



# Research Memo

South Carolina Policy Council

1323 Pendleton St., Columbia, South Carolina 29201 • 803-779-5022 • scpolycouncil.com

## Who's Got the Power? Not you...

**South Carolina state government has no balance of power. The legislature MAKES laws, EXECUTES laws and elects the judges who INTERPRET laws. Want proof?**

- The South Carolina Legislature controls more than 420 appointments to the executive branch – more than half the number the governor appoints.
- The South Carolina Legislature unilaterally elects judges.

**Four politicians in the State House have immense power, but are NOT ELECTED statewide.**

**Consider:**

- The Big Four control approximately 150 executive branch appointments. Who are they? The Senate President Pro Tempore, Senate Finance Chairman, Speaker of the House, Chairman of House Ways & Means. They serve on or appoint members to powerful state entities, including:
- The South Carolina Budget and Control Board, which technically runs the state.
- The South Carolina Research Authority, which legislators charge with running the state's economy.
- The Judicial Merit Selection Committee, which screens judicial candidates.

**South Carolina's legislative session is one of the longest, least efficient in the nation. It costs you money, promotes lobbying and leads to big government.**

**Want proof?**

- South Carolina has the longest session in the Southeast, tied for 6th longest in the nation.
- South Carolina has more than two lobbyists for every legislator.
- On average, South Carolina legislators pass about one bill each. What did they debate? Naming the state's heritage horse, licensing musical therapists and letting legislators carry concealed weapons.

**South Carolina Legislature takes most votes off the record. You can't see how your lawmakers vote!**

The General Assembly only recorded 25% of its votes in 2010. What happened the other 75% of the time? Only they know...

South Carolinians deserve balanced, accountable government based on American democracy. Lawmakers should demand **a shorter legislative session, insist lawmakers record all votes, and hold accountable the state's four most powerful politicians.**