

From: Moore, Camlin <CamlinMoore@gov.sc.gov>
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Subject: Afternoon Clips – Wednesday, May 18, 2016

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Governor Nikki Haley News:

Associated Press: Supreme Court: Haley can't appoint DOT secretary

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=GG1qowzS

Seanna Adcox

A state Supreme Court ruling temporarily put the Department of Transportation's leadership in limbo. The justices on Wednesday threw out a clause in the state budget allowing Gov. Nikki Haley to continue appointing the DOT secretary. The court ruled the clause was unrelated to the budget and therefore unconstitutional. Under the 2007 law that put the DOT in the governor's Cabinet, Haley's ability to appoint the secretary should have expired last July. Legislators intended to address that as part of highway-funding legislation.

The State: Supreme Court knocks down deal allowing governor to name roads chief

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/politics-columns-blogs/the-buzz/article78367987.html>

Cassie Cope

The S.C. Supreme Court ruled unlawful Wednesday a one-year budget amendment extending the governor's ability to appoint the head of the S.C. Department of Transportation. The budget amendment, called a proviso, was stricken down by the court, stripping Gov. Nikki Haley of her ability to appoint the head of the Transportation Department, now Christy Hall. When it became clear a road-repair bill would not pass last year, lawmakers used the budget deal to extend Haley's ability to appoint the Transportation secretary through the 2015-16 fiscal year, which ends June 30.

Post and Courier: State Supreme Court strikes DOT secretary appointment

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160518/PC1603/160519400>

Gavin Jackson

The S.C. Department of Transportation Commission reappointed agency Secretary Christy Hall in an emergency meeting Wednesday after a state Supreme Court ruling struck a budget proviso from last year as unconstitutional. It allowed the governor to appoint the secretary. The appointment is effective July 1, 2015 and includes ratification of all actions she's taken since then, to the present. The vote was 8-0.

Greenville News: Supreme Court strikes proviso allowing governor to appoint DOT head

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/politics/2016/05/18/supreme-court-strikes-proviso-allowing-governor-appoint-dot-head/84543712/>

Tim Smith

The South Carolina Supreme Court has once again sided with Greenville businessman Edward Sloan in his watchdog battle with state government, this time striking a budget proviso as unconstitutional that allowed the governor to continue appointing the leader of the state Department of Transportation. The 4-1 ruling issued Wednesday came after Sloan and his South Carolina Public Interest Foundation sued leaders of the Legislature and the state, alleging that the proviso violated a requirement in the state's constitution that legislation adhere to a single subject, in this case the budget.

Chicago Tribune: Chicago-based Opternative avoids online eye exam ban in South Carolina
<http://www.chicagotribune.com/bluesky/originals/ct-opternative-south-carolina-veto-bsi-20160518-story.html>

Meg Graham

Opternative, the Chicago-based online eye exam startup, notched a victory in South Carolina this week as it continues a contentious state-by-state battle to keep its services from being banned. Opternative launched \$40 online refractive eye tests last year, offering prescriptions for glasses or contacts to patients ages 18 to 45 without a visit to the eye doctor. The exams are now available in 34 states, including Illinois, where it has partnered with ophthalmologists to write prescriptions. A South Carolina bill would have required prescriptions for glasses or contacts to be based on an in-person exam. It was vetoed Monday by Gov. Nikki Haley.

Newsmax: Franklin Graham on SC Abortion Bill: 'A Step in the Right Direction'
<http://www.newsmax.com/Politics/Franklin-Graham-Wendy-Nanney-Nikki-Haley-SC/2016/05/18/id/729402/>

Franklin Graham called a South Carolina bill that restricts abortion after 19 weeks is "a step in the right direction that will save a lot of lives," in a Facebook post, claiming that the bill is "good news." Graham, son of evangelist Billy Graham, noted that the bill was signed by the South Carolina Legislature and is now headed to South Carolina's Republican Gov. Nikki Haley. The Myrtle Beach Online report said Haley confirmed in March that she was in favor of the bill. "I can't imagine any scenario in which I wouldn't sign it," Haley said at the time.

