

Title: **SCGOP is changing, says state's first openly gay legislator**
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SC GOP is changing, says state's first openly gay legislator

BY CASSIE COPE
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The S.C. Republican Party is changing, growing more inclusive, says Greenville attorney Jason Elliott.

Elliott says he knows firsthand.

Next January, Elliott will

become South Carolina's first openly gay lawmaker, representing a portion of Greenville in the S.C. House that includes conservative Bob Jones University.

"You hear that we're a big

tent," Elliott, a former aide to then-U.S. Sen. Jim DeMint, said of the GOP. "Well, we demonstrated that."

In the June 14 GOP primary, Elliott unseated sitting state Rep. Wendy Nanney,

SEE ELLIOTT, 6A



ONLINE

THESTATE.COM: Video of State Rep.-elect Jason Elliott discussing his legislative priorities

FROM PAGE 1A

ELLIOTT

best known as the author of the state's new law restricting abortions at 20 weeks of pregnancy. Elliott beat the Bob Jones graduate in a 16-percentage-point landslide.

Elliott says voters in Greenville's House District 22 know he is gay, but his sexual orientation did not play a role in the race.

Other S.C. GOP leaders say Elliott's election demonstrates the party is growing more inclusive and Republicans voters care more about other issues, including the economy.

"Unquestionably and undeniably, I am a Republican and proud to be one," Elliott said. "I'm also proud of the fact that I'm a white male, 6 foot, 2 inches with too much gray hair for 45 — and also happen to be gay."

'THE STATE IS CHANGING'

Elliott does not have an opponent in the November general election.

He defeated Nanney, a four-term state representative, by criticizing the incumbent's attendance record at the State House, saying she had missed 30 percent of House votes. (Nanney did not return phone calls from The State.)

"With my knowledge and understanding that people knew of my orientation, the election results tell me that — rightfully — we focused on issues that are relevant to the position for which I was running," Elliott said.

Elliott's political beliefs are conservative.

He is pro-life, and supports the 2nd Amendment, restructuring state government and school choice.

During his campaign, Elliott also pushed his message that S.C. residents deserve better from state government.

To unseat an incumbent, a challenger has to make the incumbent unacceptable in some form, said Greenville Republican political consultant Chip Felkel, a friend of Elliott's.

Voters in District 22 saw Elliott as an acceptable alternative, Felkel said, adding, "This was about leadership, experience (and) potential ability to serve."

The majority of District 22 voters "are focused on getting good representation in Columbia," Felkel said. "Some of the other stuff, they're less concerned about."

Republican voters over-

whelmingly chose Elliott based on his ideas and vision for serving in office — nothing else, said S.C. Republican

Party chairman Matt Moore. "The Republican Party is a big-tent party with a diverse coalition of supporters and elected officials."

S.C. House Majority Leader Bruce Bannister agrees.

"The more perspectives we have on different issues, the better and more creative solutions we can find," the Greenville Republican said.

"The state is changing," Bannister said, adding voters want elected officials who are going to work hard. "I don't think they're willing to limit the candidates to one particular look."

ELLIOTT'S GOP ROOTS

A self-described "big geek," Elliott has been interested in government and politics since middle school. He was student body president at both Wren High School and Clemson University.

After law school, Elliott worked as a prosecutor and, then, as district director for DeMint, R-Greenville, before starting his own law practice.

This year, Elliott initially supported former Florida

Gov. Jeb Bush in the Republican presidential race. Now, he said he plans to support the GOP nominee, Donald Trump.

Trump speaks to the frustration of the American people, Elliott said. "I understand that frustration."

Americans feel like the government has not kept its promises, he said, citing the economy's slow recovery from the Great Recession.

"For the middle class — the people that work paycheck to paycheck — they haven't seen a recovery."

GOP VOTERS MORE FOCUSED ON ECONOMIC ISSUES

State Rep. Phyllis Henderson, R-Greenville, attributes Elliott's landslide primary win, in part, to younger voters.

Voters under 40 have had their lives framed by the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and the 2008 economic crisis, said Henderson.

Those voters are most interested in where candidates stand on key issues — jobs, business and lowering taxes, she said. "What a person does when they leave the State House is not necessarily important to people."

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Winthrop University political scientist Scott Huffman notes the GOP long has had gay members, citing the Log Cabin Republicans as an example.

"The mainstream Republican Party and the libertarian wing of the Republican Party are going to have a lot less of an issue with this than the evangelical wing," Huffman said.

Many S.C. Republicans remain uneasy about LGBT issues. Two-thirds oppose gay-marriage, according to a 2015 Winthrop Poll, and the state's Republican leaders regularly make headlines for taking anti-gay positions.

For instance, Gov. Nikki Haley and Attorney General Alan Wilson, both Lexington Republicans, filed suit to

block gay marriages in South Carolina.

Elliott does not see that stance as being discriminatory. Instead, he says Haley and Wilson were arguing the gay-marriage issue should be left to states to decide.

The Supreme Court resolved the issue in 2015, declaring gay marriage legal.

"I commend our state for our reaction to the decision," Elliott said of South Carolina's acceptance of the court ruling.

'SOMEONE THAT THEY CAN WORK WITH'

Among Elliott's supporters was Greenville City Councilwoman Amy Ryberg Doyle, a longtime Republican who represents the district where Elliott lives.

Elliott is a hard worker,

good neighbor and good friend, she said.

His sexual orientation was "a non-issue" during the campaign, she said.

"The Republican Party should stay out of bedrooms and, frankly, now bathrooms," Doyle said, referring to proposals that Republican legislators introduced this year to ban transgender people from using the bathroom of their choice.

Doyle said millennials are more moderate on social issues. If the GOP is going to win more support from those younger voters and women, it has to be more inclusive, she added.

Elliott sees his sexual orientation as a political non-event.

"If someone is not going to not vote for me or support me

because of my orientation, there's nothing I can do about that," he said, adding he plans to represent both those who supported him and those who did not. "I believe that the folks who did not support me will find that they have someone that they can work with."

