

Title: **Chamber wants gas hike for roads**
 Author: NATHANIEL CARY NCARY@GREENVILLENEWS.COM
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Chamber wants gas hike for roads

NATHANIEL CARY

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The Greenville Chamber of Commerce laid out its advocacy plan for the upcoming legislative session Friday, and infrastructure is once again at the top of the list.

The Chamber, as well as a coalition of 10 more chambers of commerce, supports increasing the gas tax by 10 to 12 cents to provide a recurring source of income to fix the state's roads system. The Upstate Chamber Coalition also wants that gas tax hike to be tied to inflation so it would automatically increase without the General Assembly's action in the future.

And with a much smaller budget surplus forecast for the coming year, the Legislature won't be able to take the less-combative solution of dedicat-

ing surplus to roads like it did last session, said members of the Greenville County Legislative Delegation who spoke at the annual Chamber breakfast.

What legislators do expect is a raucous beginning to the session, with posturing for positions and power in reaction to the expected departure of Gov. Nikki Haley if she's confirmed as President-elect Donald Trump's Ambassador to the United Nations, which would thrust avid Trump-supporter Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster into the governor's seat.

"There's going to be a lot of movement in Columbia this year," said Rep. Bruce Bannister, R-Greenville.

Sen. William Timmons, R-Greenville, four days into his initial organiza-

tional session in Columbia, already made waves when he voted against Sen. Hugh Leatherman's bid for reelection to the president pro tempore position, which Leatherman won by a 36-9 vote in the Senate last week. Timmons on Friday said he expects if the vote were anonymous, 22 senators would have opposed Leatherman's reelection since Leatherman has already made it clear he won't fill the lieutenant governor role, which ordinarily would fall to the president pro tem.

"This is going to be fun," Timmons told the crowd of Chamber members Friday.

Once the legislature gets down to

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Gas

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work in a session that will already be shortened by three weeks, a renewed bite at a comprehensive infrastructure funding bill is expected, legislators said.

Haley's departure may reopen the possibility of a gas tax increase, which legislators have a general consensus should be tapped as the revenue source, Bannister said.

"With Henry (McMaster) coming in and Gov. Haley leaving, I think everything's back on the table," Bannister said. "He hasn't really taken a position yet on any details of what an infrastructure plan would look like."

A governor who's engaged with all of the options on the table would be a "refreshing start" for the House, Bannister said.

Rep. Jason Elliott, R-Greenville, said his first instinct would be to not raise the gas tax "if we can at all find another solution." But, he said, "if there's another solution please let us know."

The chamber coalition said if the state won't act on infrastructure funding, it should allow municipalities the ability to use referendums for residents to vote on local sales taxes for capital projects.

City of Greenville elected officials have said for years they would like to have the ability to control a sales tax for capital projects such as roads or sidewalk improvements. When the countywide penny sales tax referendum for roads projects failed in 2014, the proposal showed its greatest promise of passing in the city's core.

The chamber also will advocate for tax

credits for Fortune 500 company headquarters and high-impact companies as well as streamlining the business license fee process. It will also lobby the Legislature to reauthorize an Angel Investor Tax Credit program to promote funding for start-ups.

The chamber's advocacy platform also supports fully funding the state's education system and continued workforce development initiatives, as well finding a solution to the state's public pension liability.

Reps. Mike Burns, R-Travelers Rest, and Chandra Dillard, D-Greenville, each serve on the tax study committee, an appointed body that's looking at the state's tax structure. Burns said he wants the state to lower its income tax rate from seven percent to five or six percent while eliminating sales tax exemptions on items like groceries, prescriptions and the \$300



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sales tax cap on car sales, which Burns called "madness."

Burns said the tax study committee may advocate that the Ways and Means Committee move to a two-year budget, which would give the Legislature a year to "figure out some of this madness."

Dillard said the committee wants to broaden the tax base while remaining revenue-neutral, but she said her biggest concern is to make changes to the system created by Act 388, which provided property tax relief but Dillard said created a system of winners and losers with local government and the public education system on the losing end.

Rep. Garry Smith, R-Simpsonville, said the Legislature also will be tasked with finding funds to pay for Hurricane Matthew recovery and also likely for damage from the Simpsonville tornado, which may not qualify for federal aid.

Title: **SC farm chief talks drought, McMaster**
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SC farm chief talks drought, McMaster

MIKE EADS

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The state's top farm officials popped into the Anderson County Farm Bureau offices Friday to chat up local farmers, speculate what a future McMaster administration might look like and tell them where they might be able to find some hay.

