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¹⁴⁸ School reform waits for funding plans

Some say legislators did well this session on issue, but survey holds up initiatives

BY JIM HILLEY
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Improving public education in the state has become a hot issue since the South Carolina Supreme Court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs in Abbeville School District v. The State of South Carolina, declaring the state was not providing a sufficient education as provided for in the South Carolina Constitution.

In that November 2014 ruling, the court said state institutions had “failed in their constitutional duty to ensure that students in the plaintiff districts receive the requisite educational opportunity.”

In a highly controversial move, the court ordered the state and the plaintiff districts to “present a plan to address the constitutional violation ... with special emphasis on the statutory and administrative pieces necessary to aid the myriad troubles facing these districts at both state and local levels.”

In response to the ruling, House Speaker Jay Lucas, R-Darlington, established the House Education Policy Review and Reform Task Force, which included legislators, education professionals, representatives of the plaintiffs and a broad range of education and policy experts to hold hearings on how to proceed.

The task force’s report was released on Dec. 17, 2015, and was widely hailed

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as a step toward improving public education in South Carolina.

With the 2015-16 South Carolina General Assembly session now over, how well the legislators did in implementing the report's recommendations seems to depend on whom you ask.

State Rep. Rita Allison, R-Spartanburg, who chaired the task force, said the General Assembly did "very well." She said four of the seven bills introduced in the House of Representatives to implement the task force's recommendations were passed by the General Assembly and signed by Gov. Nikki Haley.

However, Carl Epps, an attorney for the plaintiffs in the Abbeville case, said the General Assembly only "tinkered around the edges."

"The House task force report was pretty positive," he said. "They just didn't act on it any."

Epps said the General Assembly passed a rural teachers initiative that will give scholarships or free tuition to anyone who commits to teach in a rural or high-poverty district for eight years.

"That certainly is a positive step forward but certainly is not short-term relief," Epps said.

A bill allocating \$9 million in incentives to teachers in high-poverty districts will bring some immediate relief, he said, but called for long-term funding of the program.

"Unless it's permanent funding, it will do very little in the way of improving conditions," he said.

The General Assembly also passed some technology funding that will have some effects on poor districts, he said.

Allison said major funding initiatives will have to wait for the next session after a study of school district facilities mandated by the General Assembly determines where funding is most needed.

"There is a bill that came out of the Ways and Means Committee that gives a funding mechanism for facilities," she said. "On the other hand, we need to have the survey first. What we are doing is we are going to do an evaluation of all facilities and see what the needs are."

She said the study will be done during the interim.

"It will point to what is deferred maintenance, what needs renovation and what needs to be totally new facilities," she said.

Epps said the state must present a report to the Supreme Court by June 29 outlining what steps are being taken to improve the state's education in poor rural districts such as those in the Abbeville case.

"They have to send a report stating what they think they got done during this past session and, more importantly, what they plan to do in the future to follow the court's order," he said.

Allison said legislators will continue to listen to public input.

"We put together a student advisory committee, and they came to Columbia during the legislative session and talked about what their education needs are," she said. "They will be coming back for further discussion and recommendations."





ments.

She said the task force has finished its work but hadn't discussed with Lucas if any additional committees will be formed to further explore possible solutions to the state's education problems.

"We laid a foundation, and now we will be building on that foundation," Allison said.

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## The Richland County Council Election Battle That's Not Over Yet

By Chris Trainor

**D**ahli Myers' race against Bernice Scott did not end with her win on June 14 in the Democratic primary to fill an unexpired term in District 10 on Richland County Council.

The pair will meet again in a June 28 runoff to determine which Democrat will have a shot at filling the seat's new four-year term that starts in January.

This bit of electoral déjà vu came from Gov. Nikki Haley removing District 10 Councilman Kelvin Washington from the seat after Washington was convicted on charges he failed to pay his state income taxes for several years.

Washington's term was set to expire at the end of this year. So, a special election was set to fill his unexpired term.

Myers and Scott (who is Washington's mother-in-law) finished first and second, respectively, among the five Democrats running in the May 31 primary for the District 10 unexpired term.

