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Subject: Morning Clips – Wednesday, September 14, 2016

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## Morning Clips – Wednesday, September 14, 2016

Governor Nikki Haley News:

The State: SC income tax burden among the nation's lowest, legislators told  
<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/article101629497.html>

Cassie Cope

South Carolina had the 10th lowest effective income tax rate of the 41 states with an income tax in 2012, state legislators reviewing the state's tax code were told Tuesday. South Carolina's high standard deductions and exemptions allow taxpayers to shield a higher portion of their income from state income taxes, reducing their effective tax rate compared with most other states, said Gordon Shuford, an economic researcher for the state. South Carolina's effective tax rate is 2.99 percent, based on 2012 figures, the most recent studied. That effective rate is far lower than the state's 7 percent top income tax rate.

NOTE: In 2015, Republican Gov. Nikki Haley, called for a 2 percentage point cut to that rate, saying the 7 percent tax bracket hurt efforts to recruit businesses to the state.

Associated Press : Auto parts maker bringing 60 jobs to Berkeley County  
[http://m.apnews.com/ap/db\\_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=9N9LYIgv](http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=9N9LYIgv)

SC State Wire

A German company that makes parts for automotive fuel injection systems is locating in Berkeley County, investing almost \$8 million and creating 60 jobs. The company, Stoba, announced Tuesday that it is leasing a building and is starting now to hire for the new positions. The company employs about 800 workers at five locations worldwide.

Post and Courier: German auto parts maker expanding to Charleston  
<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160913/160919743/german-auto-parts-maker-expanding-to-charleston>

John McDermott

A German automotive parts maker is setting up shop in Berkeley County. Stoba is expected invest \$7.7 million and create 61 jobs at 41,000-square-foot manufacturing site off Clements Ferry Road near Daniel Island, Gov. Nikki Haley's office said Tuesday. The company makes precision-machined components for high-pressure fuel injection systems. Executives are scheduled to make a formal announcement about Stoba's first U.S. expansion at 4 p.m. at the Charleston plant at 2301 Charleston Regional Parkway. "After following our automotive customers to the fast-growing China market in 2013, we decided to grow our company also in the NAFTA market," said CEO Christoph Bode, referring to the U.S. and the other countries covered under the North American Free Trade Agreement. "This is mainly driven by the upcoming growing demand of fuel-saving gasoline direct injection systems in the U.S. Our research for the best possible location ended with a clear vote for the state of South Carolina."

Island Packet: Need a late-night ride home from a Bluffton bar? You've got a new option

<http://www.islandpacket.com/news/business/article101512762.html#storylink=cpy>

Lucas High

Late-night revelers in Bluffton's Old Town have a new way to get home — pedicabs. Bluffton Town Council voted unanimously Tuesday to change town regulations to allow bike taxis to operate until 2 a.m. Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. The move came just weeks after a new company — the first of its kind in Bluffton — began operating in town. Bluffton Bike Taxi owner Trey Snow celebrated the council's decision, saying it will be a major boon for his fledgling company. Under previous town rules, Snow's drivers — who first hit the street in Old Town earlier this month — had to stop taking fares at 10 p.m. The new regulations will "really be a nice change for Bluffton Bike Taxi," he said. "We appreciate all the hard work with the town, and we are very happy to have these changes."

NOTE: S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley recently signed a bill allowing properly equipped golf carts to be driven after dark, but Beaufort County leaders must approve the concept before Bluffton cart drivers can hit the streets after dark.

SC Political News:

Post and Courier: S.C. Republicans agree VP nominee Pence is 'good guy' during Capitol Hill visit

<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160913/160919734/sc-republicans-agree-vp-nominee-pence-is-good-guy-during-capitol-hill-visit>

Emma Dumain

A visit to Capitol Hill from Republican vice presidential nominee Mike Pence was a familiar event for GOP lawmakers in the U.S. House and Senate — or at least it was for members of the South Carolina delegation. "It was the same old speech to a friendly audience of people who served with him," U.S. Rep. Jeff Duncan, R-S.C., said of the Indiana governor who served in the House between 2001 and 2011. "He is truly loved by Republicans in that room and we're excited, basically, that one of our own is the VP nominee." Pence held separate meetings with House and Senate Republicans on Tuesday to offer a dispatch from the campaign trail and an assessment of how presidential nominee Donald Trump's race is shaping up against Democrat Hillary Clinton. The eight Palmetto State Republicans serving in Congress all backed candidates other than Trump during the presidential primary campaign. When Trump finally clinched the party's nomination, S.C. lawmakers had to decide if, when or how they would come around to supporting him.

Post and Courier: Trump leads in new SC GOP poll out today

<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160913/160919767/trump-leads-in-new-sc-gop-poll-out-today>

Schuyler Kropf

A new poll released this morning commissioned by the S.C. Republican Party shows presidential nominee Donald Trump with a 13-point advantage over Democrat Hillary Clinton in South Carolina. Trump holds a 48 percent to 35 percent lead over Clinton, the survey found, with Libertarian candidate Gary Johnson collecting 7 percent. The remaining 11 percent of voters is undecided. Walter Whetsell, president of SC-based political consulting firm Starboard Communications, said the 600 likely voters were surveyed through live phone calls to landlines and cell numbers Sept. 7-9. The poll has a margin of error of +/- 4.8 percent. "Donald Trump and Mike Pence are well on their way to victory in South Carolina," Matt Moore, chairman of the S.C. Republican Party, said in a statement. "This is the third South Carolina poll in recent weeks showing the strength of our ticket." In the lone U.S. Senate race on the ballot this year, incumbent Republican Tim Scott leads Democrat opponent Thomas Dixon 58 percent to 22 percent, with 16 percent undecided, the poll said.

The State: Trump has double-digit SC lead in latest poll <http://www.thestate.com/news/politics->

[government/article101535107.html](http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/article101535107.html)

Bristow Marchant

Donald Trump has a double-digit lead in South Carolina, according to a poll commissioned by the S. C. Republican Party. The poll by Starboard Communications finds Trump has the support of 48 percent of S.C. voters, while 35 percent say they plan to vote for Hillary Clinton. Libertarian candidate Gary Johnson has the support of another 7 percent of voters, while 11 percent remain undecided. "Donald Trump and Mike Pence are well on their way to victory in South Carolina," said Matt Moore, chairman of the S.C. GOP. "This is the third South Carolina poll in recent weeks showing the strength of our ticket." Two polls earlier this month showed Trump with a lead in South Carolina. A 50-state Washington Post/SurveyMonkey poll last week found Trump at 49 percent in South Carolina, holding a 7 percentage-point lead over Clinton. A First Tuesdays poll of S.C. voters released the same day gave Trump 50 percent support and a 12-point lead.

