

Title: **Haley's new chief of staff has roots in Anderson**
 Author: BY KIRK BROWN The Associated Press
 Size: 31.0 square inch
 Columbia, SC Circulation: 128564



Haley's new chief of staff has roots in Anderson

BY KIRK BROWN
The Associated Press

ANDERSON

Swati Patel, Gov. Nikki Haley's new chief of staff, remembers feeling like a "rare bird" while growing up in Anderson.

Like Haley, Patel is the daughter of Indian immigrants. In the 1960s, her parents each came to Raleigh, where her father graduated from North Carolina State University with a master's degree in mechanical engineering. He later worked at the Owens Corning and Bosch plants in Anderson.

Patel was 6 years old when her family moved to Anderson. At the time, she said, there were only about five Indian-American families living here.

"Growing up as the child of immigrants in the 1970s in a small town in South Carolina, you were definitely looked at as different," said Patel, who attended Concord Middle School, McCants Middle School and T.L. Hanna High School.

"I never felt unwel-

come or discriminated against," she said. "People just didn't know how to categorize me."

A University of South Carolina graduate, Patel,



Patel

44, is the wife of a Columbia physician and the mother of a 10-year-old son and a 5-year-old daughter.

Her younger sister is a pediatrician in Charleston.

Patel has spent almost her entire professional career at the State House complex in Columbia.

While in college, she was appointed to serve as a page by Alex Macaulay, a former state senator and retired judge from Walhalla. After receiving her law degree, Patel worked with legislative committees and the state Judicial Merit Selection Committee.

Patel has a decade of experience as an attorney in the governor's office. She was deputy legal counsel and then chief legal counsel for former

Gov. Mark Sanford before becoming Haley's top legal adviser in 2011.

Haley announced late last month that she has chosen Patel to replace James H. Burns as her chief of staff. Burns is returning to the Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough law firm where he was a partner before joining Haley's team in 2014.

Patel is Haley's fifth chief of staff since she took office in 2011.

"I can't think of anyone who is more widely respected or uniquely qualified to lead our team than Swati Patel," said Haley in a statement issued by her office. "Swati's steady leadership as legal counsel has strengthened our staff, guided our administration, and helped us deliver results to the people of South Carolina - and, as Chief of Staff, Swati will keep that momentum going."

Patel said the added managerial responsibilities will be one of the biggest challenges of her new position.

She said she hasn't given any thought to her next career move after Haley's final term as governor ends in January 2019.

"I am just taking it day-by-day and week-to-week," Patel said.

Title: **Clemson leaders ready to look at campus diversity**
 Author: BY MICHAEL EADS The (Anderson) Independent Mail
 Size: 40.76 square inch
 Rock Hill, SC Circulation: 34688



Clemson leaders ready to look at campus diversity

BY MICHAEL EADS

The (Anderson) Independent Mail

CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

Tanzania Scarborough marched with more than 100 students, staff and faculty members across the Clemson University campus Wednesday afternoon to demand change.

When the marchers gathered not 100 yards from Clemson President Jim Clements' office in Sykes Hall, Scarborough took to the bullhorn to explain how insulting it is to black students that Tillman Hall - a prominent building at their university - carries the name of "Pitchfork Ben" Tillman, the 19th century segregationist and politician who advocated violence against blacks and helped found Clemson.

"Is this supposed to be my Clemson experience?" asked Scarborough, eliciting cheers from the crowd.

Afterward, the senior English major said many of her peers don't share a sense of urgency for change because they can't or won't empathize with what it's like to be black at Clemson University.

"It's walking into a classroom and being the only black student. It's

also being not heard about issues and being told you should just get over it," said Scarborough, a native of Lamar, South Carolina. "A lot of students don't like to validate other experiences because they're not their own. ... You should be able to empathize with someone's position, I feel, and sometimes I feel the black experience isn't empathized or understood or seen."

Chenjerai Kumanyika, a communication studies professor and adviser to the protesters, agreed that the popular perception of Clemson campus life is askew.

"It's not all good," Kumanyika said. "Everybody's not just drinking sweet tea and going to football games."

After a year of seeming fits and starts, the campaigning by Scarborough, Kumanyika and many others appears to have stirred Clements, his leadership team and Clemson trustees to address campus diversity with some urgency. The Tillman protests and calls for addressing the minority experience at the school began in fall 2014,

when the Stripes and other student groups were inspired to action by the Black Lives Matter movement that sprang up in the wake of police shootings of black men across the United States. The complaints grew louder when a fraternity held a Crips gang-themed party off campus in December. Administrators met with protesters and promised action.

Faculty and graduate students endorsed the call to rename Tillman in early 2015; however, board of trustees chairman David Wilkins ruled out a name change shortly thereafter.

"Some of our historical stones are rough and even unpleasant to look at," Wilkins said in a statement issued in February.