General Assembly News:

Associated Press: Overhaul of SC public records law may be closer to passing
http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=a1Ta61jP

Jeffrey Collins

A bill that would reduce fees and wait times for documents under South Carolina's public records law may be closer to passing this year. On Wednesday, a House subcommittee did some swapping to work around a senator who's been blocking the proposal. The panel took a bill passed by the Senate making police dashboard camera video available under a public records request and replaced it with the overhaul bill.

Associated Press: Bill to borrow \$2 billion for SC roads going to House floor
http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=NpwiYIPN

SC State Wire

A bill that would allow South Carolina to borrow more than \$2 billion for bridge repairs and interstate expansion is heading to the House floor. The House Ways and Means Committee unanimously approved a bill Wednesday that combines new money passed by the Senate with changes in how the board that runs the state Department of Transportation is appointed. Committee Chairman Brian White says he hopes the House will take up the bill early next week. He says there aren't too many changes, so he hopes senators can get something done before the legislative session ends June 2.

Associated Press: Bill would shield scholarly research from open records laws
http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=2zldNT0l

SC State Wire

A bill introduced in the Rhode Island General Assembly would shield public access to records involving scholarly research at public universities. The Providence Journal reports (<http://bit.ly/27xFvxs>) the bill is scheduled for a committee hearing Wednesday. Rep. Carol Hagan McEntee, who introduced the bill, says the intent is to protect researchers from being targeted with requests from climate change deniers.

LGBT Laws:

Associated Press: Haley, Wilson oppose federal directive on bathroom use
http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=bYB0zOyi
SC State Wire

Both South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley and state Attorney General Alan Wilson oppose a federal directive telling public schools to allow students to use bathrooms aligning with their gender identity. Both said in statements to The Greenville News (<http://grnol.co/1R8hWz8>) that it's an issue for state and local governments. Wilson says he is talking to other attorneys general to discuss if anything can be done to fight the directive. Federal education funding is at stake if schools don't follow the guidance.

News & Observer: How much money has HB2 cost North Carolina?
<http://www.newsobserver.com/news/politics-government/state-politics/article78241782.html>
Will Doran

Chris Sgro, a Democratic member of the N.C. House of Representative and an LGBT rights activist, has repeatedly called on Republican leaders to repeal HB2. The law has already cost North Carolina's economy \$500 million, Sgro said, as businesses, performers and conferences cancel in a show of support for gay and transgender people.

Associated Press: Mississippi school chief shelves transgender bathroom policy
http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=V1dC7QBH
Jeff Amy

Under fire from the governor and many Republican legislators, the Mississippi Department of Education now says it won't follow new federal guidance on use of bathrooms and locker rooms by transgender students. State Superintendent Carey Wright made the announcement Wednesday morning in a brief statement, saying the department would "follow the lead of state leadership" and take no action until the state Board of Education could discuss the situation. The move comes as Republicans in a number of other states have opposed the guidance, with some seeking to join legal challenges.

Note: Elsewhere, Georgia's governor on Tuesday ordered his state's superintendent to provide guidance to create a uniform response across the state to "this federal overreach." South Carolina's governor and state attorney general said they oppose the guidance, but the state superintendent has said she's monitoring it.

Wilson-Pascoe Dispute:

Associated Press: SC Supreme Court to hear Pascoe-Wilson case in June
http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=g0gh728Z
SC State Wire

The South Carolina Supreme Court has agreed to decide whether a prosecutor other than the state attorney general can open a state grand jury investigation. The court issued an order Wednesday saying arguments in the case will be June 16. Prosecutor David Pascoe sued Attorney General Alan Wilson, saying he was allowed to open the state grand jury probe into legislative corruption because Wilson turned the case over to him because of a possible conflict. He says Wilson turned his investigation into a political game.

The State: SC Supreme Court to hear arguments in Pascoe-Wilson case in June
<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/crime/article78406982.html>
John Monk

The S.C. Supreme Court on Wednesday set oral arguments in the high-profile dispute between Attorney General Alan Wilson and his special prosecutor David Pascoe for mid-June. Setting a date for a hearing assures that whatever decision the Supreme Court eventually reaches, the arguments from each side will get a thorough airing in a public courtroom. At issue before the high court will be

whether Wilson has the authority to remove Pascoe from an investigation into alleged public corruption in the General Assembly, an investigation that possibly involves political allies of Wilson's.

