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## S.C. Senate to take up budget vetoes today

By Tim Smith • Capital Bureau • June 17, 2010

COLUMBIA — The House sustained more than 40 of Gov. Mark Sanford's 107 budget vetoes. The Senate is expected today to take up the vetoes that the House overrode.

The House spared educational television, local library funding, the State Museum, forest firefighters, state film incentives and the state Arts Commission from vetoes, as well as an increase in the Senate's budget of \$3 million.

But some House funding and other programs weren't so lucky, including:

— The state Human Affairs Commission, whose state funds were effectively zeroed out. Lawmakers said federal officials would have to handle future discrimination complaints.

— The state Consumer Affairs Commission, which lost \$676,000 after vetoes were sustained. Supporters of the agency said the cuts would "decimate" it and leave many consumers no recourse but to try and hire lawyers to address their complaints.

— The Greenville Higher Ed Center, which lost \$67,967.

— S.C. State, which lost \$478,876 for teacher training and \$778,683 for the Clyburn Transportation Center. The school said it would have to raise tuition or lay off faculty as a result, one lawmaker said.

—The State Budget and Control Board, the state's administrative agency, was cut \$25 million. House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Dan Cooper said agency officials said the cuts would shut down several departments, including the state budget office and the board of economists that forecasts state revenues. Sanford has argued that the agency has enough in its carry-forward funds to weather the cuts.

— The state prison system, which had its vocational instruction program cut, a program supporters said

helped inmates gain work skills and which had reduced the state's prisoner recidivism rate.

Other programs or agencies cut in the vetoes and sustained by the House include \$1.2 million for the University of South Carolina's research programs for hydrogen fuel cells and nanotechnology; \$422,000 that funded a rural physicians program; and the security detail for the lieutenant governor.

The House largely rejected Sanford's arguments that \$96 million in spending improperly relies on estimated increased collection efforts by the state's tax auditors.

But its agreement on so many other Sanford vetoes worried many, Democrats and Republicans.

"We hear all kinds of comments about we're 'not conservative enough,' but all we've done is cut spending," said Rep. B.R. Skelton, a Pickens County Republican. "Everybody is suffering, and we need to carefully consider what we're doing."

State Rep. Bakari Sellers, a black Bamberg County Democrat, looked at the electronic voting board as lawmakers chose to sustain a veto of funding for South Carolina State University's Public Service Activities and fumed.

Minutes before, the House had overridden Sanford's vetoes of Clemson University PSA programs by wide margins. But when the veto came up for S.C. State's PSA, only 56 House members voted to oppose the

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cuts.

"You all are nothing more than hypocrites and I'm tired of it," Sellers told the Republican-controlled House from the podium.

After lectures from black and white lawmakers, the House reconsidered the vote and decided to fund S. C. State's PSA.

But Democrats later charged that a pattern had emerged of cuts to the state's poor, rural residents and its most vulnerable citizens.

"This is crazy," said Rep. Ken Kennedy, a Williamsburg County Democrat. "That's why I am quitting because you guys are doing a bad job of running the state."

Rep. Todd Rutherford, a Columbia Democrat, said the House effectively was collapsing state government. "We are truly hurting a lot of people," he said. "We are destroying agencies. We should not do this all in one day."

And Rep. Doug Jennings of Bennettsville told colleagues that racial divisiveness in the body was more prevalent now than when he first arrived in 1991. "That's troubling," he said.

The frustration and flared tempers continued throughout the day, as

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