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Subject: Morning Clips – Monday, April 25, 2016

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Governor Nikki Haley News:

Post and Courier (Editorial): Vote for campaign reform

<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160425/160429659/vote-for-campaign-reform>

Political races don't just require candidates to seek votes. Their relentless chase for money also plays a growing role in the campaign competition. But this opening sentence of a Post and Courier front-page story last week provided another reminder that even politicians who aren't on the ballot this year are still at least indirectly involved in the fund-raising quest: "A political advocacy group created to target political opponents of Gov. Nikki Haley in this year's elections has reported raising \$515,000 in donations from just a handful of contributors." The group's title is A Great Day S.C., in keeping with Gov. Haley's familiar slogan, "It's a Great Day in South Carolina." However, the ever-intensifying pressure on politicians to raise ever-more campaign money now exerts far too great an impact on our self-governing process. Yes, it's reasonable that Gov. Haley wants to help legislative candidates, both incumbents and challengers, who will back her initiatives in the General Assembly. It's also fair for her to try to help defeat those who oppose her proposals. Yet the all-too-direct link between contributions and access to those in power raises serious concerns.

General Assembly News:

Post and Courier: Palmetto Sunrise: Crossover week is here

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160425/PC1603/160429624>

Gavin Jackson

State lawmakers have until Sunday to pass bills originating in their respective chambers or consider them likely dead for the year. The May 1 crossover deadline marks the annual make or break point for bills to pass either the House or the Senate in order to have a shot at becoming a law this year. If bills don't clear their respective chamber by the deadline it would take a two-thirds vote to send legislation to the other chamber. Bills will need to pass third reading Thursday or receive key second reading approval by Thursday with automatic third reading granted for Friday. The Senate will be working through its 84-page calendar this week to determine the legislative winners and losers ahead of budget debates that could start Thursday. The House has a lighter, 24-page calendar to work from, so far, during the start of crossover week.

LGBT Laws:

WIS: House legislators to file HB2 repeal Monday

<http://www.wistv.com/story/31803565/house-legislators-to-file-hb2-repeal-monday>

On Monday morning, Representatives Darren Jackson, Graig Meyer, Susi Hamilton, and Grier Martin will file a bill to repeal House Bill 2 (Public Facilities Privacy Act) in its entirety. As part of this effort, the four Representatives will hold a joint press conference on Monday at 11:00 am in the NCGA pressroom to further explain beginning the effort to repeal House Bill 2. "The damage to NC's

reputation and economy has been swift and is growing exponentially. House Bill 2 is bad for all NC citizens and it is bad for all NC businesses." This, according to a press release sent out by the North Carolina Democratic Party.

Charlotte Observer: Opponents of HB2 gather in Charlotte church to call for repeal

<http://www.charlotteobserver.com/living/religion/article73693517.html>

Tim Funk

Nearly 400 people opposed to North Carolina's House Bill 2 packed Myers Park Baptist Church on Sunday night to sing, pray, light candles, listen to a rousing sermon and contribute money to support the legal battle to throw out the controversial law. The interfaith event was organized by about 40 liberal clergy who have decried the N.C. General Assembly decision to override a Charlotte city ordinance that would have extended anti-discrimination protections to the LGBT community and would have allowed transgender persons to use the bathroom of their gender identity. The agenda included a blessing of Charlotte Mayor Jennifer Roberts, members of the City Council, and Mecklenburg County officials.

Charlotte Observer: Charlotte gay wedding defies United Methodist Church rules

<http://www.charlotteobserver.com/living/religion/article73685782.html>

Tim Funk

They knew it could mean a reprimand or even a church trial that might end their careers. Still, the pastor of Charlotte's First United Methodist Church and a retired bishop who once did jail time with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. decided to go ahead over the weekend and preside at the wedding of John Romano and Jim Wilborne. The two Charlotte men became the first same-sex couple in North Carolina to get married – at least publicly – in a United Methodist church. But the mainline denomination's Book of Discipline sanctions only marriage between a man and a woman. So there could be consequences for the Rev. Val Rosenquist and Bishop Melvin Talbert – the clergy who performed the wedding – if any complaints are filed with Bishop Larry Goodpaster, who leads the Western North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church.

The State: Boycott over Target bathroom policy nets more than 400,000 pledges

<http://www.thestate.com/news/nation-world/national/article73657512.html>

Maegan Smith

On Tuesday, Target announced that transgender people would be able to use the bathroom and fitting room that aligns with their gender identity in Target stores. By Sunday, more than 400,000 pledges to boycott the big-box retailer had been collected. The conservative American Family Association is calling for the boycott, echoing arguments used to support controversial North Carolina legislation requiring transgender people to use the bathroom that matches their sex at birth. "Target's policy is exactly how sexual predators get access to their victims," AFA President Tim Wildmon said Thursday in a statement on the group's website. "And with Target publicly boasting that men can enter women's bathrooms, where do you think predators are going to go? Clearly, Target's new policy poses a danger to wives and daughters."