Post and Courier: S.C. Supreme Court to hear Pascoe-Wilson case in June

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160518/PC16/160519397>

Glenn Smith

After seven weeks of silence, the S.C. Supreme Court agreed Wednesday to weigh in on whether a special prosecutor can open a state grand jury investigation into Statehouse corruption without the blessing of the attorney general who appointed him. The high court scheduled oral arguments for June 16 at 9:30 a.m. in the running legal battle between Attorney General Alan Wilson and 1st Circuit Solicitor David Pascoe. That effectively stalls the probe into possible lawmaker misdeeds for at least another month. It remains unclear when the Supreme Court will actually rule on the matter.

SC Political News:

The State: Ethics complaint against SC treasurer continues

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/politics-columns-blogs/the-buzz/article78351452.html>

Jamie Self

State ethics officials Wednesday said they have more questions they want answered before they decide whether to dismiss an ethics case against S.C. Treasurer Curtis Loftis. The complaint accuses the Republican of breaking state ethics laws by using his office to help a long-time friend and business associate get a job representing the state in a lawsuit. Gregory Harris, an attorney for Loftis, asked the S.C. State Ethics Commission to dismiss the complaint, arguing Loftis did not break state ethics laws when Michael Montgomery, a former Richland County councilman and Richland 2 school board member, was hired as additional counsel for the state in a multimillion-dollar lawsuit against the Bank of New York Mellon.

Post and Courier: Clyburn and Sanford efforts to force full debates on tough issues fall short

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160518/PC1603/160519423>

Emma Dumain

Despite the efforts of two South Carolina congressmen, the U.S. House will not be debating questions of whether the Confederate flag should fly at The Citadel or military recruits should have to buy U.S.-made sneakers. House Republican leaders opted late Tuesday night not to allow for an up or down vote on either amendment offered by Jim Clyburn and Mark Sanford, respectively, to the fiscal 2017 National Defense Authorization Act. It brings to an end several days of intense lobbying on the parts of both congressmen and their allies, who strongly believed their amendments should have been made subject to full debate on the chamber floor, even if they might not have ultimately passed.

Associated Press: Capitol Hill Buzz: Gowdy remarks stir partisan Benghazi feud

<http://bigstory.ap.org/cb7e7c791ab84788ab9ce0f9f3b9129b>

Matthew Daly

It's a question congressional investigators have long been seeking to answer: Could the military have reached the besieged diplomatic outpost in Benghazi, Libya, in time to prevent the killings of four Americans, including U.S. Ambassador Chris Stevens, the night of Sept. 11, 2012? The chairman of the House Benghazi committee — echoing comments by his top lawyer — now says no. "Whether or not they could have gotten there in time, I don't think there is any issue with respect to that. They couldn't," Rep. Trey Gowdy, R-S.C., told Fox News this week.

South Carolina News:

Post and Courier: State, local law enforcement kick off Memorial Day seat belt campaign

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160518/PC16/160519393>

The S.C. Department of Public Safety kicked off its Buckle Up, South Carolina! campaign Wednesday as law enforcement prepares for the busy summer travel season. The department, along with local law enforcement agencies and first responders, held news conferences around the state to alert the public about the seat belt enforcement effort. From now until June 3, the S.C. Highway Patrol and local agencies will conduct a unified enforcement effort focusing on South Carolina's primary safety belt law.

Post and Courier: Airbnb to start collecting taxes from South Carolina renters

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160518/PC05/160519420>

Allison Prang

Airbnb will start collecting taxes from people who rent homes and rooms in South Carolina through the company's website starting June 1. The collections will include state sales and use taxes, any local taxes and the state accommodations tax, Airbnb said on its website. "This program ... is designed to make collecting and remitting taxes easier for Airbnb hosts," Airbnb said in a statement to hosts. "When we collect this tax from guests on your behalf, it won't affect your payouts."

