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SENATE VOTES TO REAUTHORIZE FIRST STEPS LEGISLATION

Columbia, SC – Today, the South Carolina State Senate voted unanimously to renew legislation that would allow First Steps to continue helping the state’s youngest children prepare for school. The legislation, first approved by the General Assembly in 1999, is set to expire July 1st of next year unless reauthorized.

“Today’s vote in the Senate is a strong endorsement of First Steps’ work in communities across our state during its first six years,” First Steps director Susan DeVenny said. “Since inception, First Steps has helped families prepare over 330,000 young children for school through programs that strengthen families, improve children’s health and well-being, increase the quality of child care and early education opportunities, and transition 5-year-olds into kindergarten. Thanks to the Senate, the state’s youngest children are a step closer to quality early childhood experiences for years to come.”

The Senate legislation (S. 947), cosponsored by 25 senators, passed the full Senate today by voice vote. It would reauthorize First Steps until a sunset of July 1, 2013. The identical House bill (H. 4406) has received bi-partisan sponsorship from 74 representatives. H. 4406 is currently in the House Committee on Education and Public Works.

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South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness ('First Steps') is a comprehensive, results-oriented statewide education initiative to help prepare children to reach school healthy and ready to succeed. Public and private support are combined through county partnerships to enable individual communities to address the unmet needs of young children and their families.

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