

Title: **SC Senate rejects ethics reform bill**  
 Author: By SEANNA ADCOX The Associated Press  
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# SC Senate rejects ethics reform bill

By SEANNA ADCOX  
*The Associated Press*

The Senate on Wednesday rejected a bill aimed at strengthening South Carolina's ethics laws, dealing a blow to legislation Gov. Nikki Haley says is her top priority.

The proposal failed on a vote of 19-24 after weeks of debate, including six hours Wednesday.

Senate Judiciary Chairman Larry Martin said the defeat could mean ethics reform is done. "I'm embarrassed and taken aback," said Martin, R-Pickens.

He voted against his own bill after the Senate approved an amendment changing how investigations into legislators would be handled. Currently, legislative ethics committees oversee their own members' campaign filings, while the State Ethics Com-

mission is responsible for all other filings from state and locally elected officials.

Haley has said any reform package must include independent investigations. Haley's personal experience with the House Ethics Committee in 2012, when she was cleared of allegations she lobbied for employers while a House member, prompted lawmakers of both parties to call ethics reform a top priority. But legislators have been unable since to agree on what to do.

Martin's bill would have put a restructured State Ethics Commission in charge of investigations into legislators. But many senators have balked at that idea. They insist that problems with legislators overseeing their own have been in the House, not the Senate.

A compromise amendment by Senate Ethics

Chairman Luke Rankin – approved 25-20 earlier Wednesday – instead created a nine-member investigative ethics committee for legislators, separate from the State Ethics Commission, that includes four legislators. The governor and attorney general would have appointed the rest.

"It was independent enough, and transparent," said Rankin, R-Conway. The only difference from Martin's proposal, he said, is that it didn't lump responsibility of legislators in with statewide, city and county officials to a state commission that can't handle their current workload.

But Martin said that's worse than changing nothing because it creates a mirage of reform.

"It placed ourselves in a special, privileged class we created for ourselves," he said. "I can't defend that, and I won't."

Title: **Reform hits roadblock as Senate kills ethics bill**  
 Author: BY JEREMY BORDEN [jborden@postandcourier.com](mailto:jborden@postandcourier.com)  
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# Reform hits roadblock as Senate kills ethics bill

## Main sticking point was lawmakers on investigative panels

BY JEREMY BORDEN  
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COLUMBIA — The S.C. Senate killed a measure Wednesday aimed at overhauling the law that governs legislators' ethics, throwing into doubt whether anything would get done this year on a major priority for Gov. Nikki Haley and other top leaders.

Senators said the chamber's failure to pass a bill on a 19 to 24 vote was a

bitter pill, given that the fight comes in the wake of the guilty plea and resignation of former House Speaker Bobby Harrell, R-Charleston, to ethics-related charges.

The Senate's action also sets up a clash regarding ethics bills already passed and on the way from the S.C.

House.

Please see **ETHICS**, Page A5

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## South Carolina Senate kills ethics bill

**ETHICS**, from A1

The main issue that spiked the reform effort, led by Judiciary Chairman Sen. Larry Martin, R-Pickens, was whether lawmakers should be involved in the process of investigating themselves. The majority of senators agreed with Sen. Luke Rankin, R-Conway, that Martin's bill to set up an independent panel to investigate senators' conduct solved a problem that didn't exist.

Harrell pleaded guilty to ethics-related charges last year when a criminal investigation led by the attorney general turned up evidence that the longtime speaker had profited from his campaign account. But Harrell was never investigated by the House Ethics Committee, which critics have said is evidence enough that the system is broken.

Haley, a Republican who campaigned on the issue, took to Facebook to criticize lawmakers for failing to back reforms

that would allow an independent group to investigate lawmakers' conduct.

"When we allow legislators to investigate themselves, it is a slap in the face to every citizen in South Carolina," Haley wrote. "Sen. Rankin put up an amendment that continues this practice, even as we have seen a Lt. Gov., Senator and House Speaker all indicted. I will veto any bill that does not include true independent investigations of elected officials."

Haley was referring to the recent ethics scandals and resignations of former Lt. Gov. Ken Ard, Sen. Robert Ford and Harrell.

Rankin, however, said his proposal was an improvement on the current system and blamed Martin and others for failing to compromise after weeks of debate and an extended six-hour session on Wednesday.

Rankin's proposal set up a separate nine-member committee to investigate members of the House and Senate. The

leaders of both parties in the House and Senate would appoint one member each; three would be appointed by the governor; and two by the attorney general. Local and statewide candidates would have still been overseen by the State Ethics Commission, which has members appointed by the governor.