Local News:

Associated Press: Man charged in triple slaying in rural South Carolina

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=C6sywSdu

SC State Wire

A man has been charged with three counts of murder after two women and an 8-year-old child were shot in a mobile home in rural South Carolina, authorities say. The shootings, which are thought to have resulted from a domestic dispute, happened in a mobile home park in Ravenel, a rural community about 20 miles west of Charleston, Maj. Eric Watson of the Charleston County Sheriff's Office said.

Post and Courier: Family, friends face Ravenel triple murder suspect in court

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160518/PC16/160519429>

Andrew Knapp, Dave Munday and Melissa Boughton

After escaping a Ravenel home where three of her loved ones had been slain earlier this week, a woman crawled to a neighbor's door and pleaded for help. "She is terrified," the neighbor said in a 911 call. "She said her entire family has been murdered. ... She begged him not to shoot them." Inside the home, sheriff's deputies would find a grandmother, a woman pregnant with twins and an elementary school student — all shot to death during a burst of domestic violence. They were named Wednesday as Betty Mungin, 55; Alexis Mungin, 29; and Armani Mungin, 8.

Post and Courier: Activist renews call for AG to intervene in backyard burial slayings case

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160518/PC16/160519383>

Bo Petersen

Civil rights activist James Johnson plans a follow-up demonstration Thursday opposing the handling of the James Edward Loftis trial for murder as a "castle doctrine" case. The demonstration is scheduled for 11 a.m. in front of the Berkeley County Courthouse, where Johnson, state coordinator for activist Al Sharpton's National Action Network, led a news conference on the issue last week.

Island Packet: Lawsuit: Levy fire chief's negligence led to motorcyclist's death

<http://www.islandpacket.com/news/local/crime/article78304262.html>

Lucas High

The family of a Savannah man killed in motorcycle accident near Hardeeville late last year has filed a wrongful death lawsuit against Jasper County and the volunteer fire department that responded to the wreck. Ian Richard Nicholson, 32, was killed Oct. 9 after he was hit by a box truck on S.C. 315 near U.S. 17. The civil suit — filed late last month by Devon Hassan, the mother of Nicholson's daughter

and representative of his estate — claims Nicholson “was alive and ... trapped underneath the box truck” when Levy Volunteer Fire Department personnel, including Fire Chief Doug Graham, arrived on scene.

Greenville News: Middle schooler charged with sex assault at Riverside

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/crime/2016/05/18/sex-assault-student-recorded-middle-school-students/84543108/>

Nathaniel Cary

Four Riverside Middle School students have been charged with possession of child pornography after a recorded FaceTime video of another student's sexual assault was shared between classmates at school. "We have charged four juveniles," said Greer Police Lt. Chris Varner. "They have been charged with possession of child pornography." The four students, all eighth-graders, also face charges of disturbing schools, Varner said.

Greenville News: Pay hike for employees in Greenville schools budget

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/education/2016/05/18/pay-hike-employees-greenville-schools-budget/84540956/>

Nathaniel Cary

All teachers and staff in Greenville County Schools would receive a five percent pay bump in the proposed 2016-17 budget. The new budget would add dozens of new teaching and clerical positions at schools across the county and would make athletic directors at all 14 high schools a full-time position, removing teaching responsibilities for athletic directors. Taxpayers would not see a tax increase in the proposed budget, which came before the school board for first reading Wednesday.

Post and Courier: Blackbaud to invest \$154M, add 300 jobs in Charleston HQ expansion

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160518/PC05/160519395>

Thad Moore

Charleston technology stalwart Blackbaud said it will invest \$154 million to expand its global headquarters on Daniel Island and add 300 jobs over the next five years. The software company and developer Holder Properties will start construction on a 360,000-square-foot office complex this fall, with a move-in planned for 2018. The first phase will be at Fairchild and Central Island streets. The second phase will be built at Fairchild and River Landing Drive.

Greenville News: German company announces plant, jobs in Liberty

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/local/pickens-county/2016/05/18/german-company-announce-plant-jobs-liberty/84504354/>

Ron Barnett

Project Big Apple came to fruition Wednesday, with the announcement that the world's leader in high-speed railway couplings is moving its North American manufacturing headquarters to Pickens County. County Council gave final approval to a fee-in-lieu of taxes agreement and other incentives in a special meeting at Alliance Pickens headquarters to make way for the announcement that German-based era-contact would be building a \$3.6 million facility in the Pickens County Commerce Park that will create 45 jobs.

