

Title: **Haley takes jobs trip outside S.C.**

Author:

Size: 5.27 square inch

Rock Hill, SC Circulation: 34688



### **Haley takes jobs trip outside S.C.**

**COLUMBIA** Gov. Nikki Haley is traveling outside South Carolina, but the governor's office refuses to give her whereabouts, saying only that she's on a job recruiting trip.

Spokesman Rob Godfrey said Monday that Haley and Commerce Department officials are on an economic development mission, which is confidential because of its competitive nature. Godfrey says details of the trip and its cost will be released but gave no timeline.

Haley's office said she left Sunday with one member of her staff and Commerce officials. The group returns Wednesday.

AP



Title: **Saving S.C. State will be challenging**

Author:

Size: 37.66 square inch

Rock Hill, SC Circulation: 34688

## Our view

# Saving S.C. State will be challenging

While the actions proposed by state lawmakers to save South Carolina State University are drastic, they at least offer evidence that the Legislature is determined to prevent the state's only public historically black university from closing its doors.

S.C. State has been in financial decline for years. But the patience of lawmakers appeared to run out after a large infusion of state money in December failed to turn things around.

A legislative panel chaired by Senate President Pro Tem Hugh Leatherman agreed in December to grant S.C. State \$12 million over three years. The school received the first \$1.5 million payment soon after, but the amount it owes in unpaid bills continued to grow by \$1 million and now totals \$11 million.

Leatherman said he has lost faith in S.C. State's trustees, and it now appears likely that the entire board will be fired. The school's president, Thomas Elzey, has been suspended with pay, and he also could be fired, although two years remain on his contract and he could be owed about \$400,000 if fired without just cause.

A proposal to replace S.C. State's board with a temporary one appointed by Leatherman and other lawmakers is co-sponsored by the Senate's Democratic leader as well as two senators who graduated from the school. The Legislative Black Caucus also has called for Elzey to step down.

And, significantly, U.S. Rep. Jim Clyburn, D-S.C., now has called for the ouster

of the board. Clyburn who, along with his wife, graduated from S.C. State in 1961, has been one of the school's biggest boosters,

Despite the seriousness of this plan, it is a step back from a proposal by the S.C. House Ways and Means Committee to close the school for two years while it undergoes a massive overhaul. Fortunately, the plan had little support in the full House, and senators promised to kill it if it passed.

"I don't think anybody wants to see South Carolina State closed, and I hope that's never a serious consideration," said Gov. Nikki Haley last month, no doubt echoing the sentiments of most lawmakers, not to mention students, alumni and other supporters of the university. But, Haley added, "we want to help you but you're not helping yourself."

No single factor is the source of S.C. State's woes. It has suffered years of declining enrollment, along with a drop in state funding and federal changes that made many students ineligible for grants.

But critics say school leaders did little to stop the bleeding. Elzey, who took over in the spring of 2013, said the school had continued to spend as if nothing had changed.

Part of the problem could be a declining attraction of traditionally black colleges and universities, as other institutions continue to draw African American students. However, a number of traditionally black schools – Spel-

man College, Morehouse College, Howard University, Tuskegee University, Florida A&M University – continue to thrive around the nation.

S.C. State has a rich tradition that many of its defenders would like to preserve and build upon. But the school, even under better circumstances, would have to deal with many of the same challenges facing other state-supported colleges in South Carolina: flat enrollment, the recession, lack of state funding, delayed maintenance, low faculty morale.

But those challenges are compounded for S.C. State, which is \$11 million in the hole with no obvious way out.

If state lawmakers are committed – as we hope they are – to preserving S.C. State, new leadership and stable funding could help. But the school also will have to find a way to reverse declining enrollment, which no doubt stems in part from the uncertainty of the school's future.

Rescuing S.C. State won't be easy. But, as Haley stated, no one wants to see it close.