Complicating matters was the state's Heritage Act, which requires a two-thirds vote of the state's House of Representatives and Senate to rename any historical buildings or monuments.

A tragedy four months later brought race-related issues back to the forefront. Just days after nine black members of Charleston's Emanuel AME Church were shot dead

after a Wednesday night meeting June 17, Clemson trustees voted unanimously to endorse Gov. Nikki Haley's call to remove the Confederate battle flag from the Statehouse grounds.

A few days after that, several former Clemson Faculty Senate presidents issued a public letter urging the board of trustees to rename Tillman Hall and force the issue with the Legislature. The board did not respond to that letter, but it did later denounce Tillman's actions and racial philosophy as "repugnant."

Clements welcomed faculty and students back to campus in August by announcing several diversity initiatives that had been in the works since those earlier encounters with the student protesters. The efforts include a speakers' series, a campus diversity council, more money for minority scholarships and the appointment of Clements' Chief of Staff Max Allen to serve as chief diversity officer until a permanent replacement for the recently retired Leon Wiles is hired.

Title: **Do anything to keep detainees out of S.C.**

Author:

Size: 11.00 square inch

Columbia, SC Circulation: 128564



Do anything to keep detainees out of S.C.

It is unconscionable to think that the murdering Islamic terrorists who are being held at Guantanamo Bay could possibly be coming to the prison near Charleston. They should never be allowed to set foot on American soil, let alone come to our state.

The Obama regime has no legal right to move them to any prison on American soil, but then the law never seems to stop our dictator-in-chief from his illicit goals.

I am confident that Nikki Haley will do everything she can to make sure this doesn't happen. However, as a last resort, citizens of South Carolina should, by the thousands, surround that prison and refuse to let the federal agents and terrorists in, no matter what it takes.

It is obvious that until we elect a good conservative/constitutional administration, we everyday citizens around the country are going to have to get more involved through peaceful civil disobedience or whatever means necessary to stop this rogue government from its illegal usurping of the U.S. Constitution and the rights of legal citizens.

*- Thomas Stollmaier
Chapin*

Title: **Haley wrong on birthright citizenship**

Author:

Size: 6.97 square inch

Columbia, SC Circulation: 128564



Haley wrong on birthright citizenship

Gov. Nikki Haley in recent comments to the National Press Club was critical of presidential candidates trying to restrict birthright immigration. The majority of South Carolinians want to do away with the birthright immigration, which allows children born to illegal immigrants in America to automatically become U.S. citizens.

Legislation has been introduced in Congress to limit citizenship to children whose parents are either citizens or lawful permanent resident aliens who live in the United States.

We do not need elected officials like Gov. Haley who do not want to reform birthright immigration.

*- Jim Gordon
Chapin*

Title: **Conservatives cheer loudest for political novices at SC forum**
 Author: BY ANDREW SHAIN ashain@thestate.com
 Size: 110.51 square inch
 Columbia, SC Circulation: 128564



GOP PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES POLITICAL FORUM

Conservatives cheer loudest for political novices at SC forum

BY ANDREW SHAIN
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GREENVILLE

If thousands of conservatives gathered Friday in Greenville are any gauge, Republican presidential candidates without political experience are the GOP's stars at the moment.

Ben Carson, a retired Maryland neurosurgeon, and

Carly Fiorina, a former California chief executive, received the biggest applause of 10 GOP hopefuls on the stage

of a forum hosted by the Heritage Action conservative advocacy group and S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley.

Fiorina received ovations for criticizing Congress and

the White House for not defunding Planned Parenthood after controversial videos went public.

"We cannot be the kind of nation that funds this kind of barbarity," she said

The third non-politician in the field, GOP front-runner Donald Trump, canceled his

plans to attend hours before the forum started at Bon Secours Wellness Arena.

A pair of U.S. senators, Ted Cruz of Texas and Marco Rubio of Florida, also were crowd favorites as the candidates took the stage, one-by-

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GOP FORUM

one, over five hours.

Rubio said he wants a merit-based immigration policy, vowing to end policies where, "America has become a hotel that checks in but never checks out."

Cruz mentioned Democratic President Barack Obama more often than most candidates, engaging the attending conservatives, who hope to regain the White House. But he also took his own party to task.

"We don't need a Republican who will simply

manage the decline of this country," Cruz said.

Five months before the S.C. Republican primary on Feb. 20, the candidates, trying to stand out in a large field, pitched their conservative credentials. The hopefuls took questions from Haley and members of Heritage Action, a sister group of the Heritage Foundation, led by former U.S. Sen. Jim DeMint of South Carolina.

Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, who sits third in

S.C. polls, pushed states' rights. New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie talked about requiring colleges to provide transparent bills. Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal talked about ending Obama's executive orders.

However, the loudest applause of the night was for Carson, who has surged into second in recent polls, nationally and in South Carolina.