Greenville News: SCGOP-commissioned poll: Trump up by 13 in SC

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/2016/09/13/scgop-commissioned-poll-trump-up-13-sc/90299380/>

Amanda Coyne

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump leads Democratic opponent Hillary Clinton by 13 percentage points in the Palmetto State, according to a new poll released and commissioned by the South Carolina Republican Party. Trump has 48 percent of voters' support, while Clinton has 35 percent, according to the poll. Libertarian candidate Gary Johnson earned 7 percent in the poll and 11 percent of respondents were undecided. The poll was conducted by Walter Whetsell, president of the Lexington political firm Starboard Communications. Whetsell surveyed 600 likely voters in South Carolina on landline and cell phone numbers. The poll's margin of error is 4.8 percent. Trump had the strongest lead in South Carolina's 7th Congressional District in this poll, leading Clinton 57 percent to 42 percent. One of Trump's largest margins of victory in February's South Carolina Republican presidential primary was in Horry County, part of the 7th Congressional District and home to Myrtle Beach, where he earned 50 percent of the vote in a field of six candidates.

Independent Mail : Trump surging in polls, S.C. campaign chairman boasts

<http://www.independentmail.com/story/news/politics/2016/09/12/trump-surging-polls-sc-campaign-chairman-boasts/90258112/>

Kirk Brown

Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump is surging in polls with eight weeks left before Election Day, his South Carolina campaign chairman said Monday in Anderson. "Right now, the trend is phenomenal," Ed McMullen told the 1st Monday Club of Anderson. "The fact of the matter is South Carolina is doing extremely well, as is the nation and so are those key battleground states. "Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton currently leads Trump by 3 percent, based on the latest aggregation of national polls compiled by RealClearPolitics.com. Her lead was twice as large about two weeks ago. According to the same website, Clinton is leading in North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Virginia while Trump is ahead in Florida, Georgia and Iowa. McMullen said Trump's rise comes as more voters start to focus on the presidential race. "People are waking up and seeing the real effects of what Hillary would do to this country versus what Mr. Trump's vision is," he said.

The State : Former S.C. Dem chair: Party needs to plan for replacement nominee

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/article101578952.html>

Bristow Marchant

While Hillary Clinton's campaign is trying to quiet concerns about her health after Sunday's public

bout with pneumonia, one South Carolina member of the DNC is saying party leaders should seriously consider what to do if the nominee can't finish the race. "Now is the time for all good political leaders to come to the aid of their party," Don Fowler told Politico. "I think the plan should be developed by 6 o'clock this afternoon." Fowler is a long-time Clinton ally. He was the chairman of the Democratic National Committee from 1995 to 1997 while Hillary Clinton's husband Bill Clinton was in the White House. Fowler said he expects Clinton to make a full recovery after she was forced to leave a 9/11 memorial service early on Sunday and was captured on camera needing help to get into an SUV. But Fowler says Democrats shouldn't wait until they have to name a new presidential nominee to spell out how the party can do so after this summer's nominating convention.

Post and Courier: Don Fowler suggests Democrats need contingency if Clinton health worsens  
<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160913/160919735/don-fowler-suggests-democrats-need-contingency-if-clinton-health-worsens>

Schuyler Kropf

Former Democratic National Committee Chairman Don Fowler of South Carolina said this week that party members need to have a contingency if presidential nominee Hillary Clinton's health forces her to drop out. Fowler told Politico on Monday that President Barack Obama and congressional leaders should draft a process for identifying a potential successor, if need be. "Now is the time for all good political leaders to come to the aid of their party," Fowler was quoted as saying. He led the DNC from 1995 to 1997 when Bill Clinton was in the White House. "I think the plan should be developed by 6 o'clock this afternoon." Hillary Clinton's health became an issue when she left the 9/11 remembrance ceremony in New York early, collapsing into a vehicle. Video of the event drew widespread media attention. Her campaign later disclosed she was suffering from pneumonia. She also cancelled a fundraising swing out West. Picking a top ticket replacement could prove difficult, especially as ballots have already been set in many of the states, and early voting will pick up soon where it's allowed.

Post and Courier: Graham slams military aid deal to Israel deal as 'flawed'

<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160913/160919706/graham-slams-military-aid-deal-to-israel-deal-as-flawed>

Emma Dumain

Working outside of Congress, the Obama administration has finalized a deal to provide Israel's military with \$38 billion during the next 10 years. It's the largest package of military assistance the U.S. has ever pledged to another country, but one which U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham rejects as insufficient and inappropriate. "While I think the agreement is important and deserving of respect, I have also made it very clear that Congress is not a party to this agreement nor is this agreement binding on future Congresses," the South Carolina Republican said in a statement Tuesday afternoon, a few hours after the agreement was announced. "Congress has an independent duty to make a decision about the proper level of support for Israel or our other allies. To suggest this MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) will bind future Presidents and Congresses for the next decade is constitutionally flawed and impractical."

Post and Courier: Hartsville senator's presence at '79 USC shooting shapes approach to gun hearings

<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160913/160919740/hartsville-senators-presence-at-79-usc-shooting-shapes-approach-to-gun-hearings>

Maya T. Prabhu

The chairman of the Statehouse panel that will look at reforming the state's gun laws said it's difficult to describe what it was like 40 years ago when he saw a gunman shoot and kill two people at a party

at the University of South Carolina. Sen. Gerald Malloy, R-Hartsville, said he didn't realize what was going on when the man he was standing near, Terrell Johnson, was shot in the head at a fraternity party at a dormitory. It was Oct. 5, 1979. Malloy was a 17-year-old freshman at the time. "It's terrifying and it's long-lasting," Malloy said. "I still remember the date 37 years later. I hate to bring it up because I know there are some out there that have suffered much more than I have." Johnson was one of two young men killed by fellow student Mark Houston. Five others were injured. Houston pleaded guilty and was sentenced to two life terms, which he is serving at McCormick Correctional Institution. Now 55, he received a third life term after stabbing a fellow inmate to death in 1994.

Associated Press : Reversing Course: School board opts for silence over prayer

[http://m.apnews.com/ap/db\\_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=tc3TcR3E](http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=tc3TcR3E)

SC State Wire

A month after agreeing to open its meetings with prayer a South Carolina school board has reversed course and is again observing a moment of silence instead. The Post and Courier of Charleston reports (<http://bit.ly/2ckj3Wb>) the Berkeley County School Board last month agreed to open meetings with a nonsectarian prayer. But a moment of silence was observed at Tuesday's meeting after the board agreed to rethink the decision. The board for years opened meetings with the Lord's Prayer. That was replaced with a moment of silence in June when Americans United for Separation of Church and State warned prayer was unconstitutional. The board agreed to reinstate prayer last month after receiving a letter from state lawmakers citing a U.S. Supreme Court decision reaffirming the right to pray at public meetings.

