



HENRY MCMASTER
GOVERNOR

May 1, 2019

The Honorable Harvey S. Peeler, Jr.
President of the Senate
State House, Second Floor
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Dear Mr. President and Members of the Senate:

I am hereby vetoing and returning without my approval R-35, S. 735, which seeks to abolish the Clarendon County Board of Education and alter the manner in which certain members are appointed to the Boards of Trustees of Clarendon County School District Nos. 1 and 2. For the reasons set forth below, I must veto S. 735.

The South Carolina Constitution expressly prohibits the General Assembly from enacting legislation "for a specific county" and "where a general law can be made applicable." S.C. Const. art VIII, § 7; S.C. Const. art. III, § 34(IX). Although our courts have held that greater deference is warranted when local legislation relates to the General Assembly's article XI authority to establish, organize, and support a system of public schools, I believe that S. 735 is problematic for reasons unrelated to this threshold constitutional inquiry. For example, Section 1 of S. 735 purports to abolish the Clarendon County Board of Education; yet, Section 2 of the bill refers to the terms of office of "the members [of the Board of Trustees of Clarendon County School District No. 1] appointed by the county board of education."

To the extent that S. 735 is intended to increase accountability and advance the conversation regarding school district consolidation in Clarendon County, I applaud this effort. However, such legislation should be free of internal inconsistencies and should take care to avoid unnecessary legislative entanglement in the affairs of local schools. Moreover, I encourage the General Assembly to begin addressing such matters by passing laws of uniform, statewide application, rather than by repeatedly resorting to local or special legislation.

For the foregoing reasons, I am respectfully vetoing R-35, S. 735 and returning the same without my signature.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Henry McMaster".

Henry McMaster