SC Political News:

Post and Courier: State Democrats to pick national convention delegates Saturday

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160424/PC1603/160429734>

Maya T. Prabhu

South Carolina Democrats will gather for their annual state convention Saturday to select the

individuals who will represent them as delegates to nominate a president in Philadelphia in July. Throughout the day, voting will be held to choose the 59 delegates and four alternates for the Democratic National Convention. There are 179 Democrats vying to be a delegate, with 22 of those coming from Charleston County. "What came out of the primary is the total number of delegates that each (candidate) would receive," S.C. Democratic Party Executive Director Jason Perkey said. "The elections are putting people with those numbers."

SC Elections:

The State: SC sheriff candidate: Campaign signs damaged, defaced

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/article73665847.html#storylink=apmobile>

Glen Luke Flanagan

A candidate for Richland County sheriff said several of his campaign signs have been cut and damaged, and some defaced with racial slurs. James Flowers, a former State Law Enforcement Division Agent who is running in the Democratic primary against incumbent Sheriff Leon Lott, said in a news release some signs have been defaced over the past month in the northeast part of the county. As of Sunday evening, Flowers said Sunday, six signs had been damaged. He also said in a news release, "Signs have also been written on with vulgar, racist themed writing," though details were not given.

The Herald: Chester sheriff could see surge for re-election after lawsuit win

<http://www.heraldonline.com/news/local/article73541107.html>

Andrew Dys

Wiping away tears, Chester County Sheriff Alex Underwood said Thursday what his campaign signs say – that he is "somebody you can trust." Now, he can point to a jury verdict that could have ended his career as more evidence of his trustworthiness as he seeks to keep the top law enforcement – and most visible – political job in Chester County. "People could see in the verdict that their belief in him (Underwood), and what he has done, is legitimized," Belk said. The civil trial last week could have demolished Underwood's political chances. But after 18 months of denying the allegations, 12 jurors ruled Underwood was trustworthy. Thousands of voters come next.

Opinion/Editorial:

The State: US Attorney Nettles: How we can form a more perfect re-union

<http://www.thestate.com/opinion/op-ed/article73361957.html#storylink=apmobile>

Opinion Extra: Bill Nettles

In the beloved words of the preamble to our Constitution, the Founding Fathers invited "a more perfect Union." This constitutional charge is not static; each new generation of Americans inherits both its burden and its privilege. Its ideals are neither stale nor antiquated. It is a collective obligation that extends even to now. As the U.S. attorney for the South Carolina, I have worked these past six years alongside career prosecutors and state and federal law enforcement in pursuit of the Founding Fathers' aspirations to enable security and establish justice and promote great welfare. Together, we have worked to produce safer neighborhoods within which to live and to raise our children. Today, violent and drug crime is at significantly impactful lows. But the question persists: Can we do better? Can we be even "more perfect" in our union?

The State: Thousands in SC will lose food aid in July

<http://www.thestate.com/opinion/op-ed/article73362857.html#storylink=apmobile>

Guest Columnist: Sue Berkowitz

In less than three months, some of the poorest residents in South Carolina will lose a critical tool to help them get enough to eat each day. Beginning in July, a draconian time limit on basic assistance to keep food on the table will go into effect for thousands of non-disabled adults ages 18-49 who are not caring for minor children. Cutting off this basic assistance to the poorest South Carolinians will not make them better able to find employment or more hours of work. It will simply mean increased hunger for some of our most vulnerable citizens.

South Carolina News:

The State: Medal of Honor recipient returns to Columbia to speak to students

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/article73690332.html#storylink=apmobile>

Glen Luke Flanagan

It's one of his missions these days – trying to show students that the military is a good place to be. He has another stop this week to meet with students in Ohio. "I want them to understand somebody is always standing up for them to make sure they're safe and make sure they've got the freedoms that are in the Constitution – and to realize that down the road, they too have to step up to the plate, and take care of future generations," Morris said.

WIS: Bikers rally against child abuse in South Carolina

<http://www.wistv.com/story/31802650/bikers-rally-against-child-abuse-in-south-carolina>

Caroline Patrickis

On Sunday, bikers rallied at the American Legion against child abuse in an effort to ensure that all children grow up in safe environments. It was their first event that featured food, an afternoon of live music, and bikers who are passionate about putting an end to child abuse. The event is hosted by the nonprofit organization Bikers Against Child Abuse. Event organizers say the purpose of the event is to start the conversation about an issue that affects many families in the Midlands. In the last three years, the Department of Social Services has reported 27,200 cases of child abuse in the state of South Carolina.