Hugh Weathers admitted that drought has hit the Upstate hard this year, but added that conditions aren't any better elsewhere across the South.

"It's dry all the way across the South, and it's worse the farther West you go," Weathers told a dozen or so farmer at an informal lunch meeting. "... But this is about the lowest I've ever seen these lakes up here."

Weathers didn't bring rain along for Lake Hartwell, which is down about 10 feet, or any of the farmers, but he did refer them to the

state's hay exchange — <https://agriculture.sc.gov/market-bulletin/hay-exchange/> — an online effort to link those who have hay with those who need it.

There was also curiosity about how Henry McMaster might run South Carolina. The lieutenant governor is expected to ascend to the state's top job if Gov. Nikki Haley is confirmed as the United States' Ambassador to the United Nations.

The commissioner fielded a few complaints about Haley's May veto of \$40 million in relief for farmers hit by 2015's fall flooding across the state. He didn't speak directly to accusations from some of the attendees about Haley politicking at farmers' expense, but he did say McMaster is a good listener.

"Henry McMaster will have two years to establish himself and I, personally, think he'll do a good job," said Weathers.

Title: **McMaster a sound consensus conservative**
 Author:
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McMaster a sound consensus conservative

Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster is slated to become South Carolina governor after Nikki Haley becomes Trump's U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations.

He's a Columbia resident, and he will be a sound consensus conservative that will head the South Carolina government.

McMaster served South Carolina well as U.S. Attorney when he was appointed by Reagan back in 1981. He also served as S.C. Attorney General from 2003 to 2011. He was elected Lieutenant Governor of South Carolina in 2018, and he once was chairman of the South Carolina Republican Party. Lt. Gov. McMaster gave the nominat-

ing speech at the Republican National Convention in Cleveland that nominated Trump for president.

The five points and items that will be in the South Carolina General Assembly's agenda that McMaster will have to consider include schools, roads, the state budget, state employees, and pension.

On roads, lawmakers want to find a way to pay for much-needed roads and bridges legislation. The state wanted to raise South Carolina's 16.75-cents-per-gallon gas tax, one of the lowest of the nation. Haley promised to veto the tax hike until the General Assembly passed a much larger tax cut.

Bill Ross from the S.C. Alliance to Fix Our Roads thinks that McMaster will get lawmakers to come up with a better plan for our roads once he becomes governor. He said, "I think Henry's going to be somebody who's going to be about compromise and working together to get solutions for our problems."

I think Henry McMaster will serve South Carolina well as our governor.

He will work with South Carolina lawmakers and our new president to make a better Palmetto state and a better America.

Steven Hawkins,
Greenville

Title: **The education of Nikki Haley**

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POLITICS

The education of Nikki Haley

BY AVERY G. WILKS, BRISTOW MARCHANT AND CASSIE COPE

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COLUMBIA

Before a S.C. governor steps on a plane for a foreign economic development trip, he or she first spends weeks studying a thick briefing book, prepared by the state Department of Commerce.

There are dossiers on corporate officials the governor will meet, plus a run-down of the company's history, its relationship with the United States and South Carolina, the jobs it could bring and the specifics of its potential investment in the Palmetto State.

In some cases, the governor gets a tutorial on the country's social norms: Businessmen in the Far East present their business cards with two hands and a bow, and it is an affront in some cultures to stop drinking before the host.

"It's like putting together a battle plan for the Super Bowl," said Bob McAlister, a spokesman and chief of staff

under late S.C. Gov. Carroll Campbell. "It is a very detailed, time-consuming effort to get a governor prepared for an economic development trip overseas."

Until now, those trips have served as the bulk of S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley's foreign policy experience: eight visits to seven countries, helping attract more than \$13 billion in overseas investment in the Palmetto State since 2011, according to the state Commerce Department.

That means President-elect Donald Trump's nominee for U.S. ambassador to the United Nations has work to do before her Senate confirmation hearing, expected in January.

Haley's office is tight-lipped on how she is preparing.

The Republican has said she would continue to serve as S.C. governor until her confirmation, though she has handed off traditional

gubernatorial appearances — at military briefings and groundbreakings — to GOP Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster.

"In coordination with the presidential transition team, Gov. Haley has met with and spoken to numerous diplomatic and national security leaders, and she will continue to do so," Haley spokeswoman Chaney Adams said.

