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148 Congressman Wilson responds to State of the Union Address

Congressman Joe Wilson (SC-02) issued the following statement this evening after President Obama concluded his State of the Union address:

"As Americans watched the State of the Union, they were hopeful that the President would provide real efforts to defeat ISIS which threatens American families and real reforms to reduce regulations which destroy jobs. Instead they heard more failed promises and empty words. The American people deserve more from their elected officials. I was grateful to hear Governor Nikki Haley's address: a positive change for a more confident America."

Jobs

"Today, our national debt is nearly \$19 trillion—an inconceivable number that will be left to our children and grandchildren to repay. Right now, 7.9 million Americans are unemployed. Six million Americans would prefer full-time work, but are only able to find part-time jobs. So many American families don't see the recovery that the President claims we have.

"South Carolina families need good job opportunities and want to protect the jobs they have from Washington's spending problem and overbearing regulations. House Republicans will continue to promote job creation by rolling back harmful regulations and passing positive reforms, like protecting "right to work" laws," and repealing Obamacare which destroys jobs."

Guantanamo Bay

"The job of Guantanamo Bay is to house some of the world's most dangerous terrorists. Releasing these terrorists to return to the battlefield places American families at risk of attacks."

Gun Control

"The President's legacy of more gun control would not have stopped any of the mass attacks that have saddened our nation. The President should change course and work with Congress to enact meaningful change by reforming mental health and stopping terrorists from attacking American families—not restricting the rights of law-abiding gun owners."

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Nikki Haley's righteous gamble

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CHARLESTON, S.C. -- By broad consensus, the winner of Thursday night's GOP debate was Donald Trump, followed by Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio, with most of the post-game commentary focused on "the fight" between Cruz and Trump.

Oh, how we love a good fight.

But the real fight was revealed a couple of nights earlier when South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley gave the Republican Party's response to President Obama's State of the Union address. She pulled no punches and brought the fight to her own party. Nice and pretty-like.

Rather than exclusively critiquing Obama's presidency as many expected, Haley turned her sights on the angry tenor of GOP politics and our dysfunctional government, for which she said Republicans are partly responsible.

"There is more than enough blame to go around," she said. "We as Republicans need to own that truth. ... We need to accept that we've played a role in how and why our government is broken. And then we need to fix it." Whoo-hoo. Sorry, but sometimes it takes a girl.

Noting that we live in anxious times, she nonetheless urged her fellow Republicans to resist the "siren call of the angriest voices." Gosh, wonder who she meant? ✓

To a certain kind of Republican, this was pure heresy. But it was also brave, necessary and true -- especially if the GOP is to survive or ever hope to reclaim the White House.

Haley's gentle *cri de coeur* neatly exposed the battle lines. On one side are those who deploy anger, bias, nativism and fear. On the other are those who want to reshape the GOP into a party based on ideals of inclusiveness and respect for others

(like, maybe, a first-generation Indian-American daughter of Sikh immigrants), exercises caution through reformed immigration policies without demonizing swaths of people, and recognizes winning hearts and minds begins with civility and communication.

"Some people think that you have to be the loudest voice in the room to make a difference. That's just not true," Haley said. "Often, the best thing we can do is turn down the volume. When the sound is quieter, you can actually hear what someone else is saying. And that can make a world of difference."

Haley confirmed on NBC's "Today Show" the following morning that she was, indeed, referring to Trump, who shouldn't take it personally. During the debate on Thursday, Trump said he is happy to wear the mantle of anger because he is angry, and he assured the audience he and Haley, who was beaming in the crowd, are good friends.

That's nice. But what's clear is Haley, who is widely considered a likely vice-presidential candidate, had decided she didn't need a Trump alliance and was choosing the "establishment lane" of the party, or, as some prefer, the "rational lane." In other words, she signaled her support for Marco Rubio, Chris Christie, John Kasich and Jeb Bush.

But which is it? What does Haley know that we don't know? As unlikely as it seems at this juncture any of these but Rubio has a reasonable shot at the nomination, we might assume she's banking on Rubio.