Martin said that a separate investigative committee — that includes legislators — is hardly the spirit of reform, given people would question whether lawmakers could treat their colleagues impartially. Martin said he was "embarrassed" and "taken aback" that senators didn't take the effort more seriously.

"This is worse than not changing anything," Martin said of Rankin's changes to his bill in an interview. "It's a mirage."

Rankin said Martin and his supporters should have accepted the compromise and that any blame for a stalled ethics reform effort should be placed

onto them, he said.

Rankin, the chairman of the Senate Ethics Committee, said the Senate has ultimately done its job when it comes to policing itself, even if the House has not. "It's hard to point to senators protecting senators," he said.

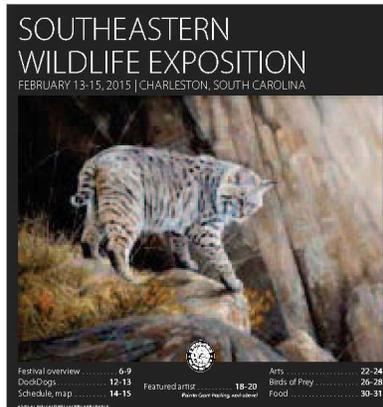
He told his colleagues on the Senate floor: "There has never been a problem in this Senate, ever."

Martin's original bill also would have forced legislators to disclose their sources of personal income, and forced outside advocacy groups that spend money on campaigns to report their donors. As it stands, those groups are unregulated in South Carolina.

At one point in the lengthy, sprawling debate, the Senate's leader rose to ask a few questions. Senate Pro-Tempore Sen. Hugh Leatherman, R-Florence, asked what the point of the discussion was. "Can you tell me what, if anything, is wrong with our current ethics law?" Leatherman asked.

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## Inside SPECIAL SECTION



**SOUTHEASTERN WILDLIFE EXPOSITION:** Schedule, map, highlights and more.  
**Inside Charleston Scene**

Title: **Move gives Keck new views on Medicaid**  
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# Move gives Keck new views on Medicaid

Ex-director in S.C. says expansion plan might work in Tenn.

BY LAUREN SAUSSER  
[lsausser@postandcourier.com](mailto:lsausser@postandcourier.com)

Tony Keck spent the better part of four years in Gov. Nikki Haley's Cabinet, adamant that South Carolina should not expand Medicaid eligibility under Obamacare.

Nearly 200,000 residents in this state can't afford private policies or qualify for the low-income health insurance

program because of difficult decisions that he helped Haley make.

Now, three months since he resigned his powerful position in her administration, Keck concedes that a recent attempt to expand Medicaid in Tennessee might have worked.

"States are very different. Medicaid expansion might be the best choice for some states, and it might not be in other states," Keck told The Post and Courier.

Late last year, he accepted a new job

as an executive with Mountain States Health Alliance, a hospital system based in Johnson City, Tenn. There,

Please see **KECK**, Page A6



## Poll

Do you agree with Tony Keck that the Affordable Care Act's Medicaid expansion might work in some states? Go to [postandcourier.com/polls](http://postandcourier.com/polls) to vote.

# Tenn. gives Keck a new perspective

**KECK**, from A1

he is partially responsible for government relations.

"Clearly the hospital system here and every hospital system in the United States is in support of Medicaid expansion," Keck said. "I'm not in charge of deciding whether it's a worthwhile plan."

Shelli Quenga, who supports the Affordable Care Act and helps residents enroll in Obamacare policies through

the Mount Pleasant nonprofit where she works, said she's not surprised that Keck is "having to look at things from a different perspective."

"If I work for McDonald's, I'm going to say the Big Mac is best. If I work for Burger King, I'm going to say the Whopper is best," she said. "We've all changed jobs before. You have to adapt."

During Haley's first term, Keck managed the S.C. Department of Health and Human Services, where he ran

the state's \$7 billion Medicaid program. He argued many times to state legislators, local media, national news outlets, even Congress, that the existing Medicaid system is flawed and that he wanted to focus on fixing it.

"Republicans are looking for a way to expand insurance but not call it Obamacare," he told The Washington Post in 2013. "The goal here is not universal coverage. The goal is getting people healthy. That's why we're doing something much

different."