Post and Courier: Berkeley school board postpones prayer

<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160913/160919715/berkeley-school-board-postpones-prayer>

Brenda Rindge

The Berkeley County School Board planned to open its meeting Tuesday with prayer for the first time in three months but at the last minute decided to postpone. As the meeting was called to order, board member Shannon Lee asked that the board delay implementation of changes to a policy it approved last month called "Public Invocation" until the board receives more information. In the meantime, the board will continue to open meetings with a moment of silence. Lee's motion passed, 7-1, with Phillip Obie casting the dissenting vote. Board Chairman Jim Hayes was absent. For years, the board opened its bimonthly meetings with the Lord's Prayer. It stopped in June after the Americans United for Separation of Church and State, a Washington D.C.-based nonprofit, warned that such prayers are a violation of the Establishment clause of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

SC Agency News:

WACH: Video inside SC prison shows what some are calling "inhumane" conditions

<http://wach.com/news/local/video-inside-sc-prison-shows-what-some-are-calling-inhumane-conditions>

Melanie Barden

A video has gone viral showing the inside of one of South Carolina's 23 prisons. According to State Corrections Director, Bryan Stirling, inmates at Broad River Correctional Institution were placed on lock-down last week. Meaning prisoners can't leave their cells for anything, including showers-- for days. "They would be in their cell, they would get their food delivered to them, they would not be able to have visitation, they would not be able to make phone calls," said Stirling. Stirling noted the lockdowns are necessary to look for contraband like cellphones, or drugs. However, for those who have loved ones in the Broad River facility, this treatment has gone on long enough. Susan DeMarco, who has friends in Broad River said, "We have basic human needs, we need to eat, we need to see

the sunlight, we need to take a walk."DeMarco works with "Hearts for Inmates" which advocates for inmates' rights.

NOTE: However, the SCDOC Director said these lockdowns are due to such short staffing across all of South Carolina's institutions. "What short staffing leads to is the ability of the inmates to obtain contraband easier because we have less eyes on them so it affects all aspects of the institution," remarked Stirling.

The State: Housing SC rapists, other sex predators costly

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/article101575812.html>

Cynthia Roldan

A \$41 million project that will help South Carolina house up to 500 sexually violent predators received approval Tuesday. Members of the state's Joint Bond Review Committee approved the Department of Mental Health's request to borrow up to \$45 million in bonds to cover the cost of constructing two new buildings and renovating three existing ones to house predators who have been committed to the state's custody. The predators – including child abusers, rapists, serial predators – have served their time for criminal offenses but are deemed too "mentally abnormal" and "extremely dangerous" to be released. Instead, they are committed by a judge or a jury civilly to these facilities run by the Department of Mental Health for sex offender treatment. Each resident costs about \$85,000 a year to house. The agency has been outgrowing its two buildings at the Department of Corrections' Broad River prison complex for years. In 2007, it installed bunk beds to make up for the lack of space. But the agency is on pace to reach its maximum capacity by early 2017.

Associated Press: SC considers borrowing \$45M to house sexual predators

[http://m.apnews.com/ap/db\\_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=TSUc0HUb](http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=TSUc0HUb)

Jeffrey Collins

South Carolina is considering borrowing \$45 million to build new, secure buildings at a Columbia prison to hold nearly 200 people the state calls sexually violent predators. The Department of Mental Health began the program in 1999 and said it has since outgrown what was supposed to be temporary housing. Since then, nearly 300 inmates have been deemed too dangerous to be released immediately, while only about 100 people have either been treated for their urges and released or died. If that pace continues, the units the program is currently using at the Broad River Correctional Institution will be full within a year, according to agency documents provided Tuesday to the Joint Bond Review Committee. The committee approved the bonds, and the State Fiscal Accountability Authority will hear the request later this month. The state will use the borrowed money to build an administrative building and 268 single-occupancy rooms, designed to hold as many as 500 people if necessary.

The State: Borrowing proposal for housing of sexual predators receives approval

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/article101575812.html>

Cynthia Roldan

A \$41 million project that will help the South Carolina house more than 180 sexually violent predators received approval Tuesday. The Department of Mental Health is requesting to borrow up to \$41 million in bonds to cover the cost of constructing two new buildings and renovating three existing ones to house predators who have been committed by a judge or a jury. As of September, the agency was holding 184 predators. Members of the Joint Bond Review Committee supported Rep. Chip Limehouse, R-Charleston, in the need to fund the project, because by law, the state has to house sexual predators. The project still has to be approved by the State Fiscal Accountability Authority next Tuesday. If approved, the project would be completed by 2018. The Department of

Mental Health is on pace to outgrow its current facilities by no later than early 2017. Predators are housed at the agency's facilities after they have served their time in prison, but a judge or jury civilly commits for treatment.

SC Law Enforcement News:

Post and Courier : Watched: A Post and Courier Investigation

<https://data.postandcourier.com/saga/watched/page/1>

Glenn Smith and Andrew Knapp

Police forces across the United States are stockpiling massive databases with personal information from millions of Americans who crossed paths with officers but were not charged with a crime. A person can end up in one of these databases by doing nothing more than sitting on a public park bench or chatting with an officer on the street. Once there, these records can linger forever and be used by police agencies to track movements, habits, acquaintances and associations – even a person's marital and job status, The Post and Courier found in an investigation of police practices around the nation. What began as a method for linking suspicious behavior to crime has morphed into a practice that threatens to turn local police departments into miniature versions of the National Security Agency. In the process, critics contend, police risk trampling constitutional rights, tarnishing innocent people and further eroding public trust. Law enforcement agencies have for decades used what's known as field interview or contact cards to document everything from sketchy activity to random encounters with people on the street. But the digital age has greatly expanded the power and reach of this tool, allowing police to store indefinitely reams of data on those who draw their interest — long after any potential link to a crime has evaporated.

Associated Press : Man shot by trooper: 6 months too long to wait for sentence

[http://m.apnews.com/ap/db\\_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=LdjgRHW0](http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=LdjgRHW0)

SC State Wire

The unarmed black driver shot by a white South Carolina trooper as he reached for his wallet during a traffic stop said waiting six months for the officer to be sentenced is far too long. Sean Groubert needs to be sentenced as soon as possible after pleading guilty in March to assault and battery of a high and aggravated nature and needs to receive the maximum 20-year sentence, Levar Jones said at a news conference Monday. Groubert was taken out of the courtroom in handcuffs after his plea. Typically, defendants are sentenced as soon as they are found guilty in South Carolina but in Groubert's case, Circuit Judge Casey Manning asked for a pre-sentencing report before deciding the former trooper's punishment. Groubert has been jailed ever since and the reasons for the delay have not been explained. Jones' shooting was captured on Groubert's dash-cam. Jones had parked his truck and was walking to a Columbia convenience store in September 2014 when Groubert, who spotted a seatbelt violation, demanded his license after pulling up without his siren.