## » Online Your view

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submit-letter](http://heraldonline.com/submit-letter)

## In summary

While S.C. State has numerous problems to solve before it can regain its stability, we hope the state is committed to saving it.

Title: **S.C. Senate looks for own plan to repair roads**  
 Author: By Jeffrey Collins Associated Press  
 Size: 45.57 square inch  
 Rock Hill, SC Circulation: 34688



# S.C. Senate looks for own plan to repair roads

## Committee viewing 6 bills to increase road revenue

By JEFFREY COLLINS  
 Associated Press

**COLUMBIA** As the South Carolina House prepares to begin debating how to raise more money to maintain and repair state roads, several other plans are being discussed by a special Senate committee.

While two bills in the House look to raise about \$400 million more for roads a year, the Senate appears to want to direct a larger amount to roads.

The Senate also appears less interested than the House and Gov. Nikki Haley in changing the way the S.C. Department of Transportation operates.

In a report last year, the DOT estimated it needed more than \$1 billion extra to get the state's roads and bridges to good condition.

A special Senate committee is reviewing six bills with four different plans to increase road revenue.

Here are highlights of the plans.

### Grooms' plan

Sen. Larry Grooms has two bills to increase road funding.

Both would involve raising the gas tax by 20 cents over a decade, while incrementally cutting the state's income tax rate 2 percentage points.

He also wants to take 20 percent of any new revenue South Carolina gets each budget year and put it toward roads until 5 percent of the state's general budget is paying for highways and bridges.

Grooms said his plans would raise much more than the \$400 million per year the House and governor seem focused on.

"Four-hundred million dollars doesn't even buy us any new lane capacity," said Grooms, R-Charleston, at the

subcommittee meeting last week.

### Gas tax rebate

South Carolina drivers would get a break from gas tax increases under a plan sponsored by Sen. Paul Thurmond.

After DOT submits its budget, any tax increase needed would be considered by a financial accountability board of state leaders, said Thurmond, R-Charleston.

But South Carolina tax-

payers wouldn't have to pay the extra tax under Thurmond's plan.

He is still working out the details, but he said he would like a system where South Carolina drivers could scan their licenses at the pump, and get a printout at the end of the year of how much fuel they bought and taxes paid. They would then get that money back on their income taxes.

Thurmond acknowledges there may be problems with the Commerce Clause in the U.S. Constitution by charging out-of-state drivers and not South Carolina residents. But he is asking for more research.

"We can charge more for out-of state people who go to college and out-of-state fishing licenses," Thurmond said.

### Local gas tax

Counties could hold referendums to decide if their taxpayers were

willing to charge a countywide 5-cent gas tax under a bill filed by Sen. Greg Gregory, R-Lancaster. Any county that passes the tax could use the money for its own roads. A county could hold a vote every two years.

### Borrowing for interstates

Sen. Nikki Setzler wants South Carolina to borrow hundreds of millions of dollars to put new lanes on its interstates.

Setzler's bill would place about \$60 million from sales tax collected on vehicles into a Lane Expansion Fund in the State Infrastructure Bank. That money would be used to fund road construction borrowing.

"You want to do something that would put us on the cutting-edge very quick? Widen the interstates," said Setzler, D-West Columbia.

South Carolina has 851 miles of interstate highway. About 80 percent of it has only two lanes in each direction.



Gregory

Title: **S.C.Senate looks for own plan to repair roads**  
Author: By Jeffrey Collins Associated Press  
Size: 45.57 square inch  
Rock Hill, SC Circulation: 34688



HERALD FILE PHOTO

Traffic on Interstate 77, looking south. Two bills in the House look to raise about \$400 million more for roads a year, but the Senate appears to want more for roads.