This would be a dream ticket for Republicans. A bilingual Cuban (check Hispanic vote), a woman (check), both first-generation Americans, coverage in two crucial states, South Caro-

lina and Florida, and perhaps most important, a younger generation of leadership without the baggage of the establishment. They would completely collapse the smallish Republican tent of older, white males and build a rainbow-hued edifice of diversity in which race and religion are not the first questions on anyone's mind.

Haley, whom I've known for several years, is a polished politician, make no mistake. She doesn't accidentally do anything, such as fumble the most important speech of her career. I also know from previous conversations she has been changed by her time in office, altered by her experiences dealing with the horrific murders of nine African-Americans in a Charleston church and by her subsequent decision to remove the Confederate battle flag from the Statehouse grounds.

The latter was a calculated political risk -- and her speech a gamble that truth wins in the end. This truth includes the lesson of South Carolina after the shootings, when the state's people embraced one another in love and dedication to a shared, higher purpose of unity, forgiveness and racial reconciliation.

Haley's point: If we can do this as a state, we can do this as a nation. It's a worthy goal and a battle worthy of its opponents.

(Kathleen Parker is a syndicated columnist for the Washington Post Writers Group. Email responses may be sent to kathleenparker@washpost.com.)



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Haley and the national spotlight¹⁴⁸

It's the call every aspirant in the political hinterland dreams of: "Will you give our party's response to the State of the Union Address?"

The answer is always "yes" -- and then the drama begins. The stakes are incredibly high. Many fail, some miserably (see Gov. Bobby Jindal in 2009), but the opportunity is exposure to more than 30 million people as the alternative voice to the President of the United States.

Gov. Nikki Haley got the call -- pretty heady stuff for a kid from Bamberg, or anywhere else for that matter.

Enough about the drama, so how did she do?

The speech itself had two parts. The first short section was an obligatory, gratuitous slap at President Obama with familiar lines about Obamacare, the deficit and terrorists. It was just a little red meat thrown to the Obama haters and then she moved on to talk about a "vision of a brighter American future."

But though she never used his name, her words were not really about America but about Donald Trump. She talked about Trump's racism, inflammatory language and immigration. Then she talked about the good way South Carolina responded to the Emanuel Nine shooting and then threw in a not so oblique reference to the troubles of Ferguson and Baltimore -- "We didn't have riots, we had hugs."

Most of all, it was a repudiation of Trump. She used her own personal story as the daughter of Indian immigrants juxtaposed with Trump's rhetoric -- "...it can be tempting to follow the siren call of the angriest voices. We must resist that temptation. No one who is willing to work hard, abide by our laws, and

love our traditions should ever feel unwelcome in this country."

She continued, "Some people (Trump) think that you have to be the loudest voice in the room to make a difference. That is just not true.... We would respect differences in modern families, but we would also insist on respect

for religious liberty as a cornerstone of our democracy," (i.e. Trump's ban on Muslim immigration).

David Brooks, the influential columnist for The New York Times, summarized Haley's speech as the Republican Establishment's case against Trump and indeed it was. The reaction from the Trump forces was swift and venal; pundit Anne Coulter tweeted "Trump should deport Nikki Haley."

Haley's address rekindled the speculation she would be the perfect vice-presidential candidate -- but presumably not for Donald Trump. Her boosters cite the obvious: she is an attractive woman of immigrant parents who's handling of the removal of the Confederate flag was a rare example of racial sensitivity by a Deep South Republican. She's the perfect antidote to the "angry old white men" problem crippling the Republican Party with the fastest growing segments of American votes -- women, the young and people of color.

There is so much irony in all this, it's hard to know where to begin.

First, the Establishment Republicans. It is indeed rich Haley is now the darling of the very folks she ran against when she was first elected. She was a rabid Tea Party favorite. Who can forget the picture and endorsement by Sarah Palin on the steps of the State Capitol in Haley's first gubernatorial campaign (never mind they had to pay Palin)? Palin went all out for Haley with recorded robo calls and TV ads blasting the Establishment and praised Haley as a "kindred spirit."