Aiken Standard: Task force ramping up efforts to fight human trafficking in South Carolina

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/20160913/160919796/task-force-ramping-up-efforts-to-fight-human-trafficking-in-south-carolina->

Thomas Gardiner

South Carolina's Human Trafficking Task Force will convene Friday in Columbia to discuss the successes and lessons learned from the previous year and sharpen focus on strategies to combat human trafficking in the year to come. The meeting will center around the annual report from anti-trafficking efforts in 2015. According to S.C. Assistant Attorney General Marie Sazehn, efforts to combat human trafficking have been ramped up over the past five to 10 years. The state's Human

Trafficking Task Force was established in 2012. Sazehn said most people associate human trafficking with commercial sex trafficking, but the issue is much wider. "From a very broad perspective, human trafficking is referred to as modern day slavery," she said. "It's where people profit from control and exploitation of other human beings, the buying and selling of people." She said apart from sex trafficking, many people are trafficked for labor purposes.

Morning News : Latta administrator had authority to fire Moore, town attorney says

[http://www.scnow.com/news/article\\_ff507e6e-79e3-11e6-9401-171f7c48da77.html](http://www.scnow.com/news/article_ff507e6e-79e3-11e6-9401-171f7c48da77.html)

Jessica Imbimbo

The Latta town attorney released a letter sent to Crystal Moore's legal team on Tuesday saying Town Administrator Jarret Taylor "has sole authority to terminate Chief Moore" and her termination as police chief stands. In the letter, Attorney Janet Altman Byrd said the decision by Taylor and the town council to fire Moore was the result of a series of reprimands against her for not following town policies and procedures. Moore's attorney, Malissa Burnette, released a letter on Monday saying that the town council had not voted in open session to fire Moore on Sept. 8 and that Moore "still holds the position as chief of police." Burnette's letter included a section of the SC Code of Laws stating no action can be taken in executive session except to (a) adjourn or (b) return to public session. The members of a public body cannot commit the public body to a course of action by a polling of members in executive session.

Associated Press : Praying together: Illumination Project holds prayer meeting

[http://m.apnews.com/ap/db\\_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=dkAw5mLe](http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=dkAw5mLe)

SC State Wire

Charleston's Illumination Project, which was formed to strengthen ties between city residents and local police, is holding a citywide prayer meeting. Part of the mission of the Illumination Project is to have gatherings where people of all races and religions can gather in prayer to increase understanding and work for the good of the community. The prayer session is scheduled for Wednesday at First Scots Presbyterian Church in the city's historic district. The Illumination Project was conceived last year as a way to build on the unity shown in the aftermath of the Emanuel AME Church shootings which left nine people dead. After the tragedy, in one show of unity, thousands of people joined hands on the Ravenel Bridge linking Charleston to Mount Pleasant.

Dylann Roof Case:

Post and Courier : Citing 'flawed' process, Dylann Roof lawyers again fight to toss death penalty

<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160913/160919738/citing-flawed-process-dylann-roof-lawyers-again-fight-to-toss-death-penalty>

Andrew Knapp

In another attack on the legality of the death penalty, Dylann Roof's attorneys said this week capital punishment is so fraught with potential problems it shouldn't be used in his case. Roof, 22, has offered to plead guilty and accept a lifetime prison sentence in the June 2015 shooting that killed nine at Charleston's Emanuel AME Church. But federal prosecutors have pushed forward with the trial, seeking Roof's execution on some of his 33 charges. But as time passes, court rulings continue to limit how the death penalty can be applied, and further evidence has emerged showing how unfair it can be, Roof's lawyers said Monday in a court document. To support their position, the attorneys included in their filing about 2,200 pages of court transcripts, research, news articles and opinion polls on the death penalty. It's time to reopen the discussion of whether the punishment is cruel and unusual under the Eighth Amendment, they said.

## LGBT Laws:

Greenville News: SC could make a good replacement host for NCAA

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/sports/college/2016/09/13/sc-could-make-good-replacement-host-ncaa/90294566/>

Elizabeth LaFleur

North Carolina was stripped of seven NCAA championship events on Monday evening when the league announced it would move the contests due to the controversial "bathroom law." The affected contests include men's Division I basketball regional games in Raleigh and Greensboro, the women's golf regional in Greenville (NC), as well as women's soccer championships, men's and women's Division III tennis championships, women's lacrosse championships and the Division II baseball championships which were all scheduled to be held in Cary. Enter the palmetto state, which could be an easy move for the displaced events. South Carolina is no stranger to NCAA bans. The league only recently dropped a ban on palmetto state postseason play when lawmakers voted to remove the Confederate battle flag from Statehouse grounds in Columbia. We've discussed the potential opportunity to capitalize on NC's NCAA losses before, now The Greenville News has compiled a list of comparable potential replacement sites in SC that have had big events.

## Opinion/Editorial:

Aiken Standard: Editorial: South Carolina voters have say in judicial appointments

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/20160913/160919832/editorial-south-carolina-voters-have-say-in-judicial-appointments>

Over the next several weeks, you won't see them planting garish political signs into the ground. Nor will you see or hear any television, radio or newspaper ads promoting their campaigns. Mailers won't get stuffed into your mailbox. There will be no stump speeches, no town halls and no door knocking. What you will see, though, is a rigorous screening process for the plethora of judicial candidates seeking appointment to the handful of courtroom vacancies. Here in South Carolina, most judicial candidates go through a rigorous screening process conducted by the S.C. Judicial Merit Selection Commission. It's the commission's job to review qualifications, run background checks, evaluate judicial temperament and other facets of being a judge. The commission is comprised of state lawmakers and prominent lawyers who review judicial applications and make recommendations to the General Assembly. South Carolina is one of a handful of states to follow this procedure.

Bluffton Today: The politics of trickle-down neglect

<http://www.blufftontoday.com/bluffton-opinion/2016-09-14/politics-trickle-down-neglect#.V9IGn5MrK9Y>

## Opinion

The true test of political leadership is making the hard, long-term and right decision instead of the easy, short-term and wrong decision. Said differently, do our political leaders genuinely work to solve problems or do they just kick the can down the road? Unfortunately for our state, kicking the can down the road has been the unofficial sport of the Statehouse crowd for nearly a generation. Can-kicking results from politicians who refuse to look down the road further than the next election. For too many, making tough decisions is just not in their nature. The irony is that most politicians face few serious challenges to re-election. In some years, more than 90 percent of incumbents who seek re-election win. Their campaign fundraising is easy in that they have a couple of fundraisers in Columbia and the special interest groups ante up. The vast majority of funds raised by most members of the Legislature

is from special interest folks and not their constituents back home. Once they build up a big war chest, they are less likely to be challenged in a primary or general election. So let's talk specifics. What does can-kicking look like in concrete terms?