Title: **Gov.'s office: Haley on covert jobs trip**

Author:

Size: 6.97 square inch

Greenville, SC Circulation: 113473



### **Gov.'s office: Haley on covert jobs trip**

Gov. Nikki Haley is traveling outside South Carolina, but the governor's office refuses to give her whereabouts, saying only that she's on a job recruiting trip. Spokesman Rob Godfrey said Monday that Haley and Commerce Department officials are on an economic development mission, which is confidential. Godfrey says details of the trip and its cost will be released when feasible. He gave no timeline. Haley's office said she left Sunday with one member of her staff and Commerce officials. How many is unknown, but they include Secretary Bobby Hitt. The group returns Wednesday. Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster told The Associated Press he was informed Sunday night she'd be traveling, but he doesn't know her location either.



Title: **What is Lindsey Graham thinking?**  
Author:  
Size: 40.3 square inch  
Columbia, SC Circulation: 128564

# What is Lindsey Graham thinking?

Lindsey Graham is not stupid. No matter what you think of his politics, he's neither clueless nor lacking common sense. He's a very smart man who knows the political landscape better than most. So why is he entertaining a run for the presidency?

He can't win the Republican nomination. Despite numerous appearances on Fox News and Sunday talk shows, the senior senator from South Carolina doesn't have the national recognition needed to either win primaries or raise the kind of money needed to overcome the more recognized candidates.

And no, he isn't positioning himself as the vice-presidential nominee. A senator (or governor) from South Carolina adds nothing to the ticket. The Palmetto State is already as red as it can get, as is most of the South. It's even doubtful that Graham would be an effective stump campaigner for whomever the GOP



RAINIER EHRHARDT/AP

## U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham was re-elected easily in November.

chooses.

His fundraising capabilities are moderate, at best, so he won't be bringing in unique money, especially since those likely to donate on his behalf already would donate to Republicans.



**Speight**

So what is the point in jumping into the nomination sweepstakes?

Graham's PAC, Security Through Strength, focuses heavy on military issues, primarily the fight against radical Islam. This is true to the subject Graham is

most often invited to discuss on national television: national security. The other issues on which Graham is cited as a leader are merely fluff to round out his resume.

What it appears Lindsey Graham is doing is running for secretary of defense.

It cannot be disputed that the senator loves the military. He has been a champion for service members and veterans and believes to his core in the necessity of strong armed forces.

By emphasizing his military-related bona fides on

the stump and the debate stage, Graham would burnish his reputation as the "defense candidate." Once a Republican is elected — not a given but a better-than-even bet — the name most prominent when the defense job is vetted will be Lindsey Graham.

For further consideration, should this scenario play out, might Gov. Nikki Haley resign so her successor, Henry McMaster, could appoint her to fill Graham's unfinished term?

**CHARLIE SPEIGHT**  
*Lexington*

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Title: **Graham, Haley waste tax dollars**

Author:

Size: 4.80 square inch

Columbia, SC Circulation: 128564

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## **Graham, Haley waste tax dollars**

The next time you hear Sen. Lindsey Graham or Gov. Nikki Haley lament government waste, think about their lawsuit that would not let a \$3 billion-over-budget jobs project, the Mixed Oxide Fuel plant (MOX) die a natural death.

Thanks to their lawsuit, in the next federal budget the taxpayers will be soaked \$345 million for a work slow-down to *not* complete a plant that would *not* have a salable product.

ROBERT V. WILLIAMS  
*Columbia*

Title: **Poised for greatness**  
 Author:  
 Size: 59.21 square inch  
 Columbia, SC Circulation: 128564



# Poised for greatness

If you want to see great things happening in South Carolina, stop by your local school. You will be inspired by the professional educators, enthusiastic students and culture of learning surrounding you.

Computer labs are full of students taking online classes through VirtualSC, the statewide virtual learning program, one of the fastest growing in the nation. Our graduation rate is now 80 percent, the highest in state history. For the past several years, we've been one of the nation's leaders in adult education, providing hope for young men and women and increased work opportunities.

The foundation for our state's future is being laid today, in classrooms across South Carolina. We should be proud. Education stakeholders, technical colleges, institutions of higher education and the business community have come together with one common vision. Through partnerships, we have developed a profile of the ideal graduate, which tells us what high school graduates need to know to be ready for college, careers and ci-

tizenship.