Elliott added he does not think his election signals that all Republicans are in the same place on any issue, including gay rights.

"What I do have hope for is that this signals that the people of this particular district are ... gauging individuals based upon their ability to do the job, their commitment to the job and their ideas."

Cassie Cope: 803-771-8657, [@cassielcope](https://twitter.com/cassielcope)

“

WHAT I DO HAVE HOPE FOR IS THAT THIS SIGNALS THAT THE PEOPLE OF THIS PARTICULAR DISTRICT ARE ... GAUGING INDIVIDUALS BASED UPON THEIR ABILITY TO DO THE JOB, THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE JOB AND THEIR IDEAS.

— Jason Elliott



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ELECTION 2016 | The GOP primary

Senate race heads to runoff

Finishing third, Ford backs Boyd over Goldfinch

BY JASON LESLEY
COASTAL OBSERVER

Stephen Goldfinch says the Waccamaw Neck will be the battleground where his runoff with Reese Boyd for the S.C. Senate District 34 Republican primary will be decided on June 28.

The two were separated by just 2 percentage points and 138 votes in Tuesday's primary — 3,232 for Goldfinch and 3,094 for Boyd. Joe Ford of Hagley finished third in the race with 852 votes, and Dick Withington of Myrtle Beach trailed with 399.

Goldfinch said he will alter

his tactics for the runoff. "Our message is going to change," he said. "We have been attacked with fraudulent misrepresentation for the last month. We thought the over-exaggerations that were in these ads would eventually turn people off, but we were wrong about that. I acknowledge the negative ads worked against me, especially TV ads. We will respond in kind."

Goldfinch said he has hired an additional staffer from the Upstate and plans to personally touch 3,000 people by June 28. "I think we can do that," he said. "We will be knocking on doors, running phone banks every single day."

Boyd says he is more
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Photos by Tanya Ackerman/Coastal Observer

43%
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Senate | County pivotal in runoff

FROM FRONT PAGE

conservative than his former law partner Goldfinch and won the endorsement of Gov. Nikki Haley because of it. The state voter turnout of 13.8 percent, Boyd said, reflects the public's dissatisfaction with the political process. "There are a lot of problems we need to fix," he said, "and it's another indication of just how badly some of these incumbents need to be replaced."

Goldfinch said he will push the message to Georgetown County voters that they deserve a resident senator. Boyd lives in Horry County. Goldfinch said history shows that counties without a resident senator get left behind in funding for roads, schools and local government. He said retiring Sen. Ray Cleary of Murrells Inlet has endorsed him and he has represented Georgetown County in the state House. "There is no doubt, and history shows us that Georgetown County will be ignored if we get a senator from Horry County," he said.

Boyd said he was pleased with his showing across the board. "Obviously, we did a little better in Horry than Georgetown, but we'll fight for every vote no matter what precinct."

He lives in Mount Gil-ead and said he spends a lot of time in Georgetown County so people shouldn't worry about being short-

changed because of his address. "With a good swing of the bat," he said, "I can hit a baseball over to Sen. Cleary's house. Drawing much of a distinction of where a senator lives is kind of silly."

Goldfinch won in the 10 Charleston County precincts that are part of the district by 112 votes out of 621 cast. Boyd won the 22 Horry County precincts by 85 out of 4,209 votes

In Georgetown County, only one District 34 precinct is outside the Waccamaw Neck. Goldfinch won the county by 120 out of 2,747 votes.

Goldfinch won the four Murrells Inlet precincts and Pawleys 1, 2 and 5.

Ford took 513 votes on the Waccamaw Neck. Goldfinch said he would appeal to voters who chose Ford and Withington. "These are people who voted for me before," he said. "I want them to know that I understand. I get it. I know what they were looking for in other people. I appreciate what those other two brought to the race and I will embrace some of their stuff."

Ford said he would direct the 852 people who voted for him to vote for Boyd. "Many of the issues we were looking at, Reese and I agreed on most of them," Ford said. "On terms of ethics - I'm going to put it out there - Mr. Goldfinch is not ethical."

Ford said he injected a point of view that the leg-

islature has failed to maintain the state's roads or address the issue of ethics in politics. "We still have the same players making the final decisions," Ford said. "Road maintenance is still politicized. The fact of the matter is that now that the primary is past and the session is closed, I doubt there will be any more road bills coming out in the very near future. You can mark my words, the legislature won't touch it."

Ford said he would consider another run for state Senate in four years de-

pending on the outcome of the runoff. "We ran a straightforward, ethical race," he said. "I didn't put signs in the public right-of-way. People stole my signs. It's interesting that I would get 11 percent of the vote but be enough of a threat that someone would take every sign with the exception of one or two in the days before the election."

Along with the Republican state Senate race, a Democratic primary for the District 3 seat on Georgetown County Council will also have a runoff. There is no Republican candidate for the seat in western part of the county.

Everett Carolina received the most votes with 331, while incumbent Leona "Tiger" Miller finished with 219 and Morris Johnson finished with 140.

Carolina and Miller will be on the ballot in the eight rural precincts on June 28.

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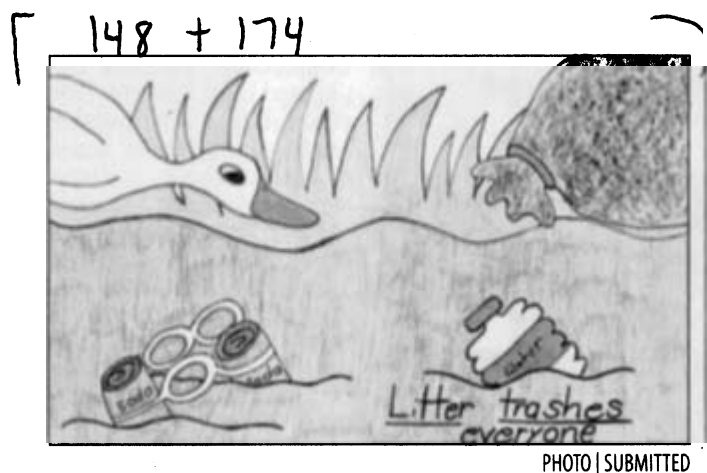


PHOTO | SUBMITTED

Emily Horton, of Mountain View Elementary, was named the Upstate Region Winner of the 2015-2016 Palmetto Pride Litter Trashes Everyone Art Contest for her depiction of the scene above.