NOTE: During the recent recession, South Carolina's legislators cut K-12 and higher education spending by a greater percentage than any state in the union. And just last week when Gov. Nikki Haley said there would be a budget shortfall of \$200 million, she proposed to cut education spending by \$100 million.

South Carolina News:

Post and Courier: Charleston's job prospects among the nation's best as employers plan to hire  
<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160913/160919831/charlestons-job-prospects-among-the-nations-best-as-employers-plan-to-hire>

Thad Moore

Charleston's job prospects are among the best in the nation heading into the final stretch of 2016, as the region's businesses say they plan to hire more staff, a new survey has found. Nearly a third of the Lowcountry's employers — 31 percent — say they plan to add to their payrolls before the end of the year, according to figures released by the human-resources consulting firm ManpowerGroup. Meanwhile, just 4 percent say they expect to let people go. That combination is among the best in the U.S., Manpower says. The Charleston area's outlook is the sixth-best among the nation's 100 largest metro areas, according to the quarterly figures. The high marks suggest Lowcountry employers are still confident about the region's economic outlook after the area notched a No. 3 spot over the summer. And the rosy expectations include nearly every sector, the survey shows. Unemployment in the Charleston area fell to 4.6 percent in July, the lowest of any region in the state and below the national jobless rate.

Independent Mail: Georgia, SC rank 1, 2 in best places for business

<http://www.independentmail.com/story/news/2016/09/13/georgia-sc-rank-1-2-best-places-business/90301128/>

Abe Hardesty

Georgia and South Carolina are the nation's two best states to operate a business, according to a survey released Tuesday by Area Development magazine. In its 30th annual survey, the national publication asked executives to rate each state in 10 categories. South Carolina ranked first in business incentives programs and speed of permitting, helping the state rank second overall. Georgia's No. 1 ranking was built in part on the highest rating in the areas of workforce development programs (South Carolina was third) and cooperative and responsive state government (South Carolina was second in that category). South Carolina ranked among the top four states in all but two categories: It was 10th in corporate tax environment and was not among the top 10 in access to capital. The rankings came as no surprise to Anderson County administrator Rusty Burns, who said the competition for business is intense among the two neighboring states. "Georgia has come on very, very strong ... we are going head to head with them on a regular basis," Burns said.

Post and Courier: The Citadel named No. 1 public regional college by U.S. News

<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160913/160919764/the-citadel-named-no-1-public-regional-college-by-us-news>

Deanna Pan

For the sixth year in a row, The Citadel has clinched the No. 1 educational offering spot among regional public colleges and universities in the South in U.S. News & World Report's annual college

rankings, released Tuesday. The Citadel also earned the publisher's top spot in "value schools" in the South, a measure which considers a school's academic quality and cost. Overall, the military college was named the 3rd best regional university in the South, behind No. 1 Elon University in North Carolina and No. 2 Rollins College in Florida. "This recognition affirms the commitment made by our dedicated faculty, staff, alumni, and donors who believe in our mission to educate and develop principled leaders for all walks of life," Ret. Lt. Gen. John W. Rosa, president of The Citadel, said in a statement. "I am pleased that our values-based education is resonating with so many families across the nation."

Greenville News : Clemson ranks No. 23 on U.S. News best college list

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/education/2016/09/13/clemson-ranks-23rd-us-news-best-college-list/90295720/>

Nathaniel Cary

Clemson University ranked as the 23rd best national public university in the latest U.S. News and World Report annual ranking of "America's Best Colleges" released Tuesday, the ninth consecutive year that Clemson has placed in the top 25. The university dropped two spots from last year's No. 21 ranking and three spots from its highest-ever ranking when it placed in a three-way tie for No. 20 in 2015, but its total score tied its highest mark ever. "The latest U.S. News rankings confirm what so many of us associated with this great university have known for years: Clemson offers one of the very finest educational experiences in the country," Clemson President Jim Clements said. "Our outstanding faculty and staff continue to provide life-changing educational opportunities for our students, and it is extremely gratifying to see their effort, along with the support of our incredible alumni base, continue to be recognized in this way."

The Herald: 'Exactly what I needed': Winthrop among best choices for student veterans

<http://www.heraldonline.com/news/local/article101643447.html>

David Thackham

Homework can be stressful enough for the typical college student. Tackling a 10-page paper during the heart of midterms is a lot trickier when you're also planning to serve your country overseas. "It's been a unique ride," said Berlin 'D.J.' Gipson. Gipson is an active member of the U.S. Navy Reserve who's looking to graduate in May with a degree in sociology. He's also one of 114 self-identified student veterans, active duty or reserve personnel at Winthrop University who have benefited from several school initiatives to help student veterans study while adapting back to civilian life. And now, the Rock Hill school is receiving national recognition for its efforts. Winthrop was ranked the 19th best university in the South for veterans, according to the 2017 edition of U.S. News & World Report's "America's Best Colleges."

Aiken Standard: Report: USC Aiken ranked fifth in best regional colleges in South

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/20160913/160919846/report-usc-aiken-ranked-fifth-in-best-regional-colleges-in-south->

USC Aiken once again has been ranked the No. 1 Regional Comprehensive Public College in the South by "U.S. News & World Report's" "America's Best Colleges" guide. The 2017 distinction marks USCA's 19th consecutive ranking among the top three in this category and its 12th time in first place, according to a news release from USCA. This year, USCA, founded in 1961, rose significantly in the overall rankings among public and private institutions in the South. Overall, among all public and private institutions throughout the South, USCA ranked No. 5, receiving an overall score of 63 out of 100.

Post and Courier : Slower cargo growth means stingier bonuses for Charleston port executives  
<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160913/160919712/slower-cargo-growth-means-stingier-bonuses-for-charleston-port-executives>

David Wren

The global slowdown in containerized cargo shipments this past year is showing up in paychecks for top executives at the State Ports Authority. Annual financial bonuses for Jim Newsome, the SPA's president and CEO, and other top leaders were blunted because the maritime agency did not meet its goal for growth in the number of cargo containers moving through the Port of Charleston during fiscal 2016, which ended June 30. There was a 1.4 percent increase in containers during fiscal 2016 compared with the previous year, a big drop from the 14 percent year-over-year growth the SPA saw in the previous 12 months. Newsome will receive a \$34,095 bonus for the SPA's performance over the past year. That is in addition to his base salary of \$455,000 for the coming year — a \$20,000 increase, or 4.6 percent, over his base pay in 2016. All told, the SPA will pay Newsome and eight other executives \$122,987 in bonuses. While the SPA missed its goal for cargo shipments by about 53,000 containers, it exceeded projections in the two other bonus benchmarks: cash flow and the volume of noncontainerized breakbulk cargo.