This profile of the graduate has been adopted by the State Board of Education, the Education Oversight Committee and TransformSC and has been presented to members of the Legislature. Having this joint focus means we're doing everything possible to prepare our students for successful lives after graduation.

New standards for English/language arts and mathematics are nearly ready for adoption. In a collaborative approach, parents, teachers, college professors, businessmen and -women and community leaders came together to draft and review new, high-quality standards that are appropriate for South Carolina. I am proud of these new standards and the thousands of hours of work conducted by so many people who care about public education in our state.

We will have new tests this spring and are engaging parents, teachers and the business community to spread awareness of them. These tests are all timed, reflecting a departure from previous testing in South Carolina.

ACT Aspire will be administered to students in grades three through eight, while ACT Workkeys and The ACT will be given to students in the 11th grade. To learn more — and to ensure students are prepared to succeed on these assessments — please visit the S.C. Department of Education website and click on the ACT button.

We've placed numerous demands on those leading our schools and classrooms during the past few years, and I believe it's time for us to take a deep breath, slow down and let our teachers do what they do best: Teach. Sometimes, we think policy ideas should come from Columbia, but find out later that trying to implement them in the field doesn't work.

Local control works best. That's why I endorsed a commonsense approach to allow the occasional Chick-fil-A biscuit or cupcake to be sold in schools. Let's trust the parents and teachers in our communities. They know what works and doesn't work better than anyone in Washington.

Having been both a classroom teacher and an assistant principal, I know this for sure: Great teachers want to work for great principals. We are working

to deliver the best principal and teacher leadership, development and mentoring. Great teachers and principals are the keys to stronger student achievement.

Technology has the potential to transform education. I support Gov. Nikki Haley's vision for technology in our schools — which was funded by the General Assembly — to expand high-speed Internet access to all of South Carolina. Technology can bring the world to a child's doorstep, even in the most rural part of our state.

The S.C. Department of Education will continue to build our own connection to parents, students and educators through technology. I encourage you to visit our website at [ed.sc.gov](http://ed.sc.gov) and participate in our social media outreach.

I am truly grateful for the opportunity to serve as your state superintendent of education. When I visit schools, I see project-based learning, innovative ways of teaching and students truly engaged. Working together, I know we will be successful in building better schools and brighter futures.

*Ms. Spearman is the state superintendent of education; contact her at [SCSuptED@ed.sc.gov](mailto:SCSuptED@ed.sc.gov).*

Title: **Poised for greatness**

Author:

Size: 59.21 square inch

Columbia, SC Circulation: 128564



Molly M. Spearman

*Guest Columnist*



TRACY GLANTZ/TGLANTZ@THESTATE.COM

**Hands-on learning programs such as the remote-control competition that Lower Richland High School hosted in the fall are helping prepare students for college, careers and citizenship.**



Title: **Autism leaders says state funding may fall short**  
 Author: BY LAUREN SAUSSER [lsausser@postandcourier.com](mailto:lsausser@postandcourier.com)  
 Size: 41.07 square inch  
 Charleston, SC Circulation: 110289

# Autism leaders says state funding may fall short

BY LAUREN SAUSSER

[lsausser@postandcourier.com](mailto:lsausser@postandcourier.com)

Last fall, the new South Carolina Medicaid director told lawmakers he needed \$30 million to comply with a recent federal rule that requires states to cover autism therapy for children enrolled in the low-income health insurance program.

But based on Gov. Nikki Haley's executive budget request, he may only get about half that much.

"There's no way it will end up being enough," said Kim Thomas, president of the South Carolina Autism Society.

But the new rule is still exciting, she said. The money will mainly pay for expensive, but effective treatment called "Applied Behavior Analysis"

for thousands of children and teenagers in South Carolina who have been diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder.