Former ambassadors from South Carolina say Haley likely will spend at least the next month studying up on U.N. operations and international relations, even though she is expected to coast to confirmation.

"She's getting a Ph.D.," said U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-Seneca. "They've given her a lot of information to absorb."

It will take time before Haley is fully comfortable as the face of the country on a prominent world stage, some say. But, most add,

she has the skills necessary for the new role.

'DRINKING FROM A FIRE HOSE'

Since her nomination, Haley has reached out to David Wilkins, a Greenville attorney who was U.S. ambassador to Canada under former President George W. Bush, and spoken with Graham.

Graham said he talked to Haley about his views on the Middle East. But neither he nor Wilkins would go into detail on their discussions with the governor.

"We've had a couple of conversations about following your instincts, relying on (your staff)," Wilkins said. "There's no way you can not feel overwhelmed at first, but it'll all come to you."

Prospective ambassadors, typically, receive an intense "crash course" from U.S. State Department officials,

SEE NIKKI HALEY , 6C

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NIKKI HALEY

several former ambassadors said last week.

That usually starts with a two-week "ambassadors' school" on everything from State Department jargon — DCH stands for "deputy chief of mission," for exam-

ple — to how to handle different document classifications, speak with media and run an embassy.

"It's like drinking from a fire hose to start with because there's so much being thrown at you," Wilkins

said.

After that follows another week learning about the ambassador's destination country, including its history, political climate, government structure and key issues the ambassador could

face.

Bob Royall, former S.C. secretary of Commerce and the U.S. ambassador to Tanzania under George W. Bush, remembers learning the east African country recently had converted to

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capitalism, its president was Catholic, and that it was one of the largest producers of cashews in Africa. He even spent a week starting to learn Swahili, the country's official language.

Haley's training for ambassador to the U.N. likely will be somewhat different.

She will live in New York City's Waldorf Astoria Hotel, not a faraway embassy, and will interact with numerous countries, not just one.

Philip Lader, a former Winthrop University president and U.S. ambassador to the United Kingdom's Court of St. James under former President Bill Clinton, expects Haley instead will go through intensive briefings with the State Department on geopolitics and U.N. operations.

She likely will be given "stacks and stacks" of briefing books to study ahead of her Senate confirmation hearing, Lader said. Typically, prospective appointees also have a "mock hearing" in which State Department staff quizzes them ahead of the real thing before senators, he said.

"It's a very intense process for any individual because it's a big world out there," Lader said. "But she has demonstrated an excellent capacity for learning."

'IT'S THE RELATIONSHIP SKILLS'

Haley is not starting totally from Square 1.

She has some foreign experience from her eight trips abroad, which S.C. Commerce Department

officials credit with a wave of new investments in the state.

German manufacturers

Continental Tire and Mercedes-Benz, Singapore-based tire manufacturer Giti, and Swedish automaker Volvo have opened new plants in South Carolina since Haley's inauguration. BMW, of Germany, and French tiremaker Michelin have expanded their operations here.

"Nikki Haley stood out above all the government officials we dealt with as one of the most impressive I've met," said Tim Rogers, vice president of finance at Continental Tire Americas. "She's, by far, the most personable. She's able to relate to people in all sincerity, not like a politician."

Julianto Djajadi, Giti North America's executive vice president for business operations, said his company's foreign executives were at ease dealing with the daughter of Indian immigrants because they felt she has a "great understanding and appreciation" for international actors.

"That's going to be very important," Djajadi said. "Because her parents are immigrants and the diversity of the United States, she can see things from many different perspectives. In the international world, having that diverse background can be a bridge."

Since 2011, nearly 200 companies from more than 30 countries have announced economic development projects in the Palmetto State, S.C. Commerce Secretary Bobby Hitt said.

Haley's success in attracting foreign investment shows she is cut out for the U.N. job, former S.C. Gov. David Beasley said.

Relating to people from different backgrounds and

views, and traveling abroad to negotiate for economic development and "selling your state" have prepared Haley, the Republican said.

"The most powerful weapon is not the knowledge of the individual walking into the room. It's the relationship skills," Beasley said.

"She has the personality, she has a powerful smile that will win hearts," he added. "A hug, a smile, a loving handshake and she will have leaders eating out of her hand."

'A QUICK STUDY'

Current and former S.C. leaders and diplomats have little doubt Haley can succeed.

Virtually all say she learns quickly, communicates clearly and can think on her feet, though she might be overwhelmed at first.