Horton regional winner of litter art contest

Mountain View Elementary student Emily Horton is among the winners of the PalmettoPride 2015-2016 Litter Trashes Everyone Art Contest winners. Her depiction of a duck flying over a littered pond was selected as the Upstate Region winner.

All winners were recognized at a meet and greet with Governor Nikki R. Haley at the State House.

Governor Haley congratulated the students on their creativity and leadership in educating others about the effects of litter.

Anna Reedy, of Cedar Grove Elementary in Williamston, took top honors as state winner.

Her drawing will appear on the back of PalmettoPride's volunteer t-shirts for 2016-2017. Reedy also receives a monetary award as part of her prize. Cedar Grove Elementary and the Art Department will both receive monetary awards for supplies.

Four regional winners received a framed copy of their drawing and a monetary prize. Each school and art teacher also re-

ceive monetary awards for supplies. Other regional winners included Gracen Zeigler, Lowcountry Region, Richard Carroll Elementary, Bamberg; Ellie Protsyuk, Midlands Region, Springfield Elementary, Fort Mill; and Sydnee Atkinson, Pee Dee Region, Aynor Elementary, Aynor.

This year had the highest number of participating students. More than 13,000 students were registered to participate.

The Litter Trashes Everyone Art Contest is open to all elementary schools in South Carolina. Each school's winning student receives a framed copy of their artwork.

PalmettoPride is a 501C3 non-profit litter prevention and beautification organization in South Carolina. The agency engages citizens to take an active role in keeping their communities clean and beautiful. Programs have helped reduce litter by more than 60 percent.

For more information, visit www.palmettopride.org.

148 Haley: Road bill 'far less' than deserved

BY BILLY CANNADA
EDITOR

South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley signed a bill (S. 1258) into law last week, allowing for more than \$2 billion in borrowing over the next 10 years to fund infrastructure.

Haley signed the bill reluctantly, stating it is far from what South Carolinians deserve.

"Let us all be honest about what we accomplished in this bill: incremental and incomplete reform, or put a different way, far less than the people of South Carolina both expect and deserve from us," Haley said in a letter to legislators.

"It's a better option than what we will have without this bill: a full reversion to the even more unac-

countable and derective system that was replaced in 2007," she said.

The bill is funded by \$200 annually in existing

vehicle sales taxes and other fees.

The bill goes into effect at the beginning of July and allows Haley to have

input in selecting South Carolina Department of Transportation Commissioners.

"The bill does move

South Carolina marginally forward by replacing General Assembly selection of Transportation Commissioners with gubernato-

rial appointment, but let's be clear: that 'progress' is little more than window dressing," Haley said.

Haley also said the state

must find a "permanent fix" to funding for roads and bridges.

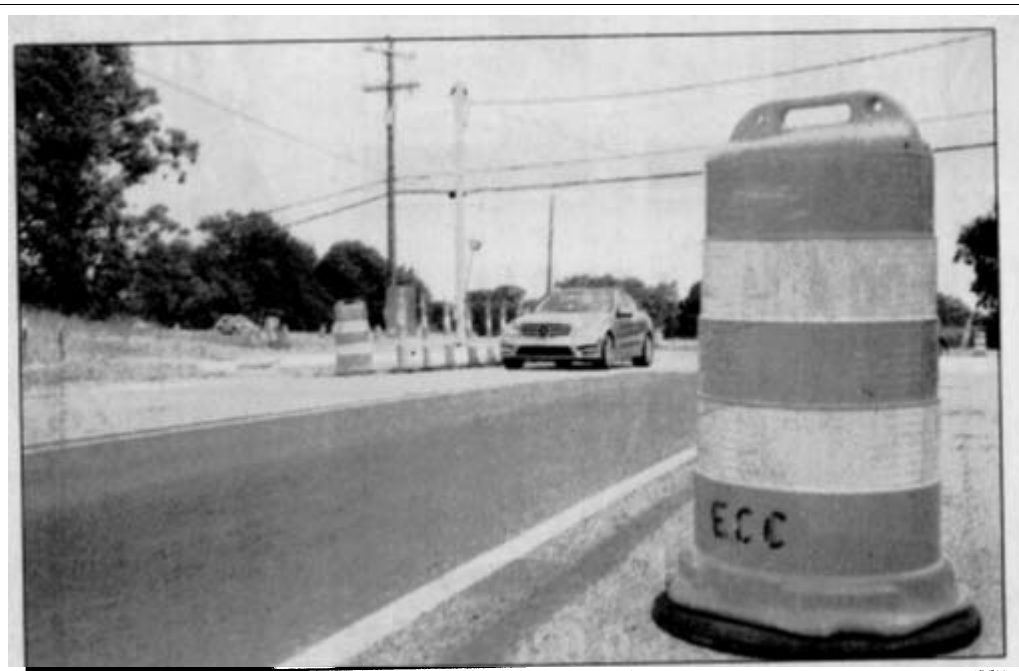
"The funding components in S. 1258 demonstrate that the consistent and prioritized use of taxpayer dollars lead to significant investments in transportation," she said. "While this funding stream is not of the magnitude or sustainability to address the long-term needs of our highway system, it is true we have taken a step forward."

The bill also takes steps to reform the Department of Transportation. Officials with the agency responded to the legislation with a statement of their own.

"While S. 1258 is a good first step on highway funding, it is not a long-term

SEE BILL | A6

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MANDY FERGUSON | THE GREER CITIZEN

South Carolina will soon be moving forward with a plan to fix infrastructure, as Gov. Nikki Haley signed legislation on the matter last week.