"Medicaid is finally realizing the value of ABA therapy, but it's important to note that they didn't have a choice," Thomas said. "This was a federal ruling."

Christian Soura, who was appointed by Haley as the new Medicaid director in November, told state senators shortly after he accepted the job that his

agency would need \$8.7 million in state money for the new autism rule.

That amount would allow his department to draw down about \$21 million more from the federal government to fully fund the program — for a \$30 million total.

But Haley's executive budget, which she released in January, only asks the General Assembly to approve \$4.8 million in state funds for autism. If the Legislature signs off on that amount, the available federal match will be much smaller — only about \$11 million or \$12 million. In that case, Soura must comply with the new rule using only \$16 million, not \$30 million.

"There's always uncertainty when you're trying to do budget projections that far in advance," Soura said. "Nobody should look at this like a sign that the commitment is not there."

The department may have needed the full \$30 million if Medicaid started covering autism services at the beginning of the fiscal year on July 1, Soura said. But it's more likely autism benefits won't be available until at least Oct. 1. The governor's bud-

get request reflects the difference between funding the new rule for a whole fiscal year versus a partial fiscal year, he said.

Fewer than 700 children enrolled in a special Medicaid waiver program currently receive autism services through the department. More than 1,000 children are sitting on that waiting list, according to data provided by the agency last year.

The new federal rule says states must pay for autism services for all children who have been diagnosed from birth to 21 years old if they're covered by Medicaid. That will cost the state millions more every year.

"We don't know, and we can't know, precisely how much we

need," said Lorri Unumb, the vice president for state government affairs for Autism Speaks, a national advocacy group. "I think it's a good idea to try to hit \$30 million altogether with state and federal funds. That might be more than we need, but if it's more than we need, then great. We have money in the pot for next year."

South Carolina Medicaid leaders said at a day-long autism summit in Columbia late last

year that they were more concerned about finding enough therapists who offer autism services to meet the increased need, than they were about convincing lawmakers to approve money for the new rule.

But Thomas says the bigger problem is that Medicaid payments to providers are too low.

"The issue is the funding," she said. "Those of us who are really digging into it, it's really more of an issue that they're not paying."

Unumb confirmed that South Carolina Medicaid reimbursement rates for autism services are much lower compared to other states.

For example, she said, line therapists in Louisiana earn \$50 an hour from the Medicaid program. Here, they earn between \$13 and \$15 an hour from Medicaid for the same services.

"It is clear to me that the paltry reimbursement rates are the primary driver of any provider capacity issues we have in South Carolina," she said.

Reach **Lauren Sausser** at 937-5598.

Title: **Haley, Lucas push to revive ethics bill**  
 Author: BY JEREMY BORDEN [jborden@postandcourier.com](mailto:jborden@postandcourier.com)  
 Size: 82.92 square inch  
 Charleston, SC Circulation: 110289



# Haley, Lucas push to revive ethics bill

Effort following Senate defeat of reform seeks to ensure lawmakers investigated independently

BY JEREMY BORDEN

[jborden@postandcourier.com](mailto:jborden@postandcourier.com)

COLUMBIA — Gov. Nikki Haley and state House Speaker Jay Lucas are prodding senators into reviving ethics reform after the Senate brought what had been touted as the legislative session's No. 1 priority to a screeching halt.

Lucas expects the House this week to pass a so-called "omnibus" ethics bill combining several ethics-related measures that already have passed into one package to send to

the Senate.

Haley has been urging lawmakers publicly and privately to reconsider an ethics bill with a way to ensure that alleged wrongdoing by lawmakers is investigated independently, not by the lawmakers themselves. As it

stands, ethics committees in both the House and Senate are responsible for policing their own members' conduct.

The governor and Lucas have said

they hope senators realize that the issue will not simply go away.

Ethics came to a head last year when

Please see **ETHICS**, Page A4



## Poll

Should the S.C. Senate take up ethics reform again or move on to other issues? Go to [postandcourier.com/polls](http://postandcourier.com/polls) to vote.