While Medicaid eligibility rules have long varied from state to state, the federal Affordable Care Act intended to even the playing field by expanding access to everyone in the country whose income fell below 138 percent of the poverty level — or about \$16,000 a year for a single adult. But the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 2012 that Medicaid expansion under the new law was optional. Many red states, including South Carolina, initially opted out

**Title:** Move gives Keck new views on Medicaid  
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and have remained firmly anti-expansion. Others, though, have recently reconsidered their options and have been busy working with the federal government to craft plans that fit their own needs.

Republican Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam announced in December that he spent many months forging a compromise Medicaid expansion plan called "Insure Tennessee" with the Obama administration. It would have extended coverage to 280,000 low-income Tennesseans, according to The Associated Press.

"States have slowly been winning concessions from the federal government that fix some of the longstanding problems" that Republicans have expressed about Medicaid expansion, Keck said. "I don't think Insure Tennessee completely solved all those problems — in fact, I know it didn't — but it definitely went a long way to incorporate some ideas that conservatives have been asking for for a long time."

On Feb. 4, a Tennessee Sen-

ate Health Committee defeated Haslam's proposal. A different Medicaid expansion deal failed to gain enough support among Wyoming legislators on Friday. Some states are still debating the issue. More than half have already expanded Medicaid under Obamacare.

Haley spokeswoman Chaney Adams said the South Carolina governor has no intention of participating.

"What's good for one state may not be what's good for another, and Gov. Haley has always said that the job of her colleagues is to do what's best for their states — and she's going to do what's best for ours," Adams said in a prepared statement.

Christian Soura, who replaced Keck in November as the Health and Human Services director, told state senators last week that his agency continues to evaluate how other states approach Medicaid expansion. "In my opinion, each state needs to make its decisions for itself," Soura said.

Technically, even though

conservative South Carolina leaders aren't embracing Obamacare, Medicaid rolls are expanding here anyway. Approximately 1.1 million people in South Carolina now receive Medicaid benefits — a 30 percent jump in four years.

Keck is responsible for most of that growth. For example, he implemented a program that automatically enrolls children based on information from other state agencies. In another initiative called the Healthy Outcomes Plan, he asked every hospital in the state to better manage thousands of poor, uninsured patients who keep showing up in emergency rooms.

But circumstances are different in Tennessee, he said. First, the state is bigger than South Carolina and more people there have no health insurance. Hospitals in Tennessee are also paid very little to treat indigent patients who can't afford their medical bills. South Carolina hospitals receive much more money for similar services.

"I didn't support Medicaid ex-

pansion in South Carolina and I still don't. I supported getting people access to care in a much different way," he said.

Keck acknowledged in an interview with this newspaper two years ago that Medicaid expansion might be appropriate in some states.

"If I had to do it again in South Carolina, I would do it the exact same way," he said. "I'm glad I'm not in the middle of it anymore."

**"I didn't support Medicaid expansion in South Carolina and I still don't. I supported getting people access to care in a much different way."**

**Tony Keck**



Keck

Title: **State cannot afford to put DSS on hold**  
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## OTHER VIEWPOINTS

# State cannot afford to put DSS on hold

**A yearlong, in-depth investigation of DSS is warranted, but some problems need to be addressed now.**

**G**ov. Nikki Haley's pick to lead the state's Department of Social Services has the right idea in proposing a comprehensive review of operations at every DSS office in the state. But, if approved by the legislature, she should act right away to address some pressing problems that already are well documented.

In one of what are likely to be several confirmation hearings, Susan Alford said she wants to visit each county, assess its needs and hear why caseworkers leave the agency. She told the Senate General Committee that caseload problems are closely associated to turnover, and she plans to address both by using her experience to probe the department's "ground game" at the county level.

During the daylong county meetings, Alford said she would meet with local law enforcement, solicitors, guardians and caseworkers. She especially hopes to get a sense of how each of the state's 46 counties is handling its responsibilities to care for children.

Alford, 60, appears to have the experience to tackle the job. She has been director of The Girls Center at Clemson University since 2007, a research hub for is-

suues such as teen pregnancy and poor self-esteem. She also worked at the Department of Juvenile Justice for more than 12 years in various director roles and served as director of the state's probation and parole agency.

Alford would replace Lillian Koller, who resigned last year amid calls for her head from members of both parties. Haley was slow in realizing that Koller was in real trouble, attributing the criticism to election-year politics,

but Koller resigned a day before the Senate was due to take up a no-confidence vote on her leadership.

Alford said making substantive changes at DSS could take years. She warned lawmakers not to start criticizing the agency if they don't see drastic improvements in the next year or two.