In many ways, Haley and Palin were a lot alike -- both are attractive, they came from nowhere politically, and they were light on substance and long on flash. But the difference is Palin gave up being governor of Alaska and Haley has continued as governor of South Carolina.

Second, the flag. Prior to the shooting of the Emanuel Nine, no one ever used the words

"Gov. Haley" and "racial sensitivity" in the same sentence. She had been an ardent supporter of keeping the Confederate flag flying and the list of issues where she had ignored the interest of the 30 percent of her citizens who are African-American is very long.

Third, the vice president nomination. The talk is hot and heavy and on the surface it all makes sense she's on everyone's short list of possible candidates. But, I'd bet dollars to donuts it will never happen. The reason is Haley's "problems" from her past.

In her first campaign and early days of her administration, she was dogged by allegations of multiple illicit sexual affairs -- complete with lurid details by a blogger/lover and an affidavit by a lobbyist. Then there were all sorts of allegations of financial irregularities and conflicts of interest which put tens of thousands of dollars in her pocket.

Are the allegations true? Isn't it a double standard to raise sexual issues as she is an attractive woman? Were the payments she received legitimate or a clear corrupt conflict of interest?

As regrettable as it may be, in the hyper media age we live in -- it doesn't matter if they are true or not.

What matters is the allegations are there and though largely forgotten by most South Carolinians, they have never really been resolved. Now fast forward to about five dozen reporters, investigative journalists, hungry bloggers and political rumor mongers descending on Columbia 10 minutes after she is picked for vice president and ... well, you get the picture.

And so does every political operative with access to Google who is charged with vetting Gov. Haley for consideration for the vice president slot.

It's unfortunate, it's ugly, it's disgusting -- and it's also the way it is today.

So, I'm glad Gov. Haley is



taking the high road in condemning Trump and talking about the need for racial and religious tolerance. She presents a good image for our state. Let her enjoy her time in the spotlight.

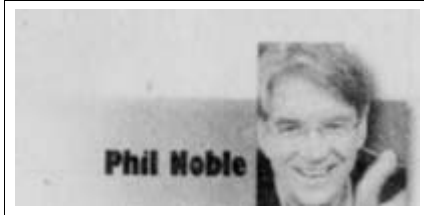
But, let's not let ourselves get

carried away. As many politicians have learned, too much time in the white hot heat of the national political spotlight, and you can get burned. Ask Sarah Palin.

(Phil Noble is a businessman in Charleston and president of

the SC New Democrats, an independent reform group founded by former Gov. Richard Riley. His column is provided by the S.C. News Exchange.)

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FROM STAFF REPORTS

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**State of the State
Address set for tonight**

South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley will deliver the State of the State Address to a joint session of the General Assembly today at 7 p.m. at the Statehouse in Columbia.

Haley's Press Secretary Cheney Adams declined to characterize either the content or the tone of the address when contacted Tuesday evening. State Rep. Mandy Powers, D-Lancaster, will deliver the Democratic response, according to a news release from House Democratic Leader Todd Rutherford.

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Gov. Nikki Haley's righteous gamble

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**Kathleen
Parker**

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gins with civility and communication.

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Haley confirmed on NBC's

COMMENTARY

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Kathleen Parker's email address is kathleenparker@washpost.com. © 2016, Washington Post Writers Group }

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COMMENTARY 148

Future generations need us to handle Pinewood site properly

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This is a public appeal to South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley, all members of South Carolina Legislature, S.C. Commerce Secretary Bobby Hitt and the people of South Carolina.

The toxic waste landfill at the headwaters of Lake Marion deserves your continued attention.

There's no mention of it in Gov. Haley's 2016-17 Executive Budget, but there's a report available here — www.pinewoodstakeholder.com — that provides a comprehensive look at the site's history and ongoing needs.

Pay particular attention to page 21, "Pinewood Site Capital Improvement Projects Request — Summary Spreadsheet."

The state of South Carolina must continue spending whatever is necessary to monitor and maintain the integrity of the toxic waste landfill. Here's our most recent story — <http://bit.ly/1U2I9D8> — and there's a public meeting at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 19, at Oakland Primary school, 5415 Oakland Drive, Sumter.