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148 LEDGER COLUMNIST

This one was a no-brainer

Sometimes a bill making its way through the state legislature seems like a no-brainer — that it makes so much sense to a common person of normal critical faculties that its passage should be uncontested.

Unfortunately, there are some folks in Columbia who do not appear to be common people of normal critical faculties.

According to a June 10 letter from Gov. Nikki Haley to members of the state House of Representatives, it is a matter of “government overreach” to make a moped rider wear a reflective safety vest at night and for a moped rider under 21 to be forced by government to protect his or her noggin by wearing a helmet.

Haley used those words — “government overreach” — in explaining why she vetoed a bill that would have set new rules for so-called liquorcycles (my word, not hers) across South Carolina. Among the changes, mopeds would have to be registered, mopeds would finally be classified as motor vehicles so you can’t drive them drunk, and it would have included the use of reflective safety vests at night and the aforementioned helmet requirement for those under the age of 21.

“I believe that adults over the age of 18 — who are allowed to vote and serve our military — should decide for themselves what they should wear for their personal safety,” Haley wrote.

That argument rings hollow to me on so many levels.

If you can vote and join the military at 18, I wonder, isn’t it government overreach to say an 18-year-old can’t legally enjoy a frosty cold beer?

Or isn’t it government overreach to demand that the driver of a car buckle up? While I think we can all agree that seat belts save lives, there are no doubt thousands upon thousands of South Carolinians who have had encounters with police agencies across the Palmetto State for failing to click-it. Shouldn’t they have had a choice if they were of consenting age?

Safety advocates argue that additional regulation was needed on mopeds in South Carolina as a means to save lives. I agree with them. I’ve seen the Regional One helicopter flown to Gaffney too many times over the past few years following wrecks of all sorts. If you have a head injury, it’s almost a given that you’re going to go for a \$17,000 (or more) ride in a helicopter.

As an aside, it’s rare indeed that a police report on a stolen moped doesn’t include a description such as “mirror broken off right side” or “mirror broken off left side” or “faring missing” or “faring cracked.” I’ll leave it to your imagination to think about how those mopeds got that way.

Mopeds are tough to see at night, safety advocates argue, hence the desire for the reflective safety vests.

I have to wear one of those reflective safety vests, which happens to say ‘PRESS’ in big bold letters across the back, whenever I’m at accident scenes on highways. I personally dislike the ‘PRESS’ lettering but understand the need to be seen. I did not



**Tim
GULLA**

STAFF WRITER



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Gaffney, SC
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consider that rule, which went into effect a couple of years ago, to be government overreach and the vest weighs practically nothing at all.

While there are some limited government fans who like to complain about government mandates, rules, regulations and red tape — whatever you want to call it — most safety-related regulations are proposed for a reason. Rules are put into place to make sure toys don't kill children, to make sure equipment at a manufacturing plant doesn't lop off fingers willy-nilly, to make sure the foods we or restaurants serve our families really are safe to eat, or to make sure that a new drug is thoroughly tested before it's prescribed to patients across this great land of ours.

Government even tells a zoo how high the fence should be at a gorilla exhibit. Recent events at the Cincinnati Zoo may make the government increase the height or design of those fences.

In pondering what should seem like a no-brainer decision on a moped safety bill, I started thinking about the facets of our lives that don't involve the government's reach in some way. I can name very few.

I like to think that the reason for most safety rules is that we, as a society, can't afford to let natural selection thin our herds.

The state House, following a second vote Wednesday, was able to come up with a 2/3rds majority to override Haley's veto of the moped safety bill (state Reps. Dennis Moss and Steve Moss were among the majority) but the state Senate was unable to vote on the matter before they adjourned for the year. One senator opposed to the bill stood in the way.

That means the proposed regulations will have to be reintroduced and the process will have to start all over again.

Maybe it will be a no-brainer next year.

148 Sen. Verdin glad he didn't have to vote on roads bill veto

By Vic MacDonald

Editor

The roads bill has passed. The governor has signed it. The controversy drives on.

South Carolina will have \$4 billion to spend on roads and bridges repairs over the next 10 years since Gov. Nikki Haley signed last Wednesday a compromise measure hammered out by the General Assembly.

She did so reluctantly. It was the best that lawmakers could do this year, she said.

"Infrastructure, roads and bridges, this has been four years of debate," Sen. Danny Verdin (R-Dist. 9) said. "It's been 30 years since the last gas tax increase. We have the lowest gas tax in the county. We do not have the worst roads in the country."

But, the roads and bridges are poor, he said, and getting worse. "My e-mail is loaded up with these complaints," Verdin told the Clinton Rotary Club last Tuesday.

Even so, Verdin said he would not support a 10-12 cents per gallon increase in the gas tax, unless real, meaningful reform was made in the South Carolina Department of Transportation.

State lawmakers remain much too involved, Verdin said, in the day-to-day decisions on which roads get repaired and paved - and which go wanting for another year. Verdin said there are some reforms in the bill Haley signed last week, just not enough.

The governor agreed. "I have done so for one reason and on reason only - it is a better option than what we will have without this bill: a full reversion to the even more unaccountable and defective system that was replaced in 2007. This bill does

move South Carolina marginally forward by replacing General Assembly selection of the Transportation Commissioners with gubernatorial appointment. But let's be clear that 'progress' is little more than window dressing. The process for confirmation and removal of commissioners is deeply flawed," she said in a signing statement last Wednesday.

Haley had until midnight last Wednesday to sign, veto or allow the bill to become law without her signature (pocket veto).

Verdin said if Haley had vetoed the bill, lawmakers would have had a difficult override decision to make. "If she signs it, I'm with her. If she vetoes it, on

an override, I'm torn," Verdin said.

Sustaining the veto would have meant nothing would be done on crumbling infrastructure

- and lawmakers would have to face voters having done nothing.