That sent the pair into a primary runoff in June 14 — the same day as the regular primary election across the state.

The upshot was that Democratic primary voters in the Lower Richland district had to cast two ballots: One for the special election runoff between Myers and Scott, and a second among the five Democrats vying for new four-year term.

On June 14, Myers emerged victorious in her showdown with Scott for the unexpired term, while they were — again — the top vote-getters in the five-candidate race for the full-time job.

Myers topped Scott in voting in both races.

Myers will have to wait until after the July 19 special general election to take Washington's seat for the remainder of the year.

In the meantime, she and Scott face off in a runoff for the four-year term on June 28.

The Democratic primary winner will likely join the council. No Republicans filed for the seat for either the unexpired term or the new four-year term in District 10.

So for those keeping score, it is still possible — if unlikely, given the recent election results — that Myers could clinch the unexpired District 10 term, while Scott nabs the Democratic nomination for the November ballot.

Myers, an attorney, says she feels grateful to win the Democratic primary for the unexpired District 10 term and is now working to finish the job and nab her party's nomination for the November ballot.

"We are campaigning as hard as we did before," Myers tells *Free Times*. "We've won against [Scott] three times. We hope to win

again, but we don't take anything for granted. We are knocking on doors every day, just like we have been the whole time."

Scott is no stranger to the political scene in District 10. She held the council seat from 1988 to 2008.

She says that, whether or not she can rally to win the June 28 runoff, she will remain active in Lower Richland.

"I didn't run to just win a seat," Scott says. "I ran to help the community. I will always help the community. That's my whole thing. I've worked with the community my whole life, and I will continue to do that. ... I tell you what: Win, lose or draw, I'm still going to be Bernice Scott, living at 328 Willow Wind Road in Hopkins, and I'm still going to help people. That's it."

Meanwhile, there were several other notable June 14 Richland County Council Democratic primary results:

- In District 3, Yvonne McBride got 59 percent of the vote and bested Bruce Trezevant (26 percent) and Michael D'Amelio (15 percent). There is no Republican running, so McBride will likely claim the seat in November held by retiring Damon Jeter.

- In District 7, Gwen Kennedy crushed Keith Bailey 60 percent to 40 percent. Kennedy, who had two previous stints on County Council, will now face Republican Michael Greene in November to succeed Torrey Rush, who ran unsuccessfully for the state Senate.

- Incumbent District 8 Richland County Councilman Jim Manning had no problem with opponent Wayne Gilbert in a Democratic primary. Manning got 60 percent of the vote, to Gilbert's 40 percent. Manning

will now take on Republican Todd Phillips in the fall.

A number of other primary runoffs in the Midlands area will take place on June 28, two of the most prominent of which will be for the state House District 79 seat and for the 11th Circuit Solicitor post.

- In House District 79, Richland 2 school board member Monica Elkins and Pastor Ivory Thigpen each got about 46 percent of the vote in the June 14 primary, with Vannie Williams finishing a distant third for the seat in Northeast Richland. The winner of the June 28 Democratic runoff will face Republican Donald Miles in November. The candidates are vying to replace District 79 Rep. Mia McLeod, who is running for state Senate.

- Meanwhile, Republicans Rick Hubbard and Candice Lively will meet in a runoff for the Republican nomination for 11th Circuit Solicitor, which covers four counties including Lexington. Hubbard got 49.8 percent of the vote in a three-way race on June 14, meaning he fell just shy of avoiding a runoff. The third-place finisher in the first round of voting, Larry Wedekind, has endorsed Hubbard in the runoff. There is no Democrat in the race, meaning the runoff winner will likely replace longtime 11th Circuit Solicitor Donnie Myers.