We've always known that if the landfill starts leaking into Lake Marion, then every water system below the center of the state is in danger. When you look at a map of South Carolina, that's obvious. Just the thought of unpredictable toxic chemicals moving into Lake Marion, on to Lake Moultrie and straight on down into the drinking



Graham Osteen

water in the so-called Holy City of Charleston should send shivers down your collective spines. All the gains we've made as a

state in terms of economic development and continued progress would be damaged badly, perhaps forever, if such a nightmare scenario occurred.

Just look at what's happening in Flint, Michigan, right now.

As a *New York Times* editorial noted this week, "Gov. Rick Snyder of Michigan is scrambling to deal with a terrible water crisis created by his administration in the city of Flint, which is poor and has a black majority. The damage to the nearly bankrupt city and its nearly 100,000 residents by lead-tainted water caused by corrosion in the pipes has yet to be totaled, but there is no doubt that the state has a moral obligation to provide clean water immediately for the citizens and to devise a long-term solution, no matter how costly."

The editorial continues with these chilling words: "This was a catastrophe caused by failures at every level. A task force appointed in October by the governor put the primary blame on the state's Department of Envi-

ronmental Quality, whose director resigned in late December. According to the task force, the state health department apparently had early knowledge about elevated lead levels in the blood of children but kept silent and did not warn the public."

We cannot allow such a situation to ever happen in South Carolina.

The first story I wrote about what was originally known as the GSX Landfill was in 1979, 37 years ago. *The Sumter Item* has never stopped reporting on the issue, and former State Sen. Phil Leventis has been raising holy "you-know-what" since the beginning. He deserves some degree of sainthood for his continued strong action. Thankfully, S.C. Sen. Thomas McElveen and other members of the Sumter and Clarendon legislative delegations have continued that fight. Many concerned citizens over the course of time have contributed to maintaining public awareness and keeping the issues out in the open.

We can't take our eye off the ball now. Do whatever is necessary to maintain the integrity of the landfill each and every year. Future generations depend on us.

Graham Osteen is Editor-At-Large of The Sumter Item. He can be reached at graham@theitem.com. Follow him on Twitter @GrahamOsteen, or visit www.grahamosteen.com.



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148 General Assembly now back in session

Legislators spend 1st week in committees, looking at budgets

BY JIM HILLEY
jim@theitem.com

Local legislators have shared their impressions of the first week of the 2016 session of the South Carolina General Assembly and sound like they are in different time zones.

"In the House, we are starting off our process of dealing with the budget and hearing from agencies," said Rep. Murrell Smith, R-Sumter. "I think it is just a normal first week of session. We've come in and basically been in committees getting our work done."

Rep. David Weeks, D-Sumter, echoed Smith's assessment.

"The House started out as we usually do, with the focus being on the general appropriations bill as the budget process has begun," Weeks said. "A great amount of that time is spent meeting with agency heads and that sort of thing, so we are not actually in session on the House floor but for very short periods of time."

"It allows for committees and subcommittee to meet, and it's

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pretty much a routine we go through every year," he said.

Meanwhile, the Senate began the session remembering Sen. Billy O'Dell, who died Jan. 7.

"We spent that day in memorial service for our colleague Sen. O'Dell," Sen. Thomas McElveen, D-Sumter said. "It was the right thing out of respect for him."

Wednesday was an organizational day, he said.

"Most of the day we spent time with committee selections because we have one new member and a vacancy with O'Dell's seat," McElveen said. "It takes time to run through the roster and get everybody assigned and we also have to pick our seats and things."

"Frankly and candidly, not a whole lot has happened," he said.

"We really haven't done anything so far," Sen. Kevin Johnson, D-Manning, said. "We spent some time memorializing Sen. Odell and we dealt with seating committees and those kinds of things."

Smith said it was an important week.

"Gov. (Nikki) Haley released her education recommendations, and while we are still reviewing them, they are very promising," he said. "It seems like we are making some headway."

He said he was pleased with the governor's infrastructure proposal for areas which lack a property tax base to fund new construction and renovations.

"There's a real effort to identify areas that are under served in education and trying to strengthen those with the governor's proposal," he said.