Overriding the veto, Verdin said, would have meant letting a flawed bill become law.

"You have to trust people, the professionally trained engineers, the planners for the long-term," said Verdin, adding that the \$4 billion is a long way from a long-term solution.

"We want to empower the SC DOT and decrease the influence of part-time legislators (in transportation decision-making). Legislators have had their arms all up into the chest cavity of the SC DOT for decades. This (infrastructure repair) should be an executive role of government.

"We should not procure the money and micro-manage how the money is spent."

Verdin said he would vote to increase the gas tax to pay for roads and bridges repairs statewide, "if we can prove we have fixed the system."

"I will be one to increase the gas tax, but not until we fix the system. When CEOs come into our state, the first thing they want to know is what is their personal income tax bracket. Georgia and North Carolina both have lower income tax than we do."

A trade-off - increase in the gas tax in exchange for lower income tax - was advocated by many in both the Senate and House this term, but it didn't happen. The roads bill was filibustered for a time, and a com-

promise on how the governor would appoint Transportation Commission members was hammered out in the 11th hour.

Eventually, the House voted 109-2 to send the compromise measure to Haley. The bill generates \$2 billion for major roads and bridges repairs, and another \$2 billion for statewide projects. The State of South Carolina will borrow half the money to get projects done.

The \$4 billion will be spent over 10 years.

"The I-26 corridor from Columbia to Charleston is awful. There's a death trap on I-85 from Cowpens to Blacksburg," said Verdin, who came to the noon Rotary meeting from an earlier in the morning talk to 700 delegates and staff of Palmetto Girls State meeting at Presbyterian College.

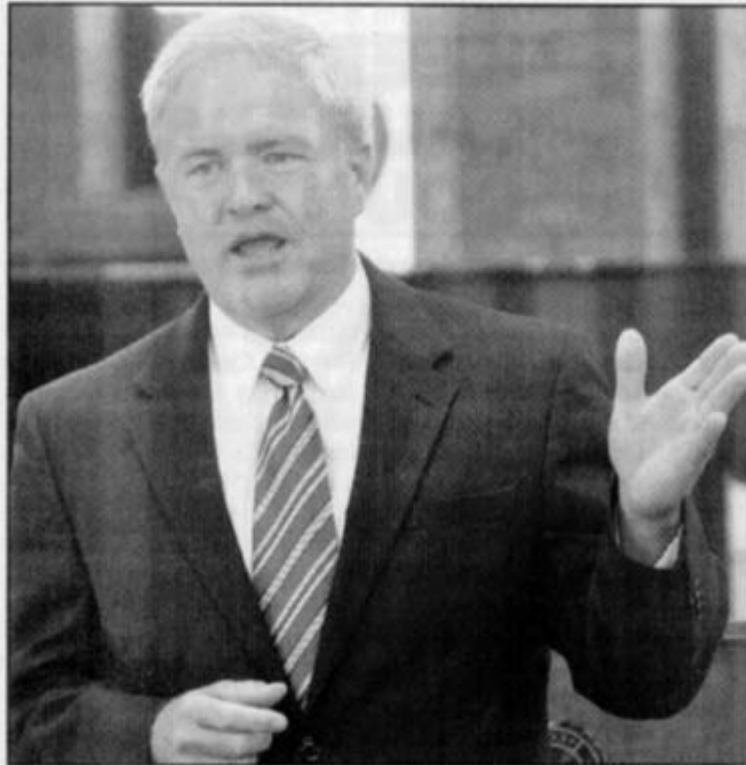
"Industry people are telling us all the time, if you don't fix these roads, your economy dies.

"If we don't get these roads right, we will see a crippled economy. It's the biggest thing we've discussed in the last four years. (But) I can't support 10-12 cents more on the gas tax (to pay for infrastructure repair, offset by a decrease in income tax) if we haven't given you a fixed SC DOT."





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Fixing the roads. District 9 State Sen. Danny Verdin talks to the Clinton Rotary Club last Tuesday before Gov. Nikki Haley signed a bill authorizing \$4 billion for repairs to South Carolina roads. Verdin said if Haley had vetoed the bill, he would have had a difficult decision to make about voting on a veto override.
- Photo by Vic MacDonald

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Legislators adopt ethics bills

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BY TIM SMITH
Greenville News
tcsmith@greenvillenews.com

COLUMBIA — The legislature approved two ethics reform bills Wednesday night after years of trying.

One bill would require lawmakers and other public officials disclose sources of private income, while another would provide independent ethics investigations of ethics complaints against lawmakers.

Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Larry Martin, who has led the push for ethics reform in the Senate, said he knew some would criticize the legislation.

"But independent investigations for the first time will be conducted outside this body," he told the Senate.

The votes send both bills to Gov. Nikki Haley, who has pushed for years for lawmakers to pass ethics reform, which repeatedly stalled in the Senate.

Under the legislation adopted Wednesday, ethics complaints against legislators would be investigated by a revamped State Ethics Commission, which would determine if there is probable cause to the complaints and if so would send them back to House and Senate ethics committees to determine guilt and any penalty.

Currently, ethics complaints against lawmakers are handled by each chamber's ethics committees, which also decide any punishment.

Sen. John Scott, a Richland County Democrat, told the Senate the bill was being rushed and was flawed.

"This is a joke," he said. "It's a feel-good piece of legislation."

The Senate approved the compromise reached with House lawmakers over the investigations bill by a vote of 40-0. The House approved it 99-0.

Legislators and public officials currently must report sources of government income, payments from lobbyists and some government contractors but not private sources.

The bill passed would require disclosure of private sources of income from officials and immediate family members, though not amounts. The bill would provide exemptions for some types of income, such as from court orders, savings, brokerage accounts or mutual funds.

Lawmakers were told they should essentially report the income sources as reported in their tax returns.

"I think it moves us a step in the right direction," Martin told the Senate.

Sen. Brad Hutto, an Orangeburg Democrat, offered less praise earlier in the day.

