with the exception of proposed Article 16, known as the Miscellaneous Article. Ratification of this article, under present conditions, would have the effect of removing from the Constitution the mechanism by which it might be amended.

Otherwise, I urge approval of all amendments, and I call your specific attention to two of those amendments. First, in recommending ratification of the so-called Mini-bottle Amendment, I make the following proposals regarding the use of new revenues created by this measure:

1. Section Five of the enabling legislation should be amended to provide that 15 per cent of the amount of mini-bottle revenues earmarked for education and the rehabilitation of alcoholic and drug addicts should be designated for the Department of Education. This money—amounting to some one-half million dollars—would be used to implement in the public schools system a comprehensive health care curriculum, which would include drug and alcohol education.

2. In order to insure the most effective and efficient use of the estimated $3 million which would be returned to the individual counties for rehabilitation and education programs, I recommend adoption of the recommendations jointly prepared by the Commission on Alcoholism and the Commission on Narcotics and Controlled Substances. Those recommendations provide a mechanism of coordination between state and local governments, and would result in South Carolina's becoming the first state in the nation with a unified program on alcohol and drug abuse fully coordinated between the state and local levels.

With regard to the proposed Judicial Reform Article, in addition to immediate ratification, I propose that the General Assembly create a special 12-man committee to conduct a complete study of our state's courts system and to make recommendations as to how best we might carry out the intended reform of the judicial system. The committee would be comprised of three members from the Senate and House of Representatives, three members appointed by the Governor, and three members appointed by the Chief Justice. Until the
committee's study is completed, I recommend that any action expanding the present number of circuit judgeships or in any way altering the current court makeup be delayed.

In addition, I propose that a court administrator be appointed to work with the Chief Justice and to assist the study committee in the conduct of its work. I have asked, as part of my earlier-enunciated financial recommendations, that $150,000 be allocated from surplus funds for the court administrator and for the work of the committee.

In order to assure prompt attention to the ratification process of all these amendments, I recommend that the Constitutional Revision Committee remain intact and assume responsibility for the orderly and speedy presentation of these amendments to the General Assembly for its consideration.

GOVERNMENTAL REORGANIZATION

It is my pleasure to recognize on this occasion the outstanding work which has been done in improving management procedures with state government as part of the overall modernizing and reorganization process. Work by the Management Review Commission has led to some $35 million in savings and income improvement, including the revised tax collections methods which led to this year's revenue "windfall." In addition, new management consciousness throughout state government has led to a general upgrading in the efficiency and effectiveness of performance by virtually every state agency.

In order to continue the pattern of progress which has been established, I particularly urge your support in the enactment of laws essential to implementing major recommendations of the commission such as a state records management law, an overall Personnel Act, the provision for five-year automobile license plates, and improved tax and purchasing procedures.

THE ENVIRONMENT

The lingering uncertainty over the disposition of South Carolina's vital Tidelands areas is a matter of concern to all citizens of this state interested in environmental protection as well as the proper usage and management of our natural resources. We feel an increasing sense of urgency to create a vigorous
coastal management plan which will allow our state to proceed in the wise
utilization of our tidelands without exploiting them. Passage of the federal
Coastal Zone Management Act with accompanying funds available to states
provides additional impetus for us to act in this area. I therefore recommend
that this General Assembly develop a comprehensive mechanism for the protection
and wise utilization of the tidelands which will serve as the foundation and
inspiration for even more extensive land use management throughout the state.

I also recognize the continuing jurisdictional difficulties which exist in
the area of state responsibility for pollution and environmental matters. I
consider this problem to be a matter of highest priority for the State
Reorganization Commission, and I urge that the appropriate subcommittee
proceed on this item as rapidly as possible so that the Commission might
have a recommendation for submission to me and the General Assembly by
early March.

ELECTION LAWS

Because of the excellent work accomplished in recent years by the
Election Laws Study Committee, and because of the continuing need for
legislation in this area, I recommend that the General Assembly enact
legislation which would re-create this vital committee. As a further matter
of major importance in that regard, I recommend legislation which would
provide for the limitation of campaign expenditures by any candidate for
public office in South Carolina and the full disclosure of all campaign
contributions made to a candidate or his organization in excess of $100.

THE AGING

Each year, South Carolina becomes more and more aware of the problems
connected with our elderly citizens, as well as the opportunities for enriching
the lives of these individuals. In terms of providing assistance to these South
Carolinians, I consider nothing to be of any greater importance than financial
relief. I therefore recommend that the present Homestead Exemption be
increased from $5,000 to $10,000. It is estimated that the present $3.5
million allocation for such an exemption will be adequate to cover the increased
amount.
With further reference to the needs of the elderly, I am pleased to announce the establishment at Clemson University of an Institute for Aging to be funded as part of my earlier financial proposals. I also recommend that the Commission on Aging study the needs and problems of the elderly living in institutions, and I ask that all senior citizens be issued "gold cards" for admission to all state parks and recreation facilities.

URBAN AFFAIRS

In recognition of the fact that ours is a state in which the population continues to migrate to our major metropolitan areas, I recommend that the Local Government Study Committee be expanded from its present six to nine members, so as to include three gubernatorial appointees. I further propose that the study committee direct its attention to a number of vital issues of concern to our cities and towns today, including methods of annexation, classification of municipalities, and increasing the maximum fine which can be imposed by municipal courts throughout the state.

Because of the growing awareness at the state level of the housing needs of our citizens, and in light of program uncertainties developing at the federal level in this regard, I recommend that the General Assembly act this year to create a standing committee on housing affairs so that the General Assembly can become more deeply involved in this matter of extreme urgency to our citizens.

My recommendations to you today have covered a wide range of subjects, from health to housing, and from education to highway safety. There has been running through it all, however, a single thread of concern: people. For every person in this state, there is a need and there is something of a special opportunity. As our state matures in its approach to human problems, it becomes increasingly aware of the special needs of our citizens. One thing must remain absolutely clear to us all, however. Every person in South Carolina, whatever may be his qualifications, his handicaps, his infirmities, his abilities, his age, his economic status, is entitled—as a matter of right—to a full and complete opportunity for success and happiness. My recommendations today are directed toward many areas where the state needs to exercise an extra effort to insure those rights, areas such as the problems of the physically and mentally handicapped, the retarded, the blind, the aging, those of low income, those who
need a second chance at social rehabilitation, those afflicted by deafness or
speech imperfections.

A free society is one in which every citizen has an equal opportunity to
realize his full potential, however great or however small that may be. We
in South Carolina have an opportunity now to make that dream become a reality.
It is an opportunity which has not been ours in the past. Let us resolve that we will
not let it pass us by. Let us resolve on behalf of those 2.6 million individual
citizens who are South Carolinians that we will respond to this challenge and
seize this unique opportunity. At this special moment in our history, let us
realize how great our state is, and how much greater we can make it by
pursuing that simplest—and most noble—goal, the goal of human understanding,
human concern, and full human development.

Thank you.

#######