"She is very qualified," said Wilkins, the former ambassador to Canada. "She's a quick study. She's smart. She's got good people skills. She's a very good communicator. She's dealt with officials. She's handled crises. All those skills she honed as a governor are very transferable."

Haley also has received national praise as a unifier for her handling of the removal of the Confederate flag from the S.C. State House grounds after the 2015 Charleston massacre and her response to two natural disasters over the past 14 months.

Haley's experience leading the state should translate to her new job, where she will be America's face and voice to the U.N.'s 193 member states, former S.C. Gov. Jim Hodges said.

"The experiences you get

as a governor in dealing with all types of different people and an array of different problems, that experience is hard to match," the Democrat said. "That's a more important element of picking anyone for a high-level job. Have they been exposed to making tough decisions? If they have, that's probably a lot more important than how many countries they've been to."

Sen. Graham said Haley's demeanor is great for a job that's one part diplomacy, one part political networking and one part charm.

"She can be very charming, but she's tough," the Republican said, adding that will help when her job requires being on the defense, such as standing up to the body if it targets Israel.

Haley's Senate confirmation hearing is expected to be friendly. Senate Democrats have bigger fish to fry among Republican Trump's cabinet nominees. But she could face questions on substantive issues, including past U.N. actions, the state of the U.N. budget or pressing foreign policy matters, Lader said.

Past ambassadors say their best advice is for Haley to consult her staff early and often.

"Your know-how comes from that staff and daily, continuous briefings she will be receiving about activities throughout the world," said Royall, the former ambassador to Tanzania. "You wake up every morning with briefings."

It would not hurt to get some sleep now, while she still can, Lader said.

"She's not going to get as much for the next couple of years."

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KIM KIM FOSTER-TOBIN kkfoster@thestate.com

Gov. Nikki Haley gets a tour of the production line of Continental by Nikolai Setzer, an executive board member.

Title: **Haley's UN qualifications? Bringing foreign jobs to SC**

Author:

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Haley's UN qualifications? Bringing foreign jobs to SC

While Nikki Haley might not have an obvious background in diplomacy, the S.C. governor has plenty of overseas experience.

6 YEARS, 7 COUNTIES, 8 TRIPS

In her six years in the Governor's Mansion, Haley has traveled to seven countries on eight separate occasions to promote the state and attract new business, according to the S.C. Commerce Department.

Haley's trips span the globe, from Canada to India to Japan. She's been to Europe several times, including three visits to German auto-makers from 2011 to 2015.

\$13 BILLION INVESTED, 30,000 JOBS

Those trips resulted in foreign manufacturers opening manufacturing plants in the Palmetto State, including German-based Continental in Sumter County, Singapore-based Giti in Chester County, Swedish-based Volvo in Berkeley County, and German-based Mercedes in Charleston County. German-based BMW and French-based Michelin also expanded their already existing S.C. operations.

In all, overseas investment under the Haley Administration has added up to more than \$13 billion and 30,000 jobs, said state Commerce Secretary Bobby Hitt. "Since 2011, nearly 200 companies from more than 30 countries have announced economic development projects in South Carolina."

PERSONAL TOUCH, INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION

Those foreign companies that have made the move to South

Carolina say the decision was due, in no small part, to Haley's active involvement.

"Nikki Haley stood out above all the government officials we dealt with as one of the most impressive," said Tim Rogers, vice president of finance at Continental Tire the Americas. "She's, by far, the most personable. She's able to relate to people in all sincerity, not like a politician."

It also helped that South Carolina has developed a reputation as being a state for international manufacturers to locate.

"If you look at the Upstate, especially, there are companies there from France, Germany, Italy," Rogers said. "South Carolina is known as a place to invest internationally."

DAUGHTER OF IMMIGRANTS UNDERSTANDS DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

Giti Tire had a similar experience when its officials visited South Carolina, said Julianto Djajadi, Giti North America's executive VP for business operations.

Djajadi said Giti's foreign executives were at ease dealing with Haley, the daughter of Indian immigrants. They felt she had a "greater understanding and appreciation" for international actors.

"Because her parents are immigrants and the diversity of the United States, she can see things from many different perspectives."

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Gov. Nikki Haley gets a tour of the production line by Nikolai Setzer, Executive Board Member of Continental AG during the grand opening of Continental's Sumter plant.

TIM DOMINICK tdominick@thestate.com

Volvo CEO Lex Kerssemakers and Gov. Haley ceremonially sign the agreement for the automaker to build its plant in Berkeley County last year.