Post and Courier : Expanded Panama Canal's biggest impact, delayed by El Nino, headed toward Port of Charleston

<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160913/160919716/expanded-panama-canals-biggest-impact-delayed-by-el-nino-headed-toward-port-of-charleston>

David Wren

Nearly 180 ships have sailed through the expanded Panama Canal since it opened June 26, but the heaviest vessels won't be making the journey until later this year. The dry weather pattern known as El Nino corresponded with the canal's expansion preparations earlier this year, evaporating some of the water in Gatun Lake — which feeds the canal — and leading officials to restrict the draft of ships making the trip between the Pacific and Atlantic oceans, according to Oscar Bazan, executive vice president of the Panama Canal Authority. Bazan, who spoke Tuesday during the S.C. International Trade Conference on the Isle of Palms, said the post-expansion draft restrictions started at 39 feet and currently stand at 44 feet. They are expected to increase to 46 feet within a week or two. The canal is dredged to handle 50-foot drafts, but there won't be enough water in the passageway to do that until December. Draft is the distance between the waterline and the bottom of a ship's hull.

Independent Mail: Palmetto Trail extension a boon to Oconee parks, Walhalla

<http://www.independentmail.com/story/news/local/2016/09/13/palmetto-trail-extension-boon-oconee-parks-walhalla/90298970/>

Ray Chandler

The extension of the statewide Palmetto Trail to a Walhalla terminus might boost other area state parks as well as the city. "No doubt it will attract more stewardship-minded folks to the area to enjoy what we have to offer," Rob Achenberg, regional chief for the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, said on Monday to civic group Walhalla Partners for Progress. The Foothills Trail provided a boon to Oconee State Park, where the trail terminates and "the Palmetto Trail will just add to that," he said. Along with discussion of the Palmetto Trail's potential impact, Achenberg gave an overview highlighting both the recreational and economic role of Oconee County's four state parks — Oconee State Park, the Oconee Station Historic Site, Devil's Fork State Park and Lake Hartwell State Park — the most of any other county in South Carolina.

Associated Press : Tropical Storm Julia bringing heavy rain to Florida, Georgia

[http://m.apnews.com/ap/db\\_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=cwOzOb3W](http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=cwOzOb3W)

SC State Wire

Tropical Storm Julia was bringing heavy rain Wednesday morning to the northeast coast of Florida and southeast Georgia. The slow-moving storm could cause flash flooding and was expected to produce 3 to 6 inches of rain in some areas through Friday, according to the U.S. The National Hurricane Center. The Hurricane Center also said an isolated tornado was possible across coastal Georgia and southern South Carolina on Wednesday. A tropical storm warning had been in effect Wednesday morning from Fernandina Beach to the Altamaha Sound in Georgia but was later canceled.

Post and Courier: Flash flood watch issued for Lowcountry as Tropical Storm Julia moves inland  
<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160914/160919704/flash-flood-watch-issued-for-lowcountry-as-tropical-storm-julia-moves-inland>

Angie Jackson

A flash flood watch is in effect for the Lowcountry as Tropical Storm Julia moves inland over southeast Georgia. The watch issued by the National Weather Service extends through 8 p.m. Wednesday and includes parts of Charleston, Berkeley and Dorchester counties. Rip current and small craft cautions were in place for South Carolina waters. Forecasters expect the storm to drop between 3 and 5 inches of rain across the region, with higher amounts possible near the coast. The Weather Service said the risk of flash flooding will be high Wednesday evening, with high tide above 6 feet about 7 p.m. Motorists traveling in low-lying and poor drainage areas such as downtown Charleston are advised that driving could become hazardous and roads could become impassable. Heavy rain is expected to continue through the night and into Thursday.

Island Packet: USMC: Days before death, recruit told Parris Island officials of suicide plans  
<http://www.islandpacket.com/news/local/community/beaufort-news/bg-military/article101621322.html>

Wade Livingston

Five days before his fatal three-story plunge, Raheel Siddiqui told personnel at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island he planned to jump to his death. On the morning of March 13, Siddiqui, a Marine recruit, told someone in his platoon he wanted to kill himself, according to a Marine Corps official close to the death investigation who spoke on background Tuesday afternoon. When asked how he would kill himself, Siddiqui said he would "jump out of the squad bay window" and, if necessary, "cut the screen window" before doing so, the official said. Siddiqui, a 20-year-old Taylor, Mich., native, died March 18 from injuries sustained in a nearly 40-foot fall at his barracks. A recent Marine Corps command investigation — one of three linked to his death — determined he killed himself. The Naval Criminal Investigative Service continues to investigate the matter. Siddiqui's family disputes the Corps' claim of suicide and feels their son was "targeted and intentionally abused," according to a statement provided Tuesday by the family's attorney, Shiraz Khan.

Local News:

Associated Press : Children's Trust training aims to help prevent child abuse  
[http://m.apnews.com/ap/db\\_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=g6oP1eWs](http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=g6oP1eWs)

SC State Wire

The top group that works to prevent child abuse in South Carolina is doing some important training this week to help keep kids safe. Starting Wednesday, Children's Trust of South Carolina is putting on a Home Visiting Summit. The two-day gathering at the Columbia Marriott is for home-visiting professionals including childcare workers and program managers. Organizers say home visiting pairs

volunteer families with specialists who provide services throughout a child's first five years to improve health, development and early learning. Children's Trust of South Carolina focuses on the prevention of child abuse, neglect and injury and advocates for the overall well-being of children. Its programs include educating first-time mothers on child safety, professional development for childcare workers and advocacy for policies that positively impact the state's children.

Associated Press: Man gets 10 years for prostituting minor girl

[http://m.apnews.com/ap/db\\_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=lcwAu0Mf](http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=lcwAu0Mf)

SC State Wire

A federal judge has sentenced a man to 10 years in prison for prostituting a girl in Virginia. The Justice Department said Tuesday that Travis C. Brown also got 10 years of supervised release and must register as a sex offender. The 25-year-old had pleaded guilty to sex trafficking crimes in June. According to court documents, Brown met the under-age girl through friends at a hotel room party where she plied with drugs and alcohol. Brown and another man then bought her lingerie and posted photos of her on the internet that advertised sex acts for sale. He then oversaw her acts of prostitution in Virginia Beach hotels, setting appointments and collecting the money she earned. Virginia Beach police eventually rescued her. Brown is from Columbia, South Carolina.

Associated Press: Off-duty trooper bitten in attack by 13-year-old student

[http://m.apnews.com/ap/db\\_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=4AMrXJJO](http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=4AMrXJJO)

SC State Wire

Richland County sheriff's deputies say an off-duty South Carolina Highway Patrol trooper was bitten by a 13-year-old boy when the officer responded to a school bus fight. Richland Lt. Curtis Wilson told local media the teen got into a fight with another student on the bus Tuesday afternoon. Wilson says when the bus driver tried to break up the fight, the driver was attacked, as well. Wilson says an off-duty trooper who saw the incident tried to intervene and was bitten on the chest and arm. It was unclear if the teen will face charges. He was released to his parents. The condition of the driver and the student who were not available. Richland District Two spokeswoman Libby Roof said the bus was carrying students in grades six to eight.