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**Bernice Scott, top, will compete in a runoff with Dahli Myers, above. Courtesy photos**



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— Army Staff

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## Templeton Weighing 2018 Run for Governor

Catherine Templeton, who headed up the state Department of Health and Environmental Control under Gov. Nikki Haley before stepping down in early 2015, is mulling a run for governor. The anti-union attorney joins a slew of other potential 2018 Republican candidates who include, per *The Post and Courier*: state Rep. Tommy Pope of York, U.S. Rep. Mick Mulvaney of Indian Land, Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster, Columbia real estate developer Bill Stern and Attorney General Alan Wilson. — *Eva Moore*



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**Haley's endorsements backfire**

So Nikki Haley's endorsement is basically the kiss of death. Newt Gingrich took South Carolina when she endorsed Mitt Romney. Donald Trump took South Carolina when she endorsed Marco Rubio. And Hugh Leatherman won re-election when she endorsed Richard Skipper.

That really shouldn't be, since we have such a counter-establishment bent in South Carolina. But Haley has proved to be a part of the problem. I've corresponded with her about the decision to take down the rebel flag. No matter what people think of it today, the Reconstruction was about allowing the South to keep their pride while rejoining the Union. Haley doesn't understand this and appears to have caved to media narrative. She's either not smart or caving to political party leaders, which isn't savvy. Gingrich filleted the media and won South Carolina. She caved to them. Boo.

She said she was requesting that no Syrian refugees come to South Carolina. What she didn't do was remove us from the federal refugee relocation program. We're getting refugees. We've got no flat tax or open carry laws. She's kept business the same as usual.

Now we're supposed to care when she endorses an insurgent candidate? It probably made Leatherman look tougher, not having her endorsement.

I bet a Democrat could run on putting the flag back up and win in 2018. That's how bad Haley has stepped in it.

**ROBERT MCCREADY**  
Florence

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# 148 Is Gov. Nikki Haley a lame duck?

BY CASSIE COPE  
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COLUMBIA, SC

Gov. **Nikki Haley**'s influence over the S.C. Legislature is waning.

In her six years in office, Haley - like her Republican predecessor **Mark Sanford** - has clashed repeatedly with lawmakers in the GOP-controlled General Assembly.

In her first term, Haley gave lawmakers report cards. She also once told a real estate group to "take a good shower" after visiting the State House, and she often takes to her Facebook page urging lawmakers to vote a certain way on legislation.

This year, Haley helped a political group raise more than \$500,000, mostly from out-of-state donors, in an effort to oust longtime state Senate leaders in the June 14 GOP primary.

However, Haley's chosen challengers won only one of the three Senate contests thus far decided. (Another will be decided by a June 28 runoff.)

Haley succeeded in ousting state Sen. **Wes Hayes**, R-York, one of three longtime state Senate leaders

**The Buzz: For six years, Gov. Haley has clashed with Legislature**

**In final two years in office, some legislators see Republican governor's influence waning**

**State senators endorse candidate in Lexington solicitor's race**

she targeted.

But she failed to oust Senate President Pro Tempore **Hugh Leatherman**, R-Florence, the state's most powerful politician, and state Sen. **Luke Rankin**, R-Horry, head of the Senate Ethics Committee.

Afterward, Leatherman acknowledges he told a primary-night victory party that not only was Haley a lame duck, she was a "dead duck."

State Rep. **Chip Limehouse**, a Charleston Republican who did not seek re-election, criticized the role that Haley tried to play in the primaries.

"It's not good form for a sitting governor to go after members of his or her own party," Limehouse said.

"I don't think it makes getting her agenda passed for next year any easier," he said, adding Haley targeting Leatherman "was a mistake at every different level."

The influence of governors typically wanes in the last two years of their term, said Leatherman, whose legislative tenure has seen six governors. However, backing challengers to sitting legislators - and failing to unseat them - could make Haley even more likely to become a lame duck, he added.

Florence County voters did not appreciate the governor telling them who should be their senator, Leatherman said, adding that Haley's opposition helped him win re-election.

"I've even considered writing her a letter thanking her for helping me win," Leatherman told The Buzz.

S.C. House Majority Leader **Bruce Bannister**, R-Greenville, says Haley's position is perfectly normal.

The closer a governor gets to the end of his or her term, the more people start looking forward to what is com-





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TRACY GLANTZ tglantz@thestate.com

Gov. Nikki Haley at her 2016 State of the State address.

ing next, Bannister said. "Like the presidents and governors before her, obviously, she's in the last two years of her term."