Weeks said he is concerned that education will not get the funding it needs.

"I think that it will probably be taken up during the budget appropriations to see whether or not we are going to actually fund the Base Student Cost, to see how close to the statutory requirement we are going to come," he said. "We have not fully funded that since I have been (in the General Assembly) and that's a long time. There is a teeny bit of more money this time around, but

there are a lot of requests for it."

Base Student Cost is a statutory formula that was passed by the General Assembly in 1977.

In her recently released budget, the governor proposes funding Basic Student Cost at \$2,220 in fiscal year 2017, 79 percent of the \$2,801 the statute requires.

"It the same thing with the Local Government Fund, and there's a statutory formula that we haven't done too well at fulfilling," Weeks said.

He said the General Assembly will also have to deal with the effects of the flood.

"There are a lot of lingering issues in that area," Weeks said.

Gov. Haley was set to release her budget proposal on Friday, and Smith said he was looking forward to seeing it.

"From my discussion with her office and others about this, I think it is going to be a well-reasoned and sound budget proposal," he said.

Smith said he was encouraged that the General Assembly is tackling some issues at the beginning of the session

rather than toward the middle or end of the session, particularly that the Senate appears set to work on an infrastructure bill.

McElveen said he was frustrated the process hasn't moved ahead more quickly.

"Our constituents and other people in the state are begging us to take up a roads bill," McElveen said. "The roads bill is in our special order slot, and it's just a matter of getting to it. We just have to commit ourselves to staying over here and getting on the bill and giving it time."

He said he is optimistic because a bipartisan Senate working group is trying to deal with some of the issues involved.

"Unfortunately, I am not on that working group," McElveen said, "but I have been speaking to its members. It is going to take the leadership and the majority of the Senate to join the rest of us who have been pushing this for years."

Both chambers of the General Assembly will reconvene at noon Tuesday.





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¹⁴⁸Candidates spew less-than-accurate rhetoric

GOP presidential hopefuls meet in North Charleston

WASHINGTON (AP) — Did Ted Cruz mean to suggest he would have gone to war with Iran because of its brief detention of U.S. sailors? Did Donald Trump forget that he proposed a massive tax on Chinese goods? And does Ben Carson really think Islamic State militants chill out with a cigar?

In their rush to slam the Obama administration, play up their records and play down inconvenient realities, Republican presidential candidates served up some misshapen rhetoric in their latest presidential debate.

The following is a look at some claims and how they compare with the facts:

CRUZ: Any country that makes U.S. service members get on their knees like the 10 sailors whose boats were boarded and seized by the Iranian military this week “will feel the full force and fury of the United States of America.”

CHRIS CHRISTIE: “Tin pot dictators ... are taking our Navy ships.”

THE FACTS: Neither candidate addressed the fact that the short-lived crisis was created by the U.S. sailors who steered their boats into sovereign Iranian waters, where they were boarded and seized by Iranian naval forces. Defense Secretary Ash Carter said Thursday that the U.S. sailors had made a navigation error.

Under such circumstances it would not be unusual to disarm members of a foreign military force — even a small one like the two Navy boats — and hold them temporarily for questioning. What was exceptional about this episode — and perhaps a provocation — is that the Iranians videotaped the Americans during the encounter and posted the images on the Internet.

The suggestion by Cruz that he would have launched a military attack on Iran in response to such an incident is hard to square with accepted international tests for the use of force.

Iran returned the sailors unharmed and their boats undamaged.

CARSON on pursuing Islamic State militants wherever they can be found: “Why should we be letting people smoke their cigars in their comfortable chairs in Raqqa?”

THE FACTS: Carson is not likely to

find IS fighters lounging with cigars in Raqqa, their de facto capital in Syria. The group has imposed a strict smoking ban throughout its territory in Syria and Iraq. In fact, the militant group implements stiff fines for anyone caught smoking, and even more brutal punishments for those caught selling cigarettes, water pipes or anything that can be smoked, cigars included.

Also in the debate, Carson suggested Syrian refugees be allowed to settle in “al-Saqqa province, where they’ll be in their own country.”

