



HENRY DARGAN McMASTER
GOVERNOR

April 28, 2025

The Honorable Joseph M. Bustos
308D Blatt Building
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Dear Representative Bustos:

I have signed into law R-23, H. 4014, which abolishes the constituent districts of the Charleston County School District and their respective boards of trustees.

As the General Assembly is well aware, like several of my predecessors, I have consistently vetoed local or special legislation that violates the South Carolina Constitution. Our 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 in the context of public education, “legislation regarding education is not exempt from the requirements of Article III, § 34(IX).” *Charleston Cnty. Sch. Dist. v. Harrell*, 393 S.C. 552, 558, 713 S.E.2d 604, 607 (2011). Therefore, I carefully review and consider all such legislation presented to me and scrutinize the same in view of the governing law. Absent other issues or infirmities, I have signed local or special legislation that is not clearly unconstitutional, such as where a general law could not be made applicable or where “a special law would best meet the exigencies of a particular situation.” *Id.* at 559, 713 S.E.2d at 608. Regardless, I have repeatedly cautioned the General Assembly to avoid relying on local legislation and, whenever possible, to instead address the underlying issues by passing laws of uniform, statewide application.

Here, although H. 4014 plainly pertains to only Charleston County, apparently the Charleston County School District is the only district that still uses constituent districts. H. 4014 will, in other words, have the same effect as any statewide bill. In addition, the General Assembly has demonstrated that it is necessary to “best meet the exigencies of [this] particular situation.” *Id.* For instance, abolishing the constituent districts will lead to more consistent disciplinary action and result in significant financial savings. Therefore, I am persuaded that H. 4014 does not constitute impermissible local legislation based on the standards established by the South Carolina Supreme Court.

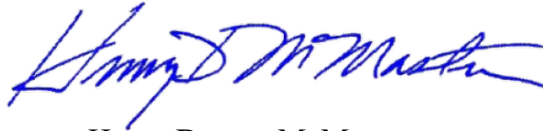
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For the foregoing reasons, I have signed H. 4014 into law.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Henry Dargan McMaster". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "H" and "M".

Henry Dargan McMaster

HDM/es/tl

cc: Charleston County Legislative Delegation