Not everyone agrees Haley's influence is waning.

Haley has used her bully pulpit effectively in the past, most successfully when she called for lawmakers to remove the Confederate flag from the State House in the wake of the Charleston church shooting.

"I still think she drives the agenda," said state Rep. **Rick Quinn**, R-Lexington, a Haley ally. He added lawmakers passed two ethics proposals before going home for the summer. "If she wasn't pushing those

bills we never would have passed them."

Another Haley ally, state Sen. **Harvey Peeler**, R-Cherokee, said, "I've tried to be her supporter long before now, and I will continue to try to be."

#### LEGISLATORS BACK LEXINGTON SOLICITOR CANDIDATE

Two top state Senate Republicans are lining up behind veteran prosecutor **Rick Hubbard** in the 11th Circuit solicitor's race in Lexington County and nearby areas.

Sens. **Katrina Shealy** of Red Bank and **Shane Massey** of Edgefield, the Senate majority leader, both are

supporting Hubbard in his June 28 Republican runoff contest with **Candice Lively**.

Earlier in the race, Lively, a former Horry County prosecutor, went to Shealy for advice about running an anti-establishment campaign.

However, the senators say that Hubbard's experience as a former 11th Circuit prosecutor and deputy S.C. attorney general - fits the bill for what's needed as chief prosecutor in Lexington, Edgefield, McCormick and Saluda counties.

Staff writer **Tim Flach** contributed. **Cassie Cope**: 803-771-8657, @cassielcope

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## 148 **THEIR VIEW**

### **Road repair issues not yet resolved**

Gov. Nikki Haley's reluctance to sign legislation that will fund road improvements in South Carolina is understandable in light of her stated priorities. But she made the right call in pushing ahead with the plan sent to her by the Legislature.

Haley did not get what she wanted as the state's chief executive: control of the S.C. Department of Transportation. She contends the DOT reforms by the General Assembly fall far short of what is needed to ensure accountability.

The governor is politically savvy. She is aware South Carolinians were going to blame her as much as lawmakers if another legislative session passed with a continuing stalemate on roads.

So the plan for an immediate infusion of money for road and bridge improvements will move forward.

The bill allows for \$2.2 billion in borrowing over 10 years for infrastructure. Funding will come from \$200 million annually in existing fees and vehicle sales taxes. Coupled with other money from the DOT, the total package for road and bridge repairs is \$4 billion.

In a letter to legislators, Haley said: "To claim this law as anything close to a victory, to represent it in any way as a true solution to our infrastructure problems" would be deceiving the public.

For their part, lawmakers have acknowledged the legislation is not a permanent fix, but finding one that is satisfactory to the governor is going to require compromise on the part of the chief executive as well as the Legislature.

The key issues are Haley and her allies' unwillingness to go along with an increase in the state's gasoline tax and their insistence on further DOT reform.

Painting the Legislature as the "bad guy" in this is not fair.

Lawmakers signaled a willingness to go along with an increase in the state's lowest-in-the-nation gas tax, with the money to be an ongoing source of funds for road and bridge repair. But even the prospect of having out-of-state travelers pay a share of the tab — in effect a user fee — was not enough to convince opponents.

Those foes used to their advantage the governor's insistence on no gas tax increase without a corresponding reduction in state income taxes. Coupled with Haley's insistence on DOT control, the opponents had all the ammunition needed to tie up any plan that could be considered a permanent solution for roads.

In making changes in DOT governance, lawmakers maintained legislative controls that Haley does not want for her or future governors. But disbanding the commission that governs DOT and handing full control to the governor is a major shift in power — one that does not ensure better operation of DOT.

To argue that putting the power in the hands of the chief executive ensures political influence will be removed from DOT and its priorities and operations is being naïve. What the change would do is consolidate more power permanently in the executive branch.

For now, South Carolina gets new money for repairing roads and bridges. That was the top priority — one that the governor and legislators wisely decided not to delay any further.

Left for resolution and as priorities in 2017 are a recurring source of funding for roads and bridges and how the agency using those funds will be controlled and operated.