Carson turned warm responses on comments about establishing a program that would have undocumented immi-

grants pay taxes and curb regulations to boost the economy to a standing ovation for saying the United States is a Judeo-Christian nation as he discussed the peaceful response to the racially charged Charleston church shooting,

Haley, the daughter of Indian-American immigrants, asked Carson, an African-American, how

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the GOP can expand its appeal to minorities.

“We need to show them there is a ladder of opportunity,” Carson responded. “It is our job to take care of the downtrodden, not the federal government.”

Carson appeared more at ease on the arena stage than at Wednesday’s GOP debate in California. He laughed as the crowd sang “Happy Birthday” when he revealed it was his birthday.

Then, he joked that “the best birthday present was I heard Donald Trump had dropped out” of the forum.

Trump, a real estate mogul with no previous elected office experience, canceled his appearance, citing work on a “significant business transaction.”

The timing raised eye-

brows.

By canceling, Trump avoided potentially awkward exchanges with Haley, who has criticized his harsh tone. He also avoided reporters asking why he did not correct a speaker at a New Hampshire town hall meeting Thursday who called Obama a Muslim.

Trump’s absence left an opening for the other non-politician in the race – Fiorina, who received the night’s second biggest response from the crowd.

In addition to her attacks on Planned Parenthood, the crowd responded to Fiorina’s pledge to simplify the tax code and fire workers at the Internal Revenue Service.

They also cheered when she said she wants to punish China for its expansionist policies and cyberattacks on the United

States. She said the United States should go after China while its economy is having problems.

When Haley asked about her toughest business decision, Fiorina referred to the difficulty of layoffs while she was leading Hewlett-Packard, where she was CEO until she was fired. But, Fiorina added, sometimes cuts are needed because bureaucracies have too many people who are not adding enough value.

Asked by Haley about her daughter who died after struggling with drug addiction, Fiorina turned the answer into how she sees a country in need of recovery. “I see too many people in this nation who lack hope in their eyes.”

Haley then took a dig at Trump’s comment about Fiorina’s attractiveness by telling the crowd, “This is

what a smart, intelligent face looks like.”

The S.C. governor also was a winner Friday night.

Haley is seen as a rising star in the GOP after her successful call to remove the Confederate flag from the State House over the summer. Friday, she shared a stage with candidates seeking her endorsement – and, perhaps, eying her as a possible vice presidential candidate.

U.S. Rep. Mark Sanford, R-Charleston, said Haley, his successor as governor, would make a good vice president.

“From a messaging standpoint, she’s incredibly strong,” said Sanford, who attended the forum. “She has been tested in the conundrum that is the S.C. (Legislature). And, most recently, she’s had something of a trial of fire.”

Democrats to hold presidential forum at Winthrop

The S.C. Democratic Party and U.S. Rep. Jim Clyburn, D-Columbia, will host a forum for the Democratic presidential candidates Nov. 6 at Winthrop University.

The forum, being held three months before the Feb. 27 S.C. Democratic primary, will air on cable news channel MSNBC, the party said Friday.

“This forum will give candidates an additional opportunity to focus on the issues that matter to voters in South Carolina and highlight the diversity of the Democratic Party,” Clyburn said in a statement.

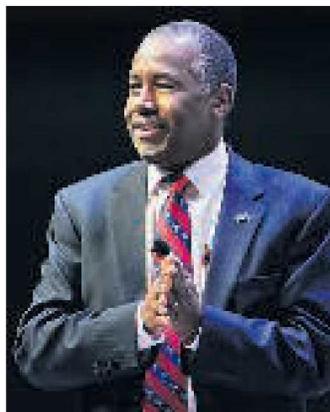
Candidates in the state’s GOP primary will debate Feb. 13 at Greenville’s Peace Center. CBS will air that debate.

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RICHARD SHIRO AP

Carly Fiorina speaks at the Greenville presidential forum.



RICHARD SHIRO AP

Ben Carson got the highest decibel applause of the night.

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RICHARD SHIRO AP

'We don't need a Republican who will simply manage the decline of this country,' Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, told Upstate conservatives at a GOP presidential candidates' forum.



RICHARD SHIRO AP

Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., said he wants a merit-based immigration policy, vowing to end policies where, 'America has become a hotel that checks in but never checks out.'

Title: **Front-running Trump skips S.C.'s GOP forum**
 Author: BY CYNTHIA ROLDAN croldan@postandcourier.com
 Size: 170.65 square inch
 Charleston, SC Circulation: 110289



Front-running Trump skips S.C.'s GOP forum

Ten other candidates participate in Greenville without tycoon

BY CYNTHIA ROLDAN
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GREENVILLE — Ten Republican presidential candidates participated in a marathon five-hour forum Friday in the Upstate, a conservative bastion that could figure prominently in which of them prevails in the state's early primary next year.

Organizers had announced that Donald Trump would take part, as well, but the flamboyant and

caustic real estate