But there is no such place. He probably meant al-Raqqa, or Raqqa. As an IS stronghold, it would not be much of a safe haven for people trying to flee the group.

CHRISTIE, countering Rubio’s criticisms for his past positions: “Common Core has been eliminated in New Jersey.” “I never wrote a check to Planned Parenthood.”

THE FACTS: Common Core has not been eliminated in his state — far from it.

A panel Christie put together recommended a series of changes to state standards this week but only recommended changes to 232 out of 1,427 standards in math and English. The panel also proposed renaming the standards the New Jersey Student Learning Standards. A separate Christie panel recommended the state continue using a Common Core-aligned test — and require it for graduation by 2021.

On Planned Parenthood, Christie’s denial is at odds with a Sept. 30, 1994, *Newark Star-Ledger* story that quotes Christie as saying, “I support Planned Parenthood privately with my personal contribution, and that should be the goal of any such agency, to find private donations.”

Christie was running for local office in Morris County, New Jersey, at the time. The same quote appeared again in a book, “Chris Christie: The Inside Story of his Rise to Power,” a book with which Christie cooperated.

The original story was written by *Star-Ledger* reporter Brian Murray, who now works as a spokesman for Christie in the governor’s office. On Tuesday, Christie said he was misquoted in the 1994 story.

TRUMP, denying he told *The New York Times* he favored a 45 percent tax on Chinese goods: “That’s wrong. They were wrong.”

THE FACTS: Trump began wriggling



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out of his idea for a massive tax on Chinese goods soon after he told the paper last week that he would impose one and that "the tax should be 45 percent."

Several days later, he said the tariff could well be much less than that and might not be needed at all because China probably would start trading more fairly in order to avoid it. Now, he denies ever proposing 45 percent, despite his remarks on the record.

More broadly, China no longer appears to be the economic powerhouse portrayed by Trump. Its major stock market has had a rocky start in 2016, and its manufacturing sector began contracting last March as growth slowed, according to a purchasing manager index.

CRUZ, asked about loans from two large banks totaling as much as \$1 million that fueled his 2012 Senate campaign, said he and his wife "ended up investing everything we owned." He acknowledged his failure to disclose the loans to the Federal

Election Commission, saying: "Yes, I made a paperwork error."

THE FACTS: Cruz did, as he asserted, eventually disclose the loans in personal financial forms filed with the Senate. But citing a mere "paperwork error" in failing to report the loans to the FEC glossed over the fact that the law requires candidates to make such reports to the election regulators.

He also did not address the fact that a large chunk of the loans came from Goldman Sachs, where his wife works as an executive, and whether that might have made the loan possible.

CRUZ, asked to explain his slam against Trump's "New York values," said, "not a lot of conservatives come out of Manhattan. I'm just sayin'."

THE FACTS: Cruz may dislike New Yorkers, but he's been willing to take a bundle of money from one of them. Wall Street hedge fund mogul Robert Mercer contributed \$11 million in April to a Cruz-aligned super PAC, according to federal filings. And there's also that Goldman Sachs loan.



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Gov. Nikki Haley, right, views the candidates before the Fox Business Network Republican presidential debate at the North Charleston Coliseum on Thursday.



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148 Haley's budget: \$350M for roads

**Governor's \$7.5B
plan also includes
\$300M for education**

COLUMBIA (AP) — Gov. Nikki Haley released a budget proposal Friday for the coming fiscal year that provides roughly \$350 million for roadwork and \$300 million on education initiatives.

Her roughly \$7.5 billion recommendation for state taxes comes in a year when there's more than \$1 billion in additional revenue available to spend. Most of the windfall stems from years of conservative estimates by the state's

economic advisers and carried-over surpluses.

ROADS

Haley's budget incorporates her plan for fixing South Carolina's crumbling roads and bridges.

Last year, Haley altered her opposition to a gas tax increase, agreeing to raise the tax by 10 cents during the next three years — to 26 cents per gallon — if legislators drastically cut income taxes in 10 years. But legislators balked at the stipulation of eliminating nearly \$9 billion of revenue during the next decade.