The State: Teen attacks student, driver, trooper during bus fight, Richland County Sheriff's spokesman says

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/crime/article101611892.html>

Cynthia Roldan

An off-duty S.C. Highway Patrol officer was treated for bite wounds Tuesday, after being attacked by a 13-year-old boy on the school bus near the Sandhill area. Lt. Curtis Wilson, spokesman for the Richland County Sheriff's Department, said a 13-year-old boy first got into a fight with another student. When the bus driver attempted to break up the fight, the student attacked the driver as well. An off-duty S.C. Highway Patrol trooper who spotted the incident also attempted to interfere, after identifying himself as a trooper, Wilson said. But the teen also attacked the trooper, biting him in the chest and arm. Richland County Sheriff's investigators are still working the case. It remains unclear if the teen will face any charges. The condition of the driver and the student who was attacked remains unknown.

Post and Courier: Second suspect arrested in alleged sexual assault of C of C student

<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160913/160919754/second-suspect-arrested-in-alleged-sexual-assault-of-c-of-c-student>

Deanna Pan

Police have arrested a second suspect in connection with the alleged sexual assault of a 17-year-old College of Charleston student. James F. West III, 22, of Bennett Street, has been charged with engaging a child for sexual performance. He is scheduled to have a bond hearing this afternoon, according to Charleston Police Spokesman Charles Francis. A College of Charleston fraternity brother, Timothy Eli Seppi, was arrested earlier this month. Seppi was charged with 1st and 3rd degree sexual exploitation of a minor.

The State: Why Lexington 1 elementary school kids are waiting for the bus at 6 a.m.

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/article101580627.html#storylink=cpy>

Glen Luke Flanagan

Despite the glow of streetlights in the neighborhood, it's pitch black around the Saluda River Club neighborhood as 7-year-old Hayden Hindman waits for the school bus each morning. The girl's mom, Vanessa Hindman, drives her to the bus stop in a golf cart. They get there at 6 a.m. When the bus arrives at about 6:05, the second-grader gets on, carrying her pink backpack, and heads to Meadow Glen Elementary School. To make this schedule work, the Hindmans have to get up at 5:25 each weekday morning. "It's a lot of coaxing to get (her) up in the morning," Hindman said. Last year, when the bus arrived at their stop later, they were able to get up at about 5:50 a.m. But after the first week of school this year, officials at Lexington 1 school district announced an earlier route for elementary school students.

Sun News: Horry County Schools on track for 13.5 percent growth in enrollment since 2010

<http://www.myrtlebeachonline.com/news/local/article101626507.html>

Christian Boschult

The preliminary 15-day enrollment numbers released by Horry County Schools on Monday shows a 13.5 percent increase in enrollment since 2010. Data presented by Superintendent Rick Maxey shows an enrollment of 43,376 students on the 15th day of this school year. Last year's 45-day official enrollment number was 42,465. The district has been experiencing constant growth over several years, with an 13.5 percent increase since 2010 when the district had 38,200 students. "What we're seeing is steady and continued growth," said Horry County Schools Spokeswoman Teal Britton. "You're not going to see dramatic changes between day 15 and day 45. And the numbers do fluctuate every day."

Post and Courier : Folly gives preliminary approval to beach plastic ban

<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160913/160919705/folly-gives-preliminary-approval-to-beach-plastic-ban->

Prentiss Findlay

The city is one step closer to becoming the state's first seaside community to ban from the beach polystyrene coolers and food and beverage containers, as well as balloons and single-use plastic bags. Council on Tuesday night gave unanimous first-reading approval to an ordinance that would establish the beach ban. Violators could face up to a \$500 fine or 30 days in jail. A second vote of approval next month is required before the new beach law goes into effect. "I think you are going to be a strong local leader on this issue," said Andrew Wunderley of Charleston Waterkeeper. Resident Keith Bolus said Folly would pay a price for the new law because of increased enforcement costs.

Associated Press: Another South Carolina beach community moves to ban plastic

[http://m.apnews.com/ap/db\\_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=dhf9prEU](http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=dhf9prEU)

SC State Wire

Another South Carolina beach community is banning plastic bags in a move that advocates say will

help protect marine life. News outlets report that Folly Beach gave preliminary approval Tuesday to banning single-use plastic bags as well as polystyrene coolers and food and beverage containers on the beach. Council gave final approval to a ban on retailers and restaurants providing such items. The Isle of Palms last year banned single-use plastic bags at retailers. The Post and Courier of Charleston reports (<http://bit.ly/2cHeww4>) that Councilman Pennell Clamp warned that plastic is eaten by turtles and other creatures. But Mike Martinez of the Dart Corp. which makes beverage containers said there's no credible evidence plastics harm marine life. Martinez said it would be better to educate people about cleaning up beach visits.

Associated Press : Crews spray for Zika virus in York County

[http://m.apnews.com/ap/db\\_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=0AIFkuHa](http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=0AIFkuHa)

SC State Wire

Crews have begun spraying for mosquitoes in Hickory Grove - one day after York County officials confirmed the area's second travel-related case of the Zika virus. The Herald of Rock Hill reports (<http://bit.ly/2cWGoZU>) that the person who tested positive for the virus lives in Hickory Grove and tested positive a week ago after traveling outside the country. York County Manager Bill Shanahan said Tuesday that it's unclear where the person contracted the virus. He added that the person is no longer contagious and that no mosquitoes in York County have tested positive for the virus. The spraying began Tuesday evening. Some sprays intended to kill mosquitoes have also caused harm to honeybee populations. However, York County Emergency Management spokesman Mike Channell says the spray being used is the "most honeybee-friendly product out there."

Independent Mail: Anderson animal shelter still being monitored for virus

<http://www.independentmail.com/story/news/local/2016/09/12/anderson-animal-shelter-still-being-monitored-virus/90275012/>

Nikie Mayo

More than 50 animals, most of them kittens, have been euthanized because of an outbreak of parvovirus that was discovered at Anderson County's animal shelter earlier this month. The shelter, Pets Are Worth Saving, is now open to the public and at least 96 healthy animals are up for adoption. Shelter director Jessica Cwynar said Monday that about a dozen animals will remain under quarantine until Saturday so her staff can watch them for signs of the virus. Parvo is a highly contagious intestinal virus that can be deadly to animals, especially to young ones.

The Herald: Rock Hill revives proposed park smoking ban; where are smokers?