## Haley, Lucas push to revive S.C. ethics bill

**ETHICS**, from A1

former House Speaker Bobby Harrell resigned and pleaded guilty to misusing campaign funds for personal expenses. Advocates have said the Harrell case exposed flaws in the system because the House Ethics Committee, made up of his fellow lawmakers, never took up allegations of abuse.

Lucas said the smaller bites at ethics reform the House has already passed is still his preferred method, so it's not an all-or-nothing proposition. But the slow-moving Senate has expressed concerns about whether passing that many bills is feasible, and Lucas said he doesn't want to see them use that as an excuse.

"I think the citizens of this state are looking for us to deal with the issue of ethics given the problems that we've not only had within the Statehouse, but all around the state with various units of government," he said, referring to sheriffs and others who have been prosecut-

ed recently.

Haley wrote a letter signed by her, the League of Women Voters, AARP and the Coastal Conservation League calling on senators to take up ethics again and endorse a panel that would independently investigate elected officials.

"Our constituents care deeply about ethics reform because it is the heart of good government," the letter says. "In order for South Carolina to deal successfully with the multitude of challenges we face ... the Legislature must commit to conducting business with the utmost integrity."

But senators may not be as eager as Haley and Lucas to see ethics come up again this session.

Sen. Luke Rankin, R-Conway, offered what he billed as a compromise amendment early last month that would have placed members of the Legislature on the committee responsible for investigating lawmakers. When his amendment passed, sponsors of the original mea-

sure, including Sen. Larry Martin, R-Pickens, fought against what they considered to be a poison pill. Ultimately, Rankin's amendment and Sen. Hugh Leatherman's opposition swung the momentum and the bill was defeated.

Leatherman questioned whether ethics reform is even necessary, saying the problem with self-policing is in the House, not the Senate.

Martin's bill would have formed an eight-member committee to oversee elected official's conduct, with four appointed by the Legislature and four by the governor. He and others said Rankin's amendment to include lawmakers on the investigative committee would have been a step backward.

Rankin said he is satisfied with the compromise he already offered. "While (ethics) is an issue with some, more people in my district and across the state continue to ask about fixing our crumbling roads and bridges, educating

our young people," he said in an email.

Rankin also referred to the recent surprise withdrawal of Department of Health and Environmental Control nominee Eleanor Kitzman after a contentious confirmation hearing as a reason why the governor's appointees should not be involved. "Last week's DHEC director drama has many questioning anew why the governor or her appointees should control this new body," Rankin said. "It's time to move on and address issues that truly affect all of our citizens' everyday lives, and not our agendas or political campaigns."

Haley spokeswoman Chaney Adams shot back in a statement and asked whether Rankin had something to hide. "Another day, another reason Sen. Rankin finds to protect the status quo — legislators overseeing the actions of their friends and colleagues, and doing so in secret," she said.

Martin said senators were surprised when he and others voted against their own mea-

**Title:** Haley, Lucas push to revive ethics bill  
**Author:** BY JEREMY BORDEN jborden@postandcourier.com  
**Size:** 82.92 square inch  
 Charleston, SC Circulation: 110289

sure with Rankin's amendment included. He said he detects some shift among senators on the issue and hopes there will be a consensus to debate ethics again sometime in the next two weeks.

He said he plans to remind his colleagues they are up for re-election next year.

"We cannot go through this session and not pass a bill," Martin said. "I really believe we're inviting trouble if we think we can cloak ourselves in this notion of 'well, ... the public isn't that interested.' I don't think that's going to play very well next year."

Reach **Jeremy Borden** at 708-5837.

## Ethics push

House Speaker Jay Lucas is



Haley



Lucas

proposing an omnibus ethics reform measure that would include the following measures:

**H. 3186:** Requires public officials to disclose all private income with the source and amount in defined categories.

**H. 3184:** Independent Investigation. Reconstitutes the State Ethics Commission and expands its authority to allow it to receive and investigate all ethics complaints against public officials. If the State Ethics Commission believes a violation occurred, the results of its investigation will be made public. The commission would be made up of 12 appointees — four by the governor, four by the Legislature and four by the Supreme

Court.