The State: Columbia, USC finalizing bid to host NCAA men's regional

<http://www.thestate.com/sports/college/article78404612.html>

David Cloninger

South Carolina will see a predetermined postseason event played within its borders for the first time since 2005 when the SEC Women's Basketball Tournament is held in Greenville next March. Why stop there? Columbia is finalizing a bid to host an NCAA men's basketball tournament regional at Colonial Life Arena. The NCAA will consider host sites for regionals in 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 and the city and university are aggressively lobbying to be one of them.

Note: “We have been a state that shows very strong people, of faith, and of kindness, and of

acceptance, but also willingness to move forward,” Gov. Nikki Haley said on Monday, when Greenville was chosen for the SEC women’s tournament. “And so this is really a tribute to the people of South Carolina, for showing that we are ready to welcome in any tournament that wants to come.”

National News:

Associated Press: Donald Trump unveils list of his top picks for Supreme Court

<http://bigstory.ap.org/c68d11041efe47cc918fe3d7d2da4edb>

Jill Colvin and Mark Sherman

Donald Trump, the presumptive Republican nominee for president, released Wednesday a list of 11 potential Supreme Court justices he plans to vet to fill the seat of late Justice Antonin Scalia if he's elected to the White House. The list of conservative federal and state judges includes Steven Colloton of Iowa, Allison Eid of Colorado and Raymond Gruender of Missouri. Also on the list are: Thomas Hardiman of Pennsylvania, Raymond Kethledge of Michigan, Joan Larsen of Michigan, Thomas Lee of Utah, William Pryor of Alabama, David Stras of Minnesota, Diane Sykes of Wisconsin and Don Willett of Texas. Trump had previously named Pryor and Sykes as examples of kind of justices he would choose.

Associated Press: US intelligence: Foreign hackers spying on campaigns

<http://bigstory.ap.org/936b3fe969a540559ecc7503a547e2ad>

Deb Riechmann

The United States sees evidence of hackers, possibly working for foreign governments, snooping on the presidential candidates, the nation's intelligence chief said Wednesday. Government officials are assisting the campaigns to tighten security as the race for the White House intensifies. The activity follows the pattern set in the last two presidential elections. Hacking was rampant in 2008, according to U.S. intelligence officials, and both President Barack Obama and Mitt Romney were targets of Chinese cyberattacks four years later. Nevertheless, cyber experts say Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton's campaign networks aren't secure enough to eliminate the risk.

Associated Press: Democrats pressure Sanders as rift threatens party

<http://bigstory.ap.org/612983ca8b9e488c998aa608c14ba663>

Erica Werner

After months when the story of the 2016 presidential campaign focused on divided Republicans, Democrats are now showcasing divisions in their ranks. Simmering tensions between Bernie Sanders backers and other Democrats, including party leaders, burst into the open following an ugly fracas at the Nevada Democratic Party convention over the weekend instigated by Sanders' supporters. When top Democratic Party leaders pressured Sanders to denounce the night of chair throwing and alleged death threats he responded with defiance, terming some complaints "nonsense" and reminding the party: "Millions of Americans are outraged at establishment politics."

World News:

Associated Press: Nigerian girl kidnapped 2 years ago is found alive

<http://bigstory.ap.org/fb6bc6533e4a4509ab919b90d5cd1892>

Michelle Faul and Haruna Umar

One of the teenagers kidnapped by Boko Haram extremists over two years ago from a boarding school in northeastern Nigeria has been found with a baby and was reunited with her mother, a doctor said Wednesday — the first of the Chibok girls to be recovered since the mass abduction. The 19-year-old woman, described by an uncle as traumatized by her experience, was found wandering with her baby on Tuesday on the fringes of the remote Sambisa Forest, which is located near Nigeria's border with Cameroon.

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Camlin Moore
Cell: 803-206-8236
Office: 803-734-8044