"This is the babyest of baby steps toward what people are asking for, and that is transparency," he said.

The House had tried to amend the bill to require the disclosure of amounts and also to address non-candidate committees and donations that are not required to be disclosed. The Senate had discussed income ranges but even that idea could not win approval in that chamber.

But a conference committee agreed to keep the bill focused on income disclosure.



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148 House revives moped bill, overrides veto

BY TIM SMITH
Greenville News
tcsmith@greenvillenews.com

COLUMBIA — House members overrode Gov. Nikki Haley's veto of a bill regulating mopeds after voting earlier in the day Wednesday to agree with her.

The change of heart occurred at 8 pm after Rep. Rick Quinn, a Lexington County Republican, asked that the earlier vote be reconsidered.

As he had earlier, Rep. Todd Rutherford, leader of House

Democrats, portrayed the bill as complicated and burdensome to the working poor who use mopeds most and asked the House to sustain the veto.

"We made it so complicated you can't understand it," he argued.

Haley argued that the requirements for operators to wear reflective vests at night and for those under 21 to wear helmets amounted to "government overreach."

But proponents argued that the bill was needed for safety and would not be prohibitively ex-

pensive for moped operators.

At 8 p.m., the House voted 69-33 to override the governor, sending the bill to the Senate, which was deliberat-

ing into the night on budget vetoes.

Earlier, several House lawmakers spoke against the bill.

Rutherford questioned how moped riders would be able to know what type of vests and helmets they should buy.

"I agree with the governor," he said. "This is government overreach."

Rep. Jonathan Hill, an Anderson County Republican, said the bill was the result of mopeds annoying some lawmakers.

But supporters said the bill was the result of six years of work and after hundreds of people have lost their lives in moped accidents.

Rep. Joseph Danning, a Berkeley County Republican and one of the bill's authors, said the vests would cost about \$9. He said the legislation had been vetted by

numerous agencies and he disagreed with Haley's arguments.

"The veto letter is simply wrong," he told the House.

Rep. Neal Collins, a Pickens County Republican, said a state trooper had asked him to pass the bill. He said he recently came upon a moped rider when he was out tending to campaign signs at 1 a.m. He said he did not see him until he came upon him because he did not have any lights.

Requiring a safety vest at night, he said, "is not too invasive."

See **VETO**, Page 3A

INSIDE

For information on the ethics reforms passed by the legislature, see Page 6A.



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Veto

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The House voted 65-47 to override the veto but because an override takes a two-thirds vote, the vote sustained the governor's action.

The bill would require owners to purchase license tags, register their vehicle, obtain either a moped license or a driver's license and follow traffic laws, closing a current loophole for those caught driving drunk on the vehicles. Police now cannot charge a moped rider with DUI.

"I believe adults over the age of 18 — who are allowed to vote and serve our military — should decide for themselves what they should wear for their personal safety," Haley wrote in her veto message Monday.

The Senate on June 2 voted 41-1 to give the bill final approval without debate. The House

concurred by a vote of 68-31.

The governor wrote that while she supports safety laws for children and requirements in the bill for working lights on mopeds at night, other provisions "go too far in regulating the behavior of adults."

"State moped laws should continue to allow for this kind of inexpensive, reliable transportation for citizens, but this bill goes too far," she wrote.

Haley said she would work with lawmakers next year in crafting a moped bill that defines mopeds, provides regulations and "balances public safety with personal responsibility."

According to the state Office of Highway Safety, 55 people died in moped accidents in 2015, up from 35 in 2014, a 57 percent increase.

That compares to about a 16 percent increase in traffic deaths overall near the end of 2015.

148 2016 House Accomplishments and Sine Die adjournment

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Sine Die (Latin meaning "without a fixed day") Adjournment fell at 5 p.m. Thursday, June 2, and marked the end of this year's general legislative session. For a bill to have become law this year, it would have needed to pass both legislative chambers by Sine Die.

The House and Senate will now work over the next week and a half in conference committee to reach final agreements on bills that passed both chambers but still need differences between them consolidated into a final version that is acceptable to each body. At that point both chambers will come back to vote on the conference reports. Gov. Nikki Haley will have five days to issue any vetoes, and my colleagues will meet one last time to sustain or override her vetoes.

Below is an update on some major pieces of legislation we passed this year in the House, along with a brief synopsis and where each bill currently stands. In the coming weeks I will send a final report for the end of the year where I will bring you updates on any changes among these bills.

I will also be working on a final report to bring to you in the coming weeks. The final report will highlight grants, special funding and approved funding in the budget for our area. As of today we have secured over \$4,000,000 in extra funds for our area this year.

In being transparent, I will have the full report and breakdown in the coming weeks.

It is an honor to serve you and your family in the General Assembly. If you ever find

yourself in need of assistance navigating state government, or if you have ideas on issues you want me to share with my colleagues in the House, don't hesitate to contact me at (843) 623-5001 or richardyow@sc-house.gov

Here are some of the 2016 House Accomplishments:

The House of Representatives concurred in Senate amendments to S.1258, legis-

lation addressing Road Funding and Department of Transportation Restructuring, and enrolled the bill for ratification. The legislation allows for an estimated total of up to \$4.5 billion to be devoted to the state's roads over the next 10 years. The legislation transfers motor vehicle sales tax revenue and the revenue from various Department of Motor Vehicles fines and fees to the Department of Transportation's State Highway Fund.

The House and Senate adopted conference committee reports and enrolled for ratification H.5001, the General Appropriation Bill, and H.5002, the joint resolution making appropriations from the Capital Reserve Fund, which together comprise the \$7.5 billion Fiscal Year 2016-17 State Government Budget.

The House concurred in Senate amendments to H.5021, the "Adult Students with Disabilities Educational Rights Consent Act" and enrolled the bill for ratification. The legislation establishes procedures and policies through which adult students who are eligible for special education under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act may

delegate authority over their educational program to agents or representatives.