— *The (Orangeburg)  
Times and Democrat*



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# 148 Probationary accreditation lifted from State University

COLUMBIA (AP) — The probationary cloud over South Carolina State University was lifted Thursday, ending worries that its accreditation could be revoked and the school could be forced to close.

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' Commission on Colleges decided to fully restore S.C. State's membership, two years after putting South Carolina's only public historically black university on probation for leadership and financial woes.

"We were very, very pleased," said board Chairman Charles Way, who traveled to Memphis, Tennessee, with school officials Wednesday to make their case. The accreditation issue "was just hanging over our heads. A lot of parents don't want to send their children to a school if it's on probation."

SC State's status was put on warning in 2013. Continuing probation a third year wasn't an option. The commission's only other choice, revoking accreditation, would have meant students could no longer qualify for federal financial aid.

Thursday's decision follows drastic actions by legislators to keep the school open.

Last year, they fired the entire governing board and tasked temporary members with making the school solvent. As of December, the board had cut \$19 million from the budget and eliminated about 200 jobs.

"We're getting this ox out of the ditch, but we've got a long way to go," Way told The Associated Press on Thursday. "We're taking it step by step. We're trying to not only have SC State survive. We'd like to take it back to its glory days of many years ago."

Earlier this month, Gov. Nikki Haley signed a bill for-

giving SC State of \$12 million in state loans over three years and approving a 16-year repayment schedule for a separate \$6 million loan.

Lawmakers hoped erasing the debt would boost the college's chances before the commission.

In arguing for the loan forgiveness, legislative leaders noted state taxpayers would be on the hook for SC State's entire debt, including all outstanding bonds, if the college didn't survive. Senate President Pro Tem Hugh Leatherman, R-Florence, has estimated that to be more than \$100 million.

"This is a big accomplishment for South Carolina State University," said Leatherman, who appointed Way, a former

state Commerce secretary.

"It's important that this university, which holds great historical value in our state, stay open, keep its accreditation and thrive in the coming years."

The state's financial board, which includes Leatherman, approved both state bailouts in 2014 so the school could pay outstanding bills, but that debt instead continued to climb. The entire board was replaced as legislators learned SC State's debt was expected to soon reach \$23.5 million.

The school has made great strides since.

About 2,800 students attended SC State last fall. That's 170 more than SC State depended on in its 2015-16 budget.

Last week, the board announced passing a balanced budget.

The university should end the fiscal year June 30 with a \$1 million positive balance, Way said.

SC State's fiscal woes stemmed from years of declining enrollment — down from nearly 5,000 in 2007 — coupled with school officials' unwill-



ingness to cut spending. Many students who did attend weren't paying, according to a report by an accounting firm the state hired to review SC State's finances.

Contributing to the losses were federal changes in eligibility for Pell grants and PLUS loans since 2009, mak-

ing it harder for students and their parents to qualify. The changes have hit historically black colleges particularly hard.

University officials hope the enrollment trend is reversing. Way said Thursday's announcement should further boost enrollment.

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# 148 Mourners remember the victims 2,500 at service for Charleston 9

**BY BRUCE SMITH**  
The Associated Press

CHARLESTON — South Carolina's governor somberly held up programs from the funerals of the victims of the Charleston church shootings, saying Friday during a memorial service that the faith of those victims showed how to heal in the aftermath of still another mass shooting.

"As for me, I will forever know that there are angels on Earth," said Gov. Nikki Haley during a three-hour service that was alternately somber and then punctuated by joyous singing.



**HALEY**

Friday was the anniversary of the shooting deaths of nine black parishioners during a Bible study at Emanuel AME Church. A white man, Dylann Roof, faces charges in both state and federal courts and prosecutors in each are seeking the death penalty.

Haley, who attended the funerals of all the victims, said

she got to know the families of both those who were killed and the three survivors in the days and weeks after the shootings.

"There hasn't been a day since June 17, 2015 that I haven't thought about the 12," she said.

She recalled each victim, sometimes with gentle humor, as she showed the funeral programs she says she keeps as reminders.

The Rev. DePayne Middleton-Doctor "had the voice of an angel," she said.