Title: **Haley's international resume**
Author:
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Haley’s international resume

Gov. Nikki Haley’s international trips as governor of South Carolina:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 2011: Paris air show, BMW's Munich HQ | 2014: Canada trade mission |
| 2012: London air show | 2014: India trade mission |
| 2012: Tokyo trade mission | 2015: Sweden, Volvo plant negotiations |
| 2013: Frankfurt, Germany, auto show | 2015: Frankfurt auto show, Sweden trade mission |

SOURCE: S.C. Department of Commerce

Title: **5 issues awaiting Haley at the UN**

Author:

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5 issues awaiting Haley at the UN

A look at five issues S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley will face if she is confirmed as the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.

1. THE IRAN DEAL

Under President Barack Obama, the U.S. and five other nations – Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia – reached a deal with Iran to dismantle its nuclear arms program in exchange for sanctions relief.

Donald Trump assailed the deal on the campaign trail, promising he would negotiate a tougher one with Iran.

As ambassador, Haley will play a role in President Trump's Iran policy, since some sanctions were imposed by the U.N. Security Council.

"The U.N. will play a big role in monitoring the Iran nuclear deal," said Bob Cox, director of the Walker Institute of International and Area Studies at the University of South Carolina. "The ambassador to the U.N. is going to be a very important person in explaining what the United States' position is."

2. REFUGEES

When the Obama administration announced plans to admit 10,000 Syrian refugees into the U.S. in 2016, Haley asked the State Department to consider not sending any to South Carolina. Donald Trump called for a "total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country's representatives can figure out what is going on."

As U.N. ambassador, Haley will be part of an organization

responsible for about 65 million refugees worldwide.

"The United Nations' job is providing support to people who are displaced by conflict," USC's Cox said. "Many of these missions require U.S. support ... That's one area where I think she is going to run up against domestic U.S. issues. She's likely to feel some pressure."

3. THE WAR IN SYRIA

Many of those refugees are fleeing a 5-year-old civil war in Syria. The conflict – among the dictatorship of Bashar Assad, anti-Assad rebels and Islamic State, or ISIS – presents one of the biggest headaches Haley will face at the U.N.

"The humanitarian crisis, particularly in the city of Aleppo, is almost unprecedented," Cox said.

Haley also will have to navigate choppy waters with Russia, which supports Assad's regime.

4. RUSSIA'S 'FROZEN' CONFLICTS

Haley will be tasked with working with Russia's U.N. representatives even as the United States considers how to deal with Russian activities in Syria and elsewhere.

The U.S. imposed sanctions on Russia for its 2015 annexation of Crimea from the

Ukraine. Russia also is involved in disputes over the territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, seized in a 2008 war with the Republic of Georgia, a U.S. ally. "These are areas it's been in Russia's interest to maintain chaos," Cox said.

Russian-backed hackers also are thought to have launched cyberattacks on U.S. targets this year.

5. REPRESENTING DONALD TRUMP

Being a U.S. ambassador is a challenge under any circumstances. Being Trump's ambassador could pose unique challenges.

Haley might find herself inundated with countries coming to her with "diplomatic slights."

For example, Cox said, "We learned ... the president-elect took a phone call from the president of Taiwan. It caused a bit of a stir within the diplomatic community."

In future phone calls, "leaders in Beijing will talk to the U.S. ambassador in Beijing, the Chinese ambassador in Washington will talk to the State Department, and the Chinese ambassador to the U.N. will contact Nikki Haley," Cox said.

Trump's unpredictability could make responding to any future slights an uncomfortable task. "To the extent that she might be caught unawares and might not have time to prep, it could be a special challenge," Cox said.

U.S. Rep. Mark Sanford, the Charleston Republican who once was Haley's mentor, has his own suggestion for handling the U.N. role.

"I would suggest she be very careful of falling into the nationalist trap Trump seemed to be setting on the campaign trail," he said. "At the end of the day, we're only 5 percent of the world's population. We have advanced by engaging with the rest of the world."

— AVERY WILKS

Title: **State leaders must address burgeoning financial sinkhole**
 Author:
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State leaders must address burgeoning financial sinkhole



Thanks for the recent column about what South Carolina's refusal to comply with the federal Real ID anti-terrorism law is going to cost average citizens ("No passport? No military ID? You could soon be grounded," Dec. 4).

I soon won't be able to go into any federal building, since I only have a S.C. driver's license, and no money for a passport. Thank goodness I can get by without flying ever again.