Certainly the agency's operation deserves an in-depth evaluation. Alford no doubt is on the right track in trying to get at the root causes of high turnover rates. Once she's has identified why so many people leave the agency, she can begin to seek remedies. But Alford does not have to start from scratch. The Senate already has produced an improvement plan after a year's

worth of bipartisan hearings investigating child deaths, excessive caseloads and turnover.

Among other things, the plan, released in October, calls for adding 221 child welfare positions this fiscal year.

Many of the agency's problems, especially regarding child welfare, have been common knowledge for years. A federal class action lawsuit was filed Jan. 12 against Haley and DSS, saying a lack of health care and other basic services is endangering children in the system.

The complaint alleges Haley and DSS are responsible for drastic foster home shortages, too many cases for workers and a failure to provide children with basic health care. The lawsuit also alleges that child maltreatment while in foster care is not adequately investigated, and inaccurate data masks a much higher rate of abuse and neglect than the state reports to the federal government.

In light of the seriousness of the allegations, action should be taken right away. Children who aren't getting proper care can't afford to wait years for a change.

The (Rock Hill) Herald

Title: **Gov. Haley represents everyone**  
Author:  
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## **Gov. Haley represents everyone**

To the editor,  
In response to Erin McKee of Mt. Pleasant, Gov. Haley does in fact represent every union member in South Carolina.

Gov. Haley does not represent the unions.

The governor does not create jobs. The governor helps foster an environment whereby businesses can flourish.

Business owners, mostly small business, create jobs. Unions have proven that they inhibit and discourage the growth of jobs.

Boeing is in South Carolina because we discourage

unions and Boeing is providing fertile ground for job creation all over the state with the opportunity for the creation of small support businesses.

I am not sure who Ms. McKee is taking to, but she needs to carry his message far away from Georgetown and Charleston counties.

The job boom that has occurred in South Carolina since the recession is among the greatest in the nation, and they are not union jobs.

*Bill Hills  
Murrells Inlet*

Title: **Boeing brings more work to S.C. plant**  
 Author: By Bruce Smith Associated Press  
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# Boeing brings more work to S.C. plant

**Products: 737 MAX engine fan cowls, 777X air inlets**

By BRUCE SMITH  
 Associated Press

**NORTH CHARLESTON** Even as Boeing opened a large new propulsion plant in South Carolina on Wednesday, the aeronautics giant announced the facility has already been assigned additional work.

When Boeing broke ground on the 225,000-square-foot plant 15 months ago, it said it would manufacture jet engine air inlets for the 737 MAX, a new generation of Boeing's workhorse 737.

As Gov. Nikki Haley joined company and local elected officials to cut the ribbon for the plant on Wednesday, additional projects were announced.

Nicole Piasecki, vice president and general manager of the Propulsion Systems Division of Boeing Commercial

Airplanes, told a crowd of several hundred gathered in the cavernous building that

Propulsion South Carolina would also design engine fan cowls for the 737 MAX as well as design air inlets for its new 777X.

"... We will house, in just the next several months, one of aerospace's most advanced automated manufacturing systems," she said.

In one corner of the building was a prototype of a robot that will be used to make the inlets. Propulsion South Carolina delivered its first intake to the engine development program at engine manufacturer General Electric last summer.

The Boeing propulsion plant will be fully operational by the end of the year.

Boeing did not say how many additional jobs are being added, but it said 7,500 people now work at Boeing facilities in South Carolina, up from 6,700 a year ago.

The new plant is just a few miles from the massive assembly plant where the company assembles its 787 Dreamliner.

The air inlets on the engine are important to both reducing drag on the airplane – thus saving fuel – and muffling the sound of the engine.

"Knowing how to design and build the inlets is crucial," said Charlie Hix, the director of Propulsion South Carolina. "It saves fuel and makes the airplane quieter so it's more environmentally friendly."

Haley, who opposes unions

and has recorded radio ads opposing any attempt to unionize Boeing workers in the state, praised the company's workforce.

"You did this and South Carolina is forever grateful," she told the gathering, adding that Boeing has shown it is grateful to the workers by bringing more work to South Carolina.