Haley recalled state Sen. Clementa Pinckney, the Emanuel pastor who was slain as "a gentle giant" and a man "who never talked about what he was against. He always spoke about what he was for."

Haley said that in the wake of the shootings — after which many family members of the victims said they forgave Roof, the suspect charged in the deaths — the people of South Carolina "didn't have protests; they had vigils. They didn't have riots; they had hugs."

College of Charleston's TD Arena, where the service was held, sits about 5,000 people and was about half full. The stage was lined with the pictures of the nine people killed. Above each were the words "Still Speaking from Eternity."

It's the same venue where President Obama gave a rousing eulogy during the funeral for Pinckney that included a rendition of the hymn "Amazing Grace" for the packed audience at the TD Arena. The Obamas were accompanied by Vice President Joe Biden and his wife, Jill; nearly 6,000 people attended the funeral.

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## SHOOTING

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Some 5,000 would-be mourners were turned away, apparently for lack of seating.

On Friday, a presidential aide read a message to the congregation from Obama and the first lady in which they said "as a nation we are deeply moved by your boundless love and your unshakeable resilience."

In the wake of the shootings, officials and businesses nationwide have taken steps to distance themselves from Confederate symbols and name. The suspect, Roof, had appeared in photos with the Confederate flag.

In Texas, the Austin school board voted to rename Robert E. Lee Elementary. The Houston school board voted to rename seven schools named for Confederate leaders. Ohio State Fair officials banned vendors from selling Confederate flag merchandise. In New Jersey, the nation's oldest and largest flag manufacturer decided a week after the shootings to stop making and selling the Confederate flag.

# 148 2 Senate leaders survive Haley opposition; 1 senator ousted

**SEANNA ADCOX**

Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. — So far, Gov. Nikki Haley is one for four. Two of the Senate leaders she tried to unseat defeated their challengers Tuesday, but a third will leave the Legislature after 32 years.

A fourth Senate candidate backed by Haley advances to a runoff, but the only House candidate she endorsed lost.

The elections represented the last chance for Haley, who's term limited, to change who runs the Republican-dominated Legislature while she's governor.

South Carolina's most powerful lawmaker, Senate President Pro Tem Hugh Leatherman of Florence, easily defeated two Republican opponents with more than 54 percent of vote, avoiding a runoff to secure a 10th term. Beyond being the top senator, Leatherman's other leadership roles include crafting the budget as Senate Finance chairman and sitting on a financial oversight board Haley chairs.

"He does a lot of good for our community and this area," Larry Bacote told the Morning News while voting at West Florence High School.

Haley's candidate, Florence County GOP Chairman Richard Skipper, received about 41 percent.

Senate Ethics Committee Chairman Luke Rankin of Myrtle Beach defeated Scott Pyle with 56 percent of the vote.

Neither Leatherman nor Rankin, first elected in 1992, has a Democratic challenger in November.

Sen. Wes Hayes lost his re-election bid to York County GOP Chairman Wes Climer, whom Haley backed. Climer had about 52 percent of the vote over Hayes, who was first elected to the House in 1984,



Sean Rayford/AP

**Sen. Hugh Leatherman, R-Florence, speaks in the Senate chambers in January at the Statehouse in Columbia. Leatherman easily won his Republican primary Tuesday.**

then the Senate in 1991.

Haley had faulted Hayes, the leading senator on K-12 issues, for supporting a highway-funding bill last year that several opponents of increasing the gas tax blocked from receiving a floor vote.

Meanwhile, state Rep. Stephen Goldfinch advanced to a June 28 primary runoff with Reese Boyd. Haley endorsed Boyd in the race to replace retiring Sen. Ray Cleary. Goldfinch led the four-way race in the Grand Strand district with 44 percent of the vote over Boyd's 37 percent.

A Haley political group, financed mostly by out-of-state donors, has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars over the last month running ads backing her opposition campaigns. Meanwhile, GOP Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster and other Haley allies worked to re-elect the incumbents.

Haley's candidate in an open House seat also lost.