I had forgotten about this particular bit of foolhardiness on

the part of former Gov. Mark Sanford and the Legislature. Geez. So now we have this in addition to:

1) a pension system deficit of more than \$20 billion.

2) a still-incomplete computer system for child support that is behind by almost 30 years.

3) no real response to the Supreme Court order in the school funding lawsuit to help under-funded school districts.

4) no responsibility required of people who own property with dams they cannot afford to safely maintain, leaving far too many other people at risk of losing all they have from repeats of the floods of 2015 and Hurricane

Matthew in 2016.

5) a nightmare road/bridge/traffic problem that is dangerous and costly to citizens (car repairs, new tires, etc.) and a projected \$30 billion price tag to repair and expand the roads to meet our expected population growth.

It's going to take a lot more than Volvo, Boeing and the other businesses that Gov. Nikki Haley brought into South Carolina to generate anywhere near the money needed to bring our state out of the financial sinkhole that is coming at us.

The Legislature and governor need to do something.

- Clint Stevens
Camden

Title: **The education of Nikki Haley**

Author: BY AVERY G. WILKS, BRISTOW MARCHANT AND CASSIE COPE awilks@thestate.com

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The education of Nikki Haley

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➔ MORE INSIDE

5 challenges Nikki Haley will face at the U.N., **6A**

Haley's U.N. qualifications? Bringing overseas jobs to S.C., **7A**

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HALEY

McAlister, a spokesman and chief of staff under late S.C. Gov. Carroll Campbell. "It is a very detailed, time-consuming effort to get a governor prepared for an economic development trip overseas."

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last week.

That usually starts with



Graham



TRAVIS DOVE NYT

Title: **Haley gains national reputation as a healer-in-chief**
 Author: BYSEANNAADCOX Associated Press
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Haley gains national reputation as a healer-in-chief

BY SEANNA ADcox
 Associated Press

Gov. Nikki Haley has developed a national reputation as a racial conciliator who led the charge to bring down the Confederate flag at the Statehouse and guided South Carolina through one of its darkest moments, the massacre at a black church.

Now the 44-year-old American-born daughter of Indian immigrants is about to take her role as the state's healer-in-chief to a world stage, as U.N. ambassador.

On Wednesday, Haley became the first woman and first minority chosen by President-elect Donald Trump for his Cabinet.

If the Senate confirms her, she could find herself in the awkward position of being the international voice for an administration that has belittled the United Nations, promised to build a wall along the Mexican border and endeared itself to the alt-right movement, even though Trump

has repudiated such groups.

Haley may have offered a glimpse last week of how she will approach the job.

"Faith with action and kindness and love will always take us where we want to go," the Republican governor said at Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, where a white man gunned down nine black parishioners in June 2015.

Haley drew wide praise for her leadership after the attack, as she conveyed the state's grief and success

fully led calls to bring down the Confederate flag that had flown on the Statehouse grounds for 54 years. The shootings were motivated by "pure hate," she said then, and will "forever change the way I live my life."

Last week, churches across the state honored Haley's request for prayer vigils amid the nearly simultaneous murder trials of the defendant in the church massa-

cre and a white former police officer accused of fatally shooting a black motorist in the back.

Her handling of the racially charged events bolstered her national image, said longtime GOP operative Richard Quinn. "It became a national example of how you can deal with racial issues peacefully," he said.

Other crises Haley has grappled with over the past two years include historic flooding in 2015, an elementary school shooting last September, Hurricane Matthew last month and wildfires that continue to rage in the state's northwestern corner.

"The one constant is when things we didn't understand happened, the action was people stood hand in hand and loved each other. They didn't look for someone to blame, or hate. They looked for someone to love and lift people up," she said, in calling for the same approach as the

trials and the disaster recovery play out.

Born Nimrata Nikki Randhawa in rural Bamberg, Haley was raised a Sikh. She says she

converted to Christianity before marrying her husband, Michael, in 1996. They have two children, ages 18 and 15.

Haley has recalled that as a youngster, she and her sister were disqualified from the segregated Little Miss Bamberg Pageant because organizers couldn't figure out if the girls should compete in the white or the black contest.

She confronted religious slurs over her Sikh roots during her 2010 campaign.

The second-term governor, who can't seek a third term, was a Trump critic during the White House campaign. She asked Americans to resist "the siren call of the angriest voices" in how the nation treats immigrants.



FILE/RICHARD SHIRO/AP/

Gov. Nikki Haley, with husband Michael in Columbia, is President-elect Donald Trump's choice as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.