

LITMUS POLICY SOLUTIONS

*USC Office of Government and Community
Relations*

September 17, 2026



THE 127TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- 1st Year of a 2-year Cycle – January 2027 thru May 2027
- 170 Legislators
 - 124 House Members
 - 46 Senators

THE COMMITTEE PROCESS...

- All are Important Committees
- House and Senate Education Committees
 - House EPW – Chair Rep. Shannon Erickson
 - Senate Edu – Chair Sen. Greg Hembree
- House and Senate Money Committees
 - House Ways and Means - Chair, Rep. Bruce Bannister
 - Senate Finance Committee - Chair, Sen. Harvey Peeler

“KNOW BEFORE YOU GO”

RULES, PLAYERS & PROCESS

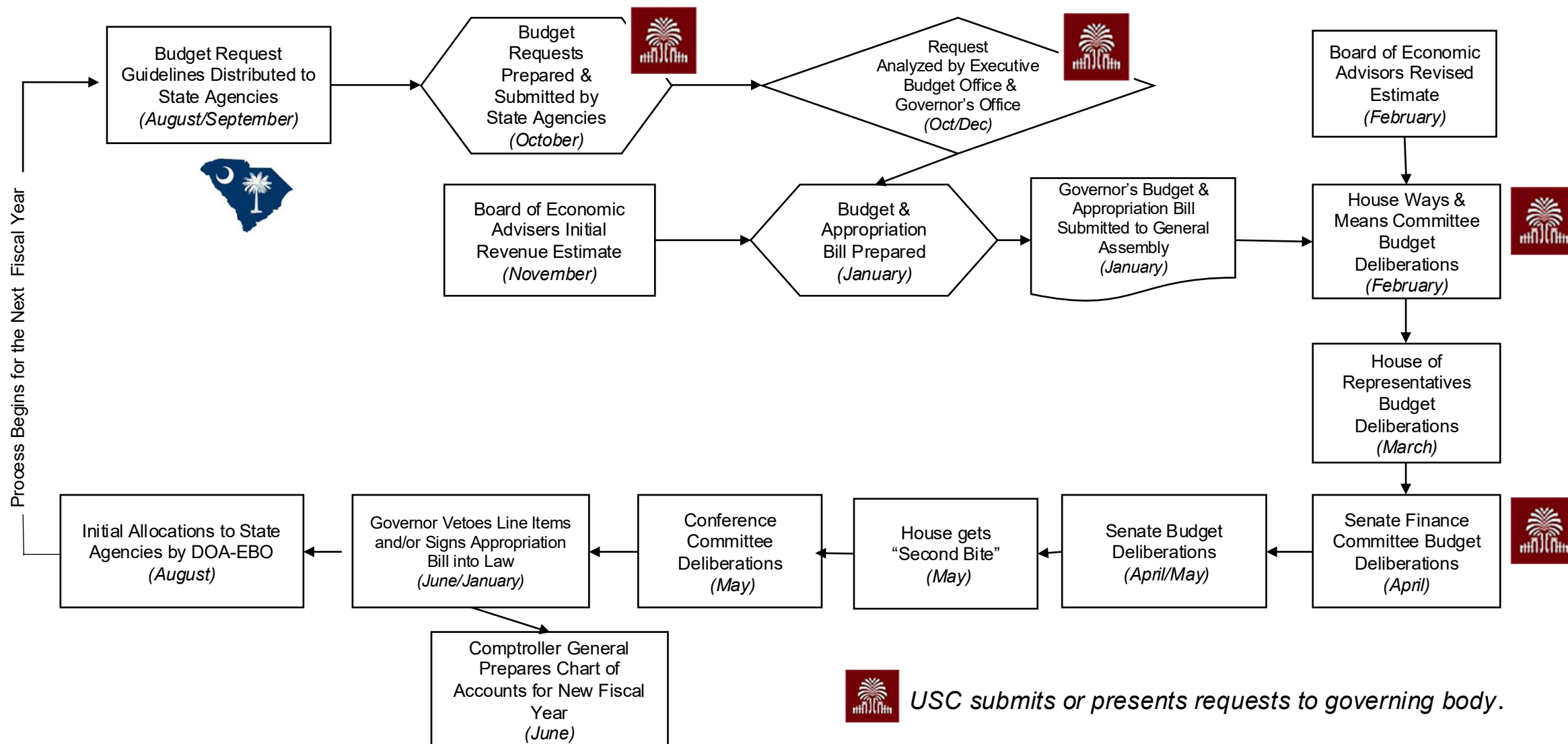
- Know the Rules
 - “He/She who Knows the Rules, Rules”
- Know the Players
 - Agencies and Institutions
 - Officials (Elected and Appointed)
 - Staffs (Where the real work gets done)
- Know the Process
 - “School House Rocks”
 - How to make a law
 - The Committee Process
 - The Legislative Process
 - The Budget Process*

*In reality, one legislative year can accommodate and process **only several larger consequential bills** each year.

IT IS VERY HARD TO PASS A NEW LAW, AND THAT IS BY DESIGN

- Most bills that are filed do not pass. During the 2025-26 cycle, there were 1,200 Senate Bills filed and 2,700 House Bills filed. During that two year session, 271 became law. That is a success rate of **7%.**
- In reality, one legislative year can accommodate and process **only several larger consequential bills** each year. **The budget is one of those bills and must pass for governmental operations to continue.**

EXTERNAL CALENDAR: BUDGET DEVELOPMENT



FY 26-27 – FINAL BUDGET

- ***+ \$108M across USC system; USC maintained a strong position in a tight state revenue year with significant competition for funds. See: "Tax Cuts".***
- Tuition Mitigation funding for the USC system (see proviso).
- Additional recurring funding included for the Neurological Hospital.
- Support for USC's Center for Civic Leadership and Civil Rights Center.
- Significant increase for USC Columbia's top capital priority: relocation of the College of Pharmacy to the Health Science Campus.
- All USC campuses received funding for capital and/or facility needs.
- Added support for new statewide Institute for Public Policy with USC leadership role.

FY 26-27 – FINAL BUDGET (PROVISOS)

- **College of Pharmacy / Health Science Campus**
- **Tuition Mitigation**
- **AI Reporting Requirements**
- **Vacant Positions Proviso**
- **NIL Proviso**

Overall result: provisos protected flexibility, reduced burdens, and advanced USC priorities.

LEGISLATION & REGULATORY OVERVIEW

- Government Relations maintained a strong presence at the State House during session.
- Secured **JBRC and SFAA approvals** for major "USC Next" capital projects, including McKissick Museum, Thomas Cooper Library, Barnwell College.
- Monitored and engaged on major policy issues affecting USC
- USC communications strategy also supported advocacy through newsletters (SHB) and social media outreach (USC Impact X).

Result: strong visibility, strong relationships, and continued momentum for USC priorities.

HAPPY DAYS! BUT CAN IT LAST?

AKA “ARE THERE HEADWINDS?”

- Naturally – but no seeming hurricanes.
 - Economically, the “Breeze” is still at our backs (not our face)
- What to watch for?
 - US / Global Macroeconomics
 - US (National Politics)
 - State leadership changes
 - State Tax Policy
 - State Education (K12) Policy
 - State Education (High Ed) Policy
 - In vs. Out-State?
 - A “Cliff”?
 - Cultural Issues?

THANK YOU!