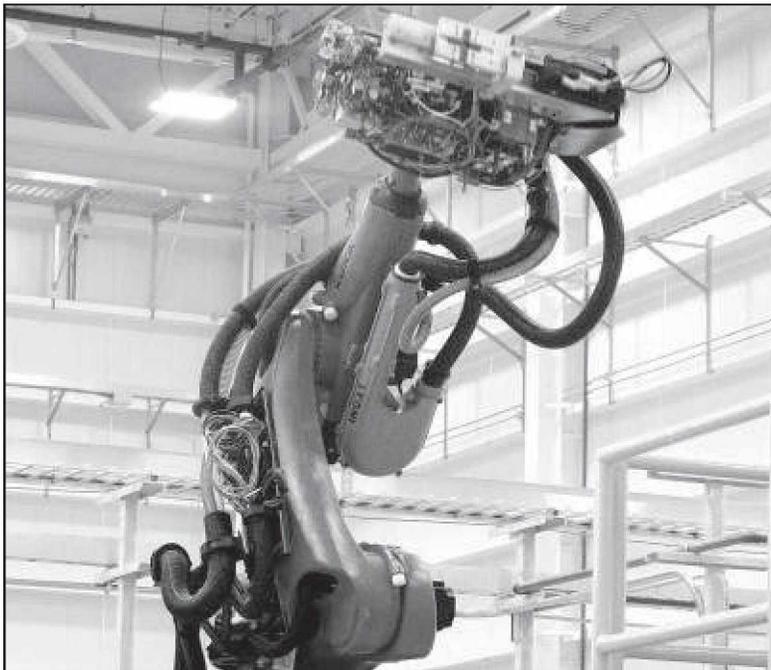
"I think whenever we have seen a good successful plant, whether it's BMW or Michelin or any of the companies that come in, the unions always want to take the opportunity they can to get in there," she told reporters later. "What we know is this work force is loyal. This work force is proud. This work force has made us what we are today."

Title: **Boeing brings more work to S.C. plant**

Author: By Bruce Smith Associated Press

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BRUCE SMITH - AP

A prototype of a robot to be used in Boeing's Propulsion South Carolina plant to make jet engine intakes is displayed on Wednesday in North Charleston. Boeing said the plant has been assigned new work in addition to building intakes.

Title: **S.C. Senaterejectsethics reform bill**  
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By SEANNA ADCOX  
 Associated Press

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own members' campaign filings, while the State Ethics Commission is responsible for all other filings from state and locally elected officials.

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vestigations. Haley's personal experience with the House Ethics Committee in 2012, when she was cleared of allegations she lobbied for employers while a House member, prompted lawmakers of both parties to call ethics reform a top priority. But legislators have been unable since to agree on what to do.

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investigations into legislators. But many senators have balked at that idea. They insist that problems with legislators overseeing their own have been in the House, not the Senate.

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didn't lump responsibility of legislators in with statewide, city and county officials to a state commission that can't handle their current workload.

But Martin said that's worse than changing nothing because it creates a mirage of reform.

"It placed ourselves in a special, privileged class we created for ourselves," he said. "I can't defend that, and I won't."

The bill was defeated after Haley posted on Facebook the names of senators who voted for Rankin's amendment, calling it a "slap in the face to every citizen," and pledged to veto any bill without "true independent investigations."

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 Title: **2road-funding bills introduced in S.C.House**

Author:

Size: 7.90 square inch

Rock Hill, SC Circulation: 34688
 

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## 2 road-funding bills introduced in S.C. House

**COLUMBIA** Two different bills to get more money to South Carolina roads have been introduced in the state House.

One bill is the idea of a special House panel that would lower the state's gas tax and raise the sales tax on fuel.

That bill was written by state Rep. Gary Simrill, R-Rock Hill, and started with 64 sponsors including House Speaker Jay Lucas.

The second bill is Gov. Nikki Haley's proposal to raise the gas tax 10 cents. That bill was introduced by Greenville Republican Rep. Tommy Stringer and started with 36 sponsors including Majority Leader Bruce Bannister.

Haley says she can only support that tax increase if lawmakers lower South Carolina's personal income tax rate by 2 percentage points.

Both bills would raise about \$400 million a year.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Title: **Haley's inaction on roads doesn't serve state well**  
 Author:  
 Size: 7.75 square inch  
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### **Haley's inaction on roads doesn't serve state well**

Maintaining and improving a state's infrastructure is one of the most important responsibilities of a governor. It is common knowledge that the overall condition of South Carolina's roads and bridges is poor and continuing to deteriorate. Our governor refused to address this critical issue in her first term, even though the state's political and business leaders called for urgent action. It is the height of arrogance that our governor would not even discuss her plans for fixing South Carolina's crumbling infrastructure until after she was re-elected. And now she has unveiled a difficult and complicated plan that has little chance of success. What will it take for the governor to take this issue seriously and act responsibly? The residents of South Carolina deserve better.

**Bob Penny**  
*Greer*