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Subject: Morning Clips – Friday, May 16, 2014

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Governor Nikki Haley News:

Associated Press: HPV vaccination bill advances, despite opposition

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=Q5MTk0xg

Andrew Coffman Smith

Legislation seeking to encourage HPV vaccinations of South Carolina children advanced Thursday in the state Senate. However, supporters of the effort to educate parents on the cancer risks posed by the human papillomavirus worry that the stigma surrounding the sexually transmitted disease and opposition by the governor and socially conservative legislators will kill the bill's chances to save lives.

Note: Spokesman Doug Mayer said Haley opposes the legislation. Mayer said, "As a mother of a teenage daughter, Governor Haley, like the majority of South Carolinians, believes that health decisions like this are best left up to parents and doctors - not state government."

Post and Courier: S.C. Senate rejects, then adopts increase for in-district expenses

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20140515/PC1603/140519524/1177/sc-senate-rejects-then-adopts-increase-for-in-district-expenses>

Jeremy Borden

When S.C. Sen. Paul Thurmond took to the floor earlier this week, he railed for hours against an increase in expense reimbursements for members of the General Assembly. Senators agreed with him that it wasn't the right time for \$1,000 a month more for expenses and they voted the measure down.

Note: The budget process is still in relatively early stages and Thurmond said the increase may not survive scrutiny from negotiations with House members and Gov. Nikki Haley's veto pen.

S.C. Political News:

The State: Incumbent McLeod faces one Democratic challenger

<http://www.thestate.com/2014/05/15/3449179/incumbent-mcleod-faces-one-democratic.html>

Carolyn Click

Rep. Mia McLeod, D-Richland, hopes her outspoken stands on issues such as public education and health care, as well as her track record of constituent service, will persuade voters that she deserves a third term in the S.C. House.

Opinion / Editorial Roundup:

Post and Courier: Legislature looks bad going all Medieval on Robert Ford

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20140516/PC16/140519531/1177/legislature-looks-bad-going-all-medieval-on-robert-ford>

Brian Hicks

Let's just put the skunk on the table here. By going after former Democratic Sen. Robert Ford with such a vengeance, and slapping him with perhaps the largest fine in Senate Ethics Committee history, lawmakers have set a dangerous precedent - or trap - for themselves.

Times and Democrat: Congressional dysfunction is threat to nation

http://thetandd.com/news/opinion/congressional-dysfunction-is-threat-to-nation/article_52dec6a6-dcae-11e3-ad53-001a4bcf887a.html

Editorial

THE ISSUE: Divided Congress; OUR OPINION: Opposition to Graham is to be expected, but deriding his work with censure is 'foolish'. The June Republican primary is less than a month away and any South Carolinian who believes Lindsey Graham is not conservative enough has a half-dozen choices of candidates

all pledging to be to the right of the state's senior senator.

Legislative Session News:

The State: PAC with links to Harrell aided 5 on House ethics panel

<http://www.thestate.com/2014/05/15/3449456/5-gop-house-ethics-committee-members.html#storylink=cpy>

John Monk

The five Republican members of the 10-member House Ethics Committee — which House Speaker Bobby Harrell wants to decide allegations against him — have received some \$13,000 in campaign contributions from a political action committee associated with the Charleston Republican.

Index-Journal: Senate approves legislators' pay increase

<http://www.indexjournal.com/Content/News/News/Article/Senate-approves-legislators--pay-increase/4/40/25538>

Chris Trainor

The South Carolina Senate approved the 2014-15 budget Wednesday, a document that would raise legislators' pay by \$1,000 per month. The Senate version of the budget, which was about \$7 billion, passed Wednesday in a 38-6 vote. It now heads back to the S.C. House for consideration.

Post and Courier: Bill that legalizes marijuana-related drug for epilepsy patients expected to pass General Assembly

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20140515/PC1610/140519566/1031/bill-that-legalizes-marijuana-related-drug-for-epilepsy-patients-expected-to-pass-general-assembly>

Jeremy Borden

A bill that would allow patients who have severe epilepsy to be treated with a type of medical marijuana is headed for a final vote in the General Assembly next week, where it's expected to pass. The bill, H. 4803, has already moved through the S.C. House and its passage in the S.C. Senate is expected next week after a key Senate committee moved it unanimously on Thursday.

The State: Update on SC sex-ed law closer to passage

<http://www.thestate.com/2014/05/15/3449462/update-on-sc-sex-ed-law-closer.html#storylink=cpy>

Jamie Self

Sex education advocates are looking at the finish line as the Legislature nears passage of an update to the state's 26-year-old health education law. A Senate education panel OK'd a bill Thursday that would require public schools to teach "medically accurate" information about sex. School districts also would have to report to the state what they teach about health or face losing 1 percent of their state money.

Greenville News: Solar compromise bill heads to House floor

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/local/2014/05/15/solar-compromise-bill-heads-house-floor/9155375/>

Nathaniel Cary

South Carolina could quickly catch up to its northern and southern neighbors in solar energy production if a solar bill that's headed for House debate gets passed this session, solar advocates said Thursday. Georgia and North Carolina each ranked in the top 10 states for amount of solar installed in 2013.

The State: Powdered alcohol ban, Election Day booze sales advance

<http://www.thestate.com/2014/05/15/3449192/powdered-alcohol-ban-election.html#storylink=cpy>

Andrew Shain

Banning powdered alcohol but allowing Election Day booze sales moved forward Thursday at the State House. Powdered alcohol sales are not permitted in the United States yet. But an Arizona maker of Palcohol is seeking permission from federal regulators.

Times and Democrat: Senators seek to combine Orangeburg's school districts

http://thetandd.com/news/senators-seek-to-combine-orangeburg-s-school-districts/article_68f66e92-dc4c-11e3-9233-001a4bcf887a.html

Orangeburg County's three school districts would be consolidated into one covering the entire county under a bill introduced in the South Carolina Senate on Thursday. The move caught some by surprise.

Orangeburg Consolidated School District 5 board Chairman Mary B. Ulmer said she had heard nothing about the bill and was shocked about it.

S.C. Federal Delegation News:

McClatchy Washington Bureau: Graham wants Senate Benghazi panel

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/politics/2014/05/15/graham-wants-senate-benghazi-panel/9155725/>

Mary Troyan

Sen. Lindsey Graham and 36 other Senate Republicans called Thursday for a select committee to investigate the 2012 terrorist attacks in Benghazi, Libya. Republicans who control the House created such a committee last week. Graham and his colleagues said a Senate counterpart is necessary to “bridge jurisdictional gaps.”

Politico: Trey Gowdy names Benghazi panel director

<http://www.politico.com/story/2014/05/benghazi-panel-staff-director-phil-kiko-106734.html?hp=l3>

Lauren French

The chairman of the House select committee on Benghazi announced his first high-profile hire for the week-old panel on Thursday, tapping a former House general counsel as staff director. Rep. Trey Gowdy (R-S.C.) selected Smith-Free Group vice chairman Phil Kiko to be the majority staff director for the committee.

Post and Courier: U.S. Rep. Mark Sanford visits Gulf oil operation as feds near decision on seismic testing off South Carolina

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20140515/PC1610/140519506/1031/us-rep-mark-sanford-visits-gulf-oil-operation-as-feds-near-decision-on-seismic-testing-off-south-carolina>

Bo Petersen

With federal decisions pending on whether to open the South Carolina offshore to seismic testing and possible exploration for oil and natural gas, Congressman Mark Sanford toured a Gulf of Mexico oil operation and offshore rig this week.

South Carolina News:

Greenville News: BMW CEO predicts sales will top 2M

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/money/business/2014/05/15/bmw-ceo-predicts-sales-will-top-2m/9155539/>

Woody White

BMW chief executive Norbert Reithofer gave an upbeat report to shareholders Thursday, detailing plans for a bigger dividend and reiterating the automaker’s goal of selling 2 million vehicles worldwide this year.

The State: Columbia, SC homes sales slump into spring

<http://www.thestate.com/2014/05/15/3448147/columbia-sc-homes-sales-slump.html#storylink=cpy>

Roddie Burris

Home sales in Columbia and throughout most of South Carolina continued to decline slightly in April, putting a chill on the traditionally strong spring selling season. Economists had hoped home buying would surge in April after a March thaw from an unusually cold start to the year allowed buyers to start looking for new homes again.

Local News:

Times and Democrat: Budget talks begin: Calhoun administrator: Cut to local government funding ‘driving millage rate’

http://thetandd.com/news/budget-talks-begin-calhoun-administrator-cut-to-local-government-funding/article_07b38f3e-dc83-11e3-9f72-001a4bcf887a.html

Martha Rose Brown

Calhoun County Council approved a series of ordinances, by title only, to kick-start the county’s budget approval process Monday night. The state Senate Finance Committee cut \$16 million from the amount the House allocated to the state’s counties and municipalities, but that local government funding could be restored if the state collects more revenue than anticipated.

Florence Morning News: Florence County Council ups fire millage rate, drops fee

http://www.snow.com/news/politics/article_5323306e-dc3d-11e3-8c9a-0017a43b2370.html

Gavin Jackson

Florence County Council approved and amended a version of its unified fire protection district plan after council eliminated the first responder fee on vehicles in the district, resulting in higher millage in the new district.

National News:

Associated Press: New Mexico's GOP governor draws Democratic support

<http://www.kansascity.com/2014/05/15/5026388/new-mexicos-gop-governor-draws.html#storylink=cpy>

Barry Massey

For Democrats, the road to victory over New Mexico Gov. Susana Martinez leads through predominantly Hispanic communities across the north of the state. The incumbent Republican, however, has become a rising national star and favorite to win re-election because of her crossover appeal, especially in places such as Espanola where Democrats typically win big.

Associated Press: Cost-Control plan for health care could cost you

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/cost-control-plan-health-care-could-cost-you>

Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar

You just might want to pay attention to the latest health insurance jargon. It could mean thousands of dollars out of your pocket. The Obama administration has given the go-ahead for a new cost-control strategy called "reference pricing." It lets insurers and employers put a dollar limit on what health plans pay for some expensive procedures, such as knee and hip replacements.

Brian Symmes

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