Times and Democrat: New invasive pest identified in S.C. wheat field

http://thetandd.com/business/agriculture/article_6f39c471-7b7b-506b-a6af-f5f1dbde967b.html

Scott Miller

A rare, invasive aphid has been found attacking wheat crops in Hampton County. This is the first documented case of the *Sipha maydis* aphid in South Carolina, said Francis Reay-Jones, an entomologist at the Clemson University Pee Dee Research and Education Center in Florence. More commonly found in Europe, Asia and parts of Africa, the *Sipha maydis* aphid has been moving eastward since its first U.S. sighting in California in 2007. The invasive pest was found in a Georgia greenhouse in 2012 and in an Alabama wheat field last year. "The insect has been reported to feed on a range of grass hosts, including wheat, oats, barley, johnsongrass, sorghum and corn," he said. "The insect is of particular concern in small grain crops as it can transmit barley yellow dwarf virus."

Local News:

Associated Press: 4 injured in balcony collapse near Clemson University

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=cIP6Uic9

SC State Wire

Authorities say about 15 people were standing on a balcony that collapsed at a house near Clemson

University, injuring several of them. The Greenville News reports (<http://goo.gl/SIbbdE>) that four people were taken to a hospital after the collapse Saturday night. The city's police chief, Jimmy Dixon, says the injuries didn't appear to be life-threatening. Investigators are still working to figure out what caused the collapse.

Greenville News: Balcony collapses, 4 injured in City of Clemson

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/2016/04/24/city-of-clemson-balcony-collapses-4-injured/83463382/>

Romando Dixson

EMS transported four people to the hospital after a balcony collapsed Saturday evening, the Clemson City Police Department said. About 15 people were on a balcony at a residence in the 200 block of Calhoun Street when the balcony collapsed about 8:30 p.m. Saturday, Police Chief Jimmy Dixon said. Four individuals were transported to the hospital with nonlife-threatening injuries, Dixon said. Investigators have not determined a reason for the collapse, police said. The investigation is ongoing.

Greenville News: 1 dead in small plane crash in Greenville County

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/2016/04/24/coroner-called-plane-crash-greenville-county/83477102/>

Romando Dixson

A man died Sunday evening when his small airplane crashed in a large, grassy field in southern Greenville County, the Coroner's Office said. Residents reported the plane crash about 5:30 p.m. Sunday off Oak Hill Road in Belton, the Sheriff's Office said. Deputies, firefighters, and EMS responded to the area. The pilot, who was the lone occupant of the single-engine plane, was pronounced dead at the scene, Deputy Coroner Kent Dill said.

Post and Courier: Leaders, gun violence survivors rally at Emanuel AME Church to close Charleston loophole

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160424/PC16/160429634>

Jennifer Berry Hawes and Melissa Boughton

South Carolina is the fourth-deadliest state for gun homicides. There were 5.31 gun slayings for every 100,000 people in the state in 2013, 47 percent higher than the national average, according to the Center for American Progress. "We need to send a message to the Republicans who would rather spend three months on tracking down 87 refugees in the state of South Carolina, who would rather hold a committee hearing on the bathroom bills," Kimpson said. "We need to send a message that there's too many deaths. ... We need to send a message that gun reform is a significant issue in South Carolina." Clark delivered a sermon about bringing the nation closer to God and expressed support for extending the background check requirement. She replaced the Rev. Clementa Pinckney, a state senator who died in the shooting at the church.

Independent Mail: VIDEO: Former NewSpring pastor coping with his wife's fatal shooting

<http://www.independentmail.com/news/crime/Former-NewSpring-pastor-coping-with-his-wifes-fatal-shooting-376908101.html>

Kirk Brown and Madeline Buckley

Former NewSpring Church youth pastor Davey Blackburn returned to Anderson on Sunday to talk about how he has coped since his pregnant wife was slain nearly six months ago at their home in Indianapolis. Sitting at a table in front of more than 2,000 people in NewSpring's cavernous auditorium, Senior Pastor Perry Noble asked Blackburn if he has forgiven the three men charged in Amanda Blackburn's fatal shooting. "Early on I recognized that forgiveness is not a feeling because I

can tell you right now that if I am waiting to feel like forgiving the people who killed my wife — that's never going to happen," Blackburn said. "What I had to realize is that forgiveness is a decision that I had to wake up and make every single morning. It is a daily decision." "If I live with bitterness and unforgiveness in my heart, it is a cancer that is killing nobody else except for me. So, it will eat me up inside if I just hold bitterness to these guys."