**H. 3187:** Changes the definition of "committee" to ensure Political Action Committees disclose their donors, which is not required because of a 2010 U.S. District Court decision.

**H. 3188:** Prohibits public officials from operating or maintaining an additional campaign entity, such as a Political Action Committee. It also bans public officials from accepting contributions from any such entities.

**H. 3193:** Makes a technical change and clarifies that contributions received during a primary runoff are to be attributed to that primary runoff election cycle period. That issue has been disputed and

lawmakers have sought to ensure the law is clear about what contributions count for what election cycle.

**H. 3197:** Allows the appropriate supervisory office to request the disclosure of campaign bank account records during the four-year window of jurisdiction. It also defines "candidate" to include any person who maintains an open campaign bank account.

—Source: S.C. House

Title: **Obama to stop in S.C. Friday**  
Author: BY CYNTHIA ROLDAN [croldan@postandcourier.com](mailto:croldan@postandcourier.com)  
Size: 37.97 square inch  
Charleston, SC Circulation: 110289



# Obama to stop in S.C. Friday

## Clyburn's office says Columbia trip set

BY CYNTHIA ROLDAN  
[croldan@postandcourier.com](mailto:croldan@postandcourier.com)

COLUMBIA — President Barack Obama will be making his first trip to South Carolina as president on Friday, said a spokeswoman for U.S. Rep. Jim Clyburn.

Amanda Loveday, spokeswoman for Clyburn, said on Sunday details from

the White House are scarce, but so far it is confirmed that Obama will stop at Benedict College in Columbia for a "youth event."

"I'm pleased to welcome President Barack Obama back to South Carolina on Friday, March 6th," said Clyburn in a Facebook post. "This is his first trip to the Palmetto State as President and I

thank President David Swinton and the Benedict College family for hosting President Obama's event with students and youth leaders."

Obama has not been in the Palmetto State since January 2008, when he won the Democratic presidential primary. South Carolina is one of three states Obama has not visited as president.

Gov. Nikki Haley — who has been

Please see **OBAMA**, Page A5

### Inside

Obama to address civil rights past and present in Selma, Alabama speech. **A8**

# Obama visits Columbia Friday

**OBAMA**, from A1

critical of Obama's policies and most recently had South Carolina join several states in suing his administration for his immigration-related executive order — welcomed the president in a written statement.

"We welcome President Obama to South Carolina," Haley said. "We are proud of the people and the successes of our state and look forward to President Obama seeing and experiencing those successes first-hand."

The Republican Party, however, had a different take on Obama's visit. South Carolina GOP Chairman Matt Moore suggested Obama instead spend his time being "more productive" in the state's "beautiful golf courses."

"From blocking construction of the Keystone Pipeline to driving up health care costs to attacking South Carolina manufacturers through the NLRB, it's clear why this President hasn't visited South Carolina in seven years," Moore said in a written statement.

Ali Pardo, spokeswoman for the Republican National Committee, said in a written statement Obama's agenda has "failed the middle class."

"On Friday, the President should explain to the students at Benedict College why he is leaving our generation with the burden of paying for his out of control spending and failing policies," Pardo said.

Though Obama has not visited the Palmetto State in recent years, Vice President Joe Biden has frequently. He visited

Charleston in February, and also addressed graduates at the University of South Carolina in May.

Staff writer **Andy Paras** contributed to this story.

Title: **Obama to stop in S.C. Friday**  
Author: BY CYNTHIA ROLDAN croidan@postandcourier.com  
Size: 37.97 square inch  
Charleston, SC Circulation: 110289



EVAN VUCCI/AP

**President Barack Obama is scheduled to visit Benedict College in Columbia on Friday.**