Haley said Friday her budget shows it can be done.

It cuts income taxes by \$131 million. According to economic advisers, her goal of cutting the top income tax bracket by 2 percentage points would reduce revenue by \$1.8 billion yearly once fully phased in.

The \$345 million her budget designates for roadwork includes \$49 million from that phased-in gas tax increase.

The DOT has said it needs an additional \$1.5 billion annually over two decades to bring the highway system to good condition, though many dispute that amount. A bill to raise roughly half that is up for debate in the Senate.

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BUDGET

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Haley repeated her threat to veto any road-funding bill that's a net tax increase.

FLOOD RECOVERY

Haley's budget provides \$124 million to cover the state's share for federal assistance amid last October's catastrophic flooding.

Of that, \$49 million is the DOT's share for repairing hundreds of roads and bridges closed during the disaster.

It also includes \$10 million to reimburse the state's unclaimed property fund. Haley approved transferring that amount to the Emergency Management Division in November for its share.

Haley spends \$40 million toward replenishing sand along South Carolina's entire coast. The total cost of nearly \$170 million includes \$71 million in federal spending and \$58 million paid by local governments.

"Tourism is a big part of what we do in South Carolina. Having healthy beaches for people to come back to is important," Haley said.

She also sends \$700,000 to the Department of Health and Environmental Control for additional dam inspectors. The

rupture of dozens of earthen dams contributed to the flooding. Seven new inspectors would double the dam safety division's staff.

Haley's budget does not provide any relief to farmers. Legislative leaders say the state must help farmers survive direct crop losses estimated at \$376 million.

EDUCATION

Haley puts an additional \$165 million toward increasing the "base student cost" by \$80 to \$2,300.

That main funding source for schools is distributed to districts based on a 1977 formula adjusted annually for inflation. The state hasn't fully funded it since the Great Recession. Doing so would take \$520 million more than Haley's proposing.

Haley designates \$20 million toward leasing or buying new school buses. Superintendent Molly Spearman has requested \$34 million to comply with a 15-year replacement cycle law that legislators passed in 2007, then ignored.

Haley's third-year education initiatives include \$13.5 million toward attracting and retaining teachers in impoverished districts, \$29 million to honor her three-year technology commitment and \$11 million in tar-

geted technology spending in poor schools and home Internet access for about 10,000 students.

"It's only good to have a tablet at school if you can take it home and use it," Haley said.

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

The executive budget sends an additional \$113 million to local governments, fully funding the state's obligation for the first time since 2008.

The money, distributed by population, would boost the "local government fund" to \$325.6 million as required under a 1991 law legislators have repeatedly suspended.

PAY RAISES

The only state employees receiving a raise under Haley's plan are prison officers.

Corrections pay is so low, officers are leaving to earn more in other state and local law enforcement agencies, Haley said.

The proposed \$8 million would increase officers pay by \$1,500 on average.

Her budget does provide \$19 million for school bus driver salaries, to help with hiring in poor, rural districts.

And it designates \$96 million to cover slated increases in pension contributions, so employees won't see a decrease in their take-home pay.

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HALEY BUDGET AT A GLANCE

TAX CUTS

- \$131 million cut to state income taxes
- \$9.8 million to begin eliminating military retirees' income taxes

EDUCATION

- \$165 million in increased per-pupil spending distributed to school districts
- \$29 million for technology improvements
- \$27 million for instructional materials
- \$20 million to lease or buy buses
- \$19 million for school bus driver salaries
- \$13.5 million for scholarships aimed at recruiting and retaining teachers in poor, rural districts
- \$11.5 million to cover student growth in charter schools
- \$5.5 million for targeted technology spending in old schools and poor areas
- \$5.5 million for Internet access in roughly 10,000 poor homes
- \$3.7 million to evaluate districts' maintenance and building needs, and design templates for construction

FLOOD RECOVERY

- \$124 million for state's share of disaster-related spending by federal agencies
- \$40 million for state's share to replenish

sand along entire coastline

- \$700,000 for new dam inspectors at the Department of Health and Environmental Control