Aiken Standard: Public Safety chief speaks about active shooters

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/article/20160420/AIK0101/160429712>

Scott Rodgers

Chief John Thomas, director of the North Augusta Department of Public Safety, spoke at the North Augusta Chamber of Commerce's event about potential active shooter situations. Thomas said since the FBI has been keeping stats in 2000, active shooter events are up 200 percent. "Do you have a plan? What plan do you have in place that's going to keep you safe, your employees safe; it's critical that you look at this with an open mind and understand the importance of it," Thomas said. "I hope and pray it never happens, but I don't have that assurance. The statistics tell us that." Thomas shared a recently released video from the FBI called "The Coming Storm." The video dramatizes the aftermath of a campus shooting, showing the steps necessary from law enforcement's perspective.

The State: Lexington sheriff moving more deputies into neighborhoods

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/article73688332.html#storylink=apmobile>

Tim Flach

Lexington County deputies are no longer taking to the air to hunt fugitives, a change aimed at improving crime prevention on the ground. Sheriff Jay Koon is grounding the helicopter as one of a series of steps to add deputies who will keep an eye on neighborhoods more often as part of an effort to reduce burglaries and thefts across the 758-square-mile county. It's one of the changes in county law enforcement that Koon is making since taking charge a year ago, planning to rely on State Law Enforcement Division aircraft as necessary. Other changes coming include turning over transport of inmates for health care outside the Midlands to security officers at Lexington Medical Center and getting schools to chip in more for classroom security.

The Herald: New online tools for tracking crime in Rock Hill neighborhoods

<http://www.heraldonline.com/news/local/article73590627.html>

Hannah Strong

The Rock Hill Police Department has released an updated crime mapping dashboard that officials hope will provide city residents and visitors information that is easier to access and use concerning crime in the city. The map data is accessible through the City of Rock Hill website and features visual tools for citizens to view specific data in a number of different ways. And unlike the previous crime mapping data, "this is live data," said Capt. Mark Bollinger, spokesman for the Rock Hill police. "It gets dumped down from our computer software system." Bollinger said the updated map is much more user friendly. "This is going to be easier for anybody, even if they don't use a computer a lot," Bollinger said.

National News:

Associated Press: Authorities: Pot operations found in homes where 8 died

<http://bigstory.ap.org/urn:publicid:ap.org:42ed834a6e3a4860873c44f09f128555>

Anna Sanner

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Marijuana growing operations were discovered at some of the crime

scenes where officials said eight family members were killed in a "pre-planned execution," raising more questions as authorities scrambled to find a suspect or suspects in the slayings in a rural southern Ohio community. The killings at four homes near the small community of Piketon on Friday was "a sophisticated operation," Attorney General Mike DeWine said at a news conference Sunday. Seven adults and one teenage boy were found shot in the head; three young children were not harmed. "This was a pre-planned execution of eight individuals," DeWine said.

Associated Press: Cruz, Kasich strategies align with goal of beating Trump

<http://bigstory.ap.org/urn:publicid:ap.org:2c7fe3233df943e295454016f2fb6fa3>

Steve Peoples and Ken Thomas

Donald Trump's rivals are joining forces to deny him the necessary delegates to win the Republican presidential nomination, the latest display of strife in a convulsive 2016 GOP race. Ted Cruz and John Kasich issued near-simultaneous statements Sunday outlining an extraordinary compact that may be unprecedented in modern American politics. Under the arrangement, the Kasich campaign will give Cruz "a clear path in Indiana." In return, the Cruz campaign will "clear the path" for Kasich in Oregon and New Mexico. The arrangement does not address the five Northeastern states set to vote on Tuesday, where Trump is expected to add to his already overwhelming delegate lead. Kasich and Cruz had already retreated to Indiana, which holds its primary on May 3. Yet the shift offers increasingly desperate Trump foes a glimmer of hope in their long and frustrating fight to halt the former reality television star's unlikely rise.

Associated Press: Obama says new US troops in Syria will be essential

<http://bigstory.ap.org/urn:publicid:ap.org:4fd8b6e12d434a8ab0ef27c0d9b6a20e>

Darlene Superville and Kathleen Hennessey

President Barack Obama on Monday announced the deployment to Syria of an additional 250 U.S. special operations forces to assist local troops who are trying to dislodge Islamic State extremists, significantly broadening the American presence in the war-torn country. The move will bring the number of personnel to roughly 300, up from about 50 special operations forces currently in Syria. Obama revealed his decision a week after Defense Secretary Ash Carter announced that more than 200 U.S. troops soon will be headed to Iraq, where local forces are also battling Islamic State militants who control areas of that country. He said the newest insertion of U.S. forces will not be in combat roles.

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