<http://www.heraldonline.com/news/local/news-columns-blogs/andrew-dys/article101642432.html>

Andrew Dys

In search of the apparent rampage of park cigarette smokers the city of Rock Hill wants to ban (after a first try in May failed), the first stop has to be Fountain Park downtown. There was nobody there because although the fountain is only a year old and cost a million dollars, it broke. It remains broken – so almost nobody and certainly no smokers go to the park with the million-dollar fountain in it that does not fount. What apparently started with a complaint or two by people at ball games to the city and its recreation commission over a grizzled old grandpa smoking behind a softball field outfield fence will bring soon, if the votes hold, an outright ban on smoking everywhere in parks. No smoking areas, either.

Presidential Election 2016:

Associated Press: Democrats fear their Senate takeover chances dimming

<http://bigstory.ap.org/5dce5719c7cf427ea7d56bae389ca155>

Erica Werner

Democrats are sounding increasingly concerned about their chances of retaking control of the Senate, as Republicans demonstrate a commanding fundraising advantage and Hillary Clinton's lead narrows in key battleground races. Although most Democrats still express confidence that they will win back the Senate majority in November, they now appear to have fewer paths to victory as wins in Ohio and even Florida look increasingly remote. And if they do win back control, it could end up being with the narrowest of margins, even a 50-50 Senate with a Vice President Tim Kaine casting tie-breaking votes for the Democrats, if Hillary Clinton becomes president. A key factor is the Republican money edge, which is particularly pronounced this year because some major donors, most notably the billionaire Koch Brothers, have decided to stay out of the presidential race out of distaste for Donald Trump and are pouring money into Senate races instead. Ohio, Florida, Nevada and other races are awash with cash.

Associated Press: GOP gains ground on Dems in voter registration in key states

<http://bigstory.ap.org/d1c611a35aa5488789e0ad0cf4f2e818>

Hope Yen

Republicans have gained ground on Democrats in registering voters in three battleground states and kept their razor-thin advantage in Iowa — encouraging news for Donald Trump eight weeks before Election Day. Republicans added hundreds of thousands of voters to the rolls since 2012 in states including Florida and Arizona, and narrowed the gap in North Carolina, according to data compiled by The Associated Press. In Iowa, Republicans prevented Democrats from surpassing them, aided by a court ruling upholding a ban on voting by ex-felons, who often register as Democrats. As Election Day approaches, voter registration drives are in full swing. Hillary Clinton's campaign is staging registration rallies and appealing in particular to non-whites and young people, who are more likely to vote early — if they vote at all. Trump is relying mostly on a base of white voters, urging supporters to be vigilant for voter fraud and "rigging."

Associated Press : DIVIDED AMERICA: How China fueled pain and Trump support

<http://bigstory.ap.org/addb96b2ab524518917c57b87577a983>

Paul Wiseman

Crushed by Chinese competition and feeling betrayed by mainstream politicians, workers in the hills of eastern Ohio are embracing Donald Trump and his tough talk on trade. For decades, they and others living across the Ohio River in West Virginia found work in coal mines and at a local aluminum plant — union jobs, with good pay and generous benefits. But those jobs are going, if not gone...

National News:

Associated Press : Police: Clowns trying to talk to kids reported in Georgia

<http://bigstory.ap.org/bb36198888d444798b7f31281bcf6eed>

Police in west Georgia say they've received several calls about clowns trying to talk to children and are investigating an online threat to abduct children from local schools. LaGrange police said in a statement that officers will file charges if appropriate. LaGrange police Lt. Dale Strickland tells WXIA-TV (<http://on.11alive.com/2cGR3LB>) someone started a Facebook page threatening to dress like a clown and drive a white van to five local schools and abduct children. He said police are working to track down the person who posted those threats. It all comes after a series of reports of clowns lurking around children in other states. Authorities have determined some of those cases are unfounded. This month, police in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, arrested a man they say filed a false report of a

clown sighting.

Associated Press: Openings set in major Chicago gang trial focused on killings

<http://bigstory.ap.org/bbede549807541cf8906b3902afb3bdd>

Michael Tarm

The biggest street-gang trial in recent Chicago history starts in earnest Wednesday, with months of testimony expected to provide a rare look inside the gangland activity fueling deadly gun violence in the nation's third-largest city. On trial for federal racketeering charges are six purported leaders of the Hobos gang who prosecutors say murdered, maimed and tortured their way into controlling the most lucrative drug markets on the city's South Side. Among the defendants is alleged Hobos hit man Paris Poe, who prosecutors say killed a government witness in 2013, shooting the man 25 times at close range while his horrified step-kids, aged 4 and 6 at the time, screamed in the back seat of a car. The 4-year-old later told investigators the "Boogie Man" had attacked them, according to court filings. Prosecutors will seek to prove that the defendants' criminal conspiracy involved at least nine murders, including the killing of semi-pro basketball player, Eddie Moss Jr., in a case of mistaken identity and the fatal drive-by shooting of two rival gang members outside a funeral home.

World News:

Associated Press: Israel's Peres in serious but stable condition after stroke

<http://bigstory.ap.org/ab976e097db8441a9b8d58e94c70e0ee>

Aron Heller

Former Israeli President Shimon Peres was in "serious but stable" condition after suffering a major stroke, doctors treating him said Wednesday, as the nation rallied in prayer and support for the 93-year-old elder statesman and Nobel Peace Prize laureate. Dr. Yitzhak Kreiss, director of the Sheba Medical Center near Tel Aviv, said Peres was in a medically induced coma to allow him to rest after experiencing significant bleeding in the brain. Peres was rushed to hospital Tuesday after feeling ill and following a battery of tests was diagnosed to have suffered a stroke. Kreiss said Peres was being transferred to the neurosurgical intensive care unit where he would continue to be evaluated. Israeli media reported that Peres was "fighting for his life," but Rafi Walden, Peres' son-in-law and personal physician, said there appeared to be no imminent threat to his life anymore. The question was what kind of damage was sustained and what kind of recovery he could make, Walden said.

Associated Press: Russia urges Syrian rebels to separate from 'terrorists'

<http://bigstory.ap.org/a63fb6f630ae4eb88ee0f1b93fb77843>

Russia is urging Syrian rebels to separate themselves from 'terrorists' to ensure that the Russia-U.S.-brokered cease-fire continues to hold in Syria, where a relative calm has prevailed since the truce went into effect two days ago. A spokesman for Russian President Vladimir Putin says the Kremlin is hopeful that the truce deal "will create the necessary environment for political settlement." Dmitry Peskov told reporters on Wednesday that the Kremlin welcomes the cease-fire but that the key thing now is to make sure moderate opposition groups are separated from the "terrorists" — a reference to militant groups such as Syria's al-Qaida affiliate. Peskov said that's the "key task, without which further progress can hardly be possible."

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