Katie Arrington won 62 percent of the vote in the race to replace state Rep. Jenny Horne, who lost her bid to unseat U.S. Rep. Mark Sanford. Haley had

endorsed Dorchester County Council member Carroll Duncan, who's also the mother-in-law of Board of Economic Advisors Chairman Chad Walldorf.

On social media Tuesday night, Haley did not mention anyone directly.

"We congratulate the winners of the primary elections, and also congratulate those who put themselves forward for public office but did not win tonight," she posted on her Facebook page.

Incumbent senators advancing to a runoff include Senate Judiciary Chairman Larry Martin, who's been a reliable ally for Haley. He will face off against former state Rep. Rex Rice in two weeks.

With 98 percent of precincts reporting, Martin had 45 percent of the total votes in the four-way race, while Rice had 33 percent.

GOP Sen. Lee Bright of Roebuck, the only incumbent publicly opposed by the state Chamber of Commerce's political committee, led a four-way race with 38 percent of the total. He advances to a runoff with former state Rep. Scott Talley, who received 27 percent.

Senate Corrections Chairman Mike Fair of Greenville made it to the runoff by coming in second in his three-way race. Challenger William Timmons received just below 50 of the vote.

Avoiding a runoff requires 50 percent plus one vote.

In the House, four Republicans lost their re-election bids: first-term Rep. Ralph Kennedy of Leesville, two-term Rep. Donna Hicks of Boiling Springs, three-term Rep. Doug Brannon of Landrum, and four-term Rep. Wendy Nanney of Greenville.

Democratic Rep. Bill Bowers of Hampton will face former Rep. Curtis Brantley in a runoff. Bowers defeated Brantley in 2012.

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# 148 Arrington, Bennett win big in primaries

**BY MONICA KREBER**  
mkreber@journalscene.com

Two Summerville residents came out on top in the polls on Tuesday.

Katie Arrington and Sen. Sean Bennett both took top spots in Statehouse races. Arrington, who netted 59.3 percent of votes, beat County Councilwoman Carroll Duncan, with 40.7 percent of votes, for the House District 94 seat.

Arrington considered herself an underdog, especially winning a race in which her opponent was endorsed a week earlier by Gov. Nikki Haley.

"Nobody believed in me," she said. "I am so humbled and honored."

Arrington also praised Duncan for her public service and promised to work "tirelessly for the people of Summerville to change Columbia."

With 63.3 percent of votes, Bennett beat out Evan Guthrie for the Senate District 38 title. Guthrie received 36.4 percent of votes.

Bennett thanked the people in District 38 "for their trust and confidence in allowing" him to continue representing them in the state Senate.

"We have been making a great

deal of progression changing the way things are done in Columbia, and I am looking forward to continuing that positive momentum," Bennett said.

"It's also my hope that the divisiveness of this community will subside so that we can move forward together. There is too much at stake, and too much potential to squander."

The day after the election, Guthrie released a statement congratulating Bennett and thanking everybody who voted.

"I look forward to being able to continue to serve the commu-

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Monica Kreber/Journal Scene

Katie Arrington's brother-in-law, Eric McClanahan, and nephew, A.J., hold up signs to drivers in support of Arrington.





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## Primaries

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nity many ways in the future," he said..

Despite high temperatures, Arrington family members could be found holding up political signs in support of Arrington near Knightsville United Methodist while the polls were still open.

Arrington's sister Connie McClanahan, joined by husband Eric and son A.J., said her sisters has "so much compassion and passion for this community."

"She loves Summerville," she said.

The family also said they were pulling for Horne for congress – "because it's about finding change for South Carolina (and) bringing in people to



Monica Kreber/Journal Scene

**Jim and Olga McCullough use the curbside service outside of Oakbrook Elementary.**

make changes," Connie said.

Neighbors Walter Albrighton and James Hughes cast their votes at Knightsville Elementary. The two supported similar candidates – except Albrighton supported Bennett and Hughes was in support of Guthrie.

"I like a guy who writes his own signs," he said, adding he thought Guthrie would be a servant to the people.

*Summerville Journal Scene reporter Jenna-Ley Harrison contributed to this report.*