The House concurred in Senate amendments to H.4554, the "South Carolina Anti-Money Laundering Act," which establishes new provisions for the regulation and oversight of money transmission services and enrolled the bill for ratification. The legislation is offered as a means of rectifying South Carolina's status as the only U.S. state lacking comprehensive regulatory authority over money transfers, which has made the state a center for money laundering activities that facilitate organized criminal enterprises and

terrorist activities.

The House concurred in Senate amendments to H.4521, the "Tucker Hipps Transparency Act," legislation named in memory of the Clemson University student who died during a fraternity activity on Sept. 22, 2014, and enrolled the bill for ratification. The legislation requires the state's public institutions of higher education, excluding technical colleges, to maintain a report detailing student misconduct investigations related to fraternity and sorority organizations formally affiliated with the institution.

The House concurred in Senate amendments to H.4387, a bill Prohibiting Law Enforcement Agencies from Requiring Officers to Meet a Quota for the number of citations issued and enrolled the legislation for ratification.

The House concurred in Senate amendments to H.4878 and enrolled the bill for ratification. The legislation establishes





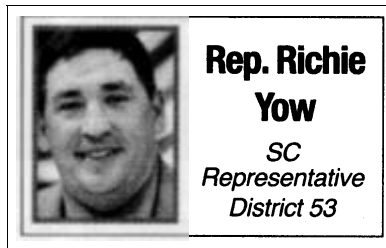
business Confidentiality Provisions for communications with law enforcement peersupport teams, made up of such personnel as chaplains, mental health professionals and public safety peers, that provide emotional and moral support to public safety employees and their immediate family members following critical incidents.

The House concurred in

The House concurred in Senate amendments to H.3147 and enrolled the bill for ratification. The legislation provides for a South Carolina individual income tax deduction for military retirement benefits in an amount of up to \$30,000 each year for those who are at least 65 years old and up to \$17,500 each year for younger taxpayers. A surviving spouse receiv-

ing military retirement income is eligible for the deductions. The deductions are gradually phased in under a five-year schedule so that maximum deductions for military retirement benefits are provided by 2020. The legislation also includes provisions for unused textile mill site rehabilitation tax credits to be carried forward.

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'WHO WOULD WANT TO HURT HIM?'

Sen. Pinckney's legacy endures a year after Charleston shootings

Community continues to recall county's hometown hero

BY JESSICAH LAWRENCE

Jasper County Sun Times
jessicah.lawrence@morris.com

The news from Charleston traveled quickly to Jasper with word that a hateful shooting claimed the lives of nine people, including a hometown pillar in politics.

Sen. Clementa Pinckney's death rocked the community a year ago but also banded people together as his imprint left behind was far reaching.

The Jasper native was one of nine people gunned down June 17, 2015 at a bible study held at Charleston's

Mother Emanuel AME Church. He was 41 years old.

Alleged killer Dylann Roof sought to start a race war.

Pinckney, who answered the call to preach when he was just 13 years old, served as the pastor at the historic church in the Holy City.

Known in Columbia for his political activism, Pinckney was elected to first serve in the House of Representatives in 1996.

In 2000, voters elected him to the Senate seat at just the age of 27. Although serving at the Statehouse called him away, Pinckney never forgot his home county.

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A LOOK BACK

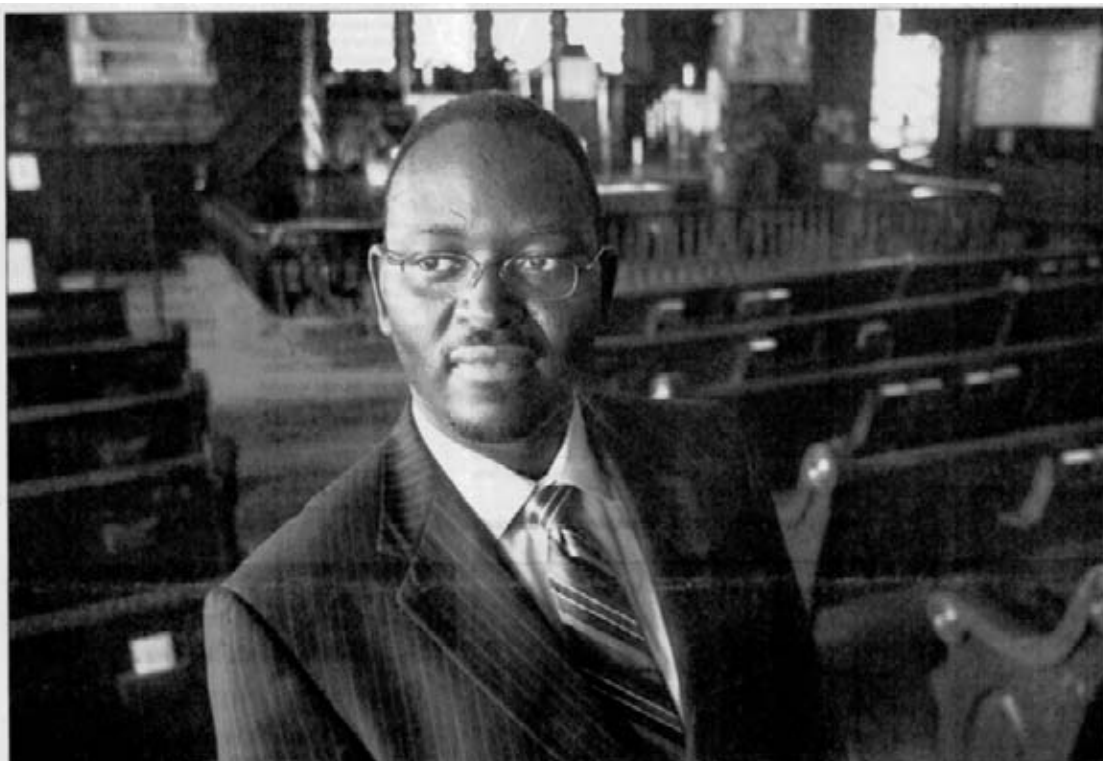
To continue to remember Sen. Clementa Pinckney, visit jaspersuntimes.com/pinckney for stories, photos and videos of our coverage of last June's events. You'll find recollections from friends and former classmates as the community struggled to make sense of the tragedy.

HONORING PINCKNEY, EMANUEL NINE

- Sen. Margie Bright Matthews, who was elected to fill Pinckney's senator seat, in conjunction with the Mother Emanuel AME Church will host a prayer breakfast entitled, Charleston: A Day of Atonement & Reconciliation at 7:30 a.m. Saturday at the Charleston church. All of the nine families who lost loved ones, the survivors and members of Mother Emanuel will take part in the event. This event is free and open to the public. However, seating is limited and a reservation is required by emailing margiebrightmatthews@scsenate.gov.
- Former state Rep. Bakari Sellers will be a keynote speaker at historic Grace Chapel AME Church in Beaufort, 6:30 p.m. Thursday. The public event will honor the Sen. Pinckney and eight others who were killed in last year's shooting at Emanuel AME Church in Charleston.



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Jasper County native Sen. Clementa Pinckney was one of eight people killed after shootings at Charleston's Mother Emanuel AME Church June 17, 2015. A year after his death, the community remembers his rise from Ridgeland to the Statehouse in Columbia.





Legacy

FROM PAGE 1

As a product of the Jasper County School District, he left a mark on many people during his youthful years, including his retired teacher Katherine Manigo.

"He was just an outstanding student and so well spoken," she recalled. "I started teaching him in the eighth grade and watched him go through high school. He just presented himself so well."

Manigo remembers when she heard the tragic news of the Charleston shootings. She was in the hospital when it appeared on the television. She's thankful for the nurses who were there to help her cope.

"Like most people, I just really broke down because, as a teacher I had so much high hopes for all my students, but this particular student we were just so proud of him," Manigo said. "I always think of his beautiful smile and the way he carried himself. And to have the President attend your funeral to give a eulogy...

that says a lot about the person you were."

Jalen Beacher-Orr, a 2015 Ridgeland-Hardeeville graduate, attended Pinckney's funeral at College of Charleston's TD Arena and remembers the mass of people who showed to pay their respect.

"It's mind blowing," he said as he listed names of well-known people who attend the funeral, including Hillary Clinton and Nikki Haley. "It's still hard to process. It's amazing the impact he had on a lot of people. You didn't know all the lives he touched until then."

Beacher-Orr participated in Pinckney's Senator for a Day speech contest. He placed third each time.

"He gave an opportunity for students to have a voice. I wanted to pay my final respects and thank him because the whole situation was tragic and unnecessary," he said of the church shooting.

To carry on Pinckney's legacy, Beacher-Orr says he wants to continue supporting the Senator for a Day program.

and reach for success.

"I feel like me, personally, just becoming successful and

giving back to my community is a way I can continue to keep his legacy alive. He did that in a big way," he said. "He gave young people an opportunity. The way I can live on his legacy is helping others and giving back to my community when I become successful."

'The voice of Jasper'

Probate judge and childhood friend of Pinckney Buster Kleckley said the youth were always drawn to him because of his supportive personality.

"Clementa as a child and teammate always had something special about him. All of the kids gravitated toward him because he never criticized, he only tried to be supportive," Kleckley said. "As he got older this positive attitude and leadership grew into what we know to be the voice of Jasper."

Known as a gentle giant by community members who knew him growing up in the Green Acres area, Pinckney's influence and legacy left behind will never be forgotten.

For Cliff Smith, his encounters with the late senator

always brought words of encouragement.

"He actually was one who went beyond to give me encouragement and insight on doing what I do," said Smith, a former Boys & Girls Club leader who started Beyond All Limits community program. "He was that one person who made a difference and pulled so many people together."

Thomasina Tyler recalls Pinckney's work with Clemson University's 4-H extension program where he excelled in public speaking.

"He was an outstanding, caring person," Tyler said. "I was saddened that he is no longer with us but even in death he continued to be a beacon for others."

Carl Tyler said he was like a non-biological son as he worked side by side with their children in the family garden.

"His demise was an immeasurable loss for mankind. He always demonstrated abundant kindness to others," he said.

Ladenier Mitchell recalls knowing Pinckney as a young girl, watching him become a

pastor and a state politician, making his hometown proud.

"He served us proud when he was elected to the House. And being appointed a pastor at age 18 was another big milestone. With being such a small county, when you have things like that happen, the county celebrates," Mitchell said. "He was our hometown hero."

But Pinckney's influence did not stay confined to the county or even the state.

Mitchell recalled her encounters with others at the funeral who said they had traveled from Ohio and Michigan. From there she realized that Pinckney was not just a "gentle giant" in her community, but across the country.

"He wasn't just ours. We like to claim him, but that let me know that he wasn't just our hometown hero. He was the world's gentle giant, especially in the AME section of religion," Mitchell said. "He was such a humble force and was so welcoming. He was a man of great presence but he was so humble and that's what made this all so crazy. Who would want to hurt him?"

Community prayer

Mitchell along with Rev. Renty Kitty will host the weekly community prayer at Turpin Park in Ridgeland at noon Friday, the one-year anniversary of the Charleston shootings, to pay a tribute to Pinckney and the Emanuel Nine.

Kitty also knew Pinckney growing up as a young leader, reminiscing on how Pinckney was dedicated to Jasper through his role as a politician and pastor. He recalled the moment he heard of Pinckney's death. His immediate reaction was anger.

"I didn't believe it at first and I became angry because I thought of Dr. King, JFK and now Pinckney. I thought of his young girls. His life ended and

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there was nothing he could do," Kitty said. "It grew from anger to sorrow to forgiveness."

As the wounds continue to heal for many who were influenced personally by Pinckney, his achievements and legacy live on in the county. His life inspired others to strive for success and remember those who helped them prosper, as Pinckney never forgot where he came from.

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