PUBLIC SAFETY

- \$10.8 million for additional prosecutors
- \$8 million to increase prison officers' pay
- \$7 million to cover half the cost of a new State Law Enforcement Division forensics lab
- \$6.6 million for defense lawyers for people who can't pay
- \$1.1 million for three circuit court judges

BUSINESS RECRUITING

- \$18.5 million for workforce training
- \$13 million for incentives from the "deal closing fund"
- \$1.9 million for rural infrastructure

OTHER

- \$129 million to boost Medicaid reserves
- \$113 million to fully fund local government aid
- \$96 million to cover slated increases in pension contributions
- \$20 million to cover half the cost of a new statewide voting system

148 Rep. Corley: SNAP users should get drug tested

BY DERREK ASBERRY
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One South Carolina House member wants adult family members receiving food stamps to be drug tested to help



Corley

eliminate fraud and "wastefulness" within the program.

Rep. Chris Corley, R-Graniteville, filed four bills in December

2015 that, if passed, would require more eligibility standards for residents receiving government benefits and limit shopping to more "cost-effective" purchases.

Corley said he hears from his constituents that many people are selling their food stamps, known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, for drugs.

To his point, reports surfaced in February 2015 that a six-month investigation resulted in the arrest of Dianne Eubanks, 65, who was the owner of Smoak's Country Store on Piney Heights Road. Eubanks was charged with six counts of food stamp fraud, according to the Aiken County Sheriff's Office.

In addition, Yvonne Key was charged with one count of food stamp fraud at Valley Jacks on Augusta Road in the Warrenville area. The Sheriff's Office obtained a search warrant for the store, and investigators discovered illegal pills and a "large quantity of money associated with the distribution of narcotics."

Corley said his proposal is not an attempt to take benefits away from those who need it; rather, it is a way to

make sure people are using benefits in the way they were intended.

Of the county's 164,753 residents, numbers released in December from the July 2013 census show 29,657, or 18 percent, of the population receive SNAP benefits.

Other states have already been heavily debating the controversial issue of whether drug testing should be a requirement to receive benefits under SNAP.

Georgia signed a similar bill into law in April 2014, but federal and state officials eventually deemed the bill illegal, as it violated the Fourth Amendment, which secures people from all "unreasonable searches."

The effort to drug test recipients has been lauded by other Republicans on a national level, including former GOP presidential candidate and Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker.

Before dropping out of the race in September, Walker told the *Huffington Post* that drug testing before receiving the benefits is "a progressive thing."

Related prefilled bills

Corley also is seeking to reform SNAP in other ways. For example, another filed bill would require those receiving benefits through the program to purchase store-brand items rather than name-brand items.

"If you're buying grits, for example, buying the Kroger brand would obviously be cheaper than buying the Quaker brand. You're getting the same product; it's just about being as cost-effective as possible," Corley said.

Another bill Corley is sponsoring would limit SNAP

benefits for able-bodied adults without dependents.

Under the bill, those residents could receive benefits for three months in a three-year period, and those individuals would be required to undergo an employment and training program.

A final, related bill would promote a healthy diet for SNAP program participants and "impose reasonable restrictions on the purchase of food and drink items with minimal nutritional value including, but not limited to, food and drink items of which 25 percent or more of the calories are from sugar."

Corley reiterated that the purpose of his bills is to make sure benefits are used in the way they were intended.

"It's about eliminating some of the wastefulness within the program," Corley said.

The bill calling for drug testing has been referred to the Committee on Judiciary. The other three have been referred to the Committee on Way and Means.

Other bills Corley has prefilled include one that would give voters an opportunity to decide if the Confederate Flag taken down from the Statehouse six months ago should go back up or remain in the Confederate Relic Room.

The flag was removed following the mass killing of nine black Charleston churchgoers on June 17. Members of Emanuel AME Church were attending church when Dylann Roof, a white gunman, opened fire after attending the service.

Authorities said Roof posted online photos of himself holding a handgun and a Confederate flag before the shooting. The tragedy pushed Gov. Nikki Haley to call for the flag to be taken down from the Statehouse. Legislators put the issue to vote and the flag was taken down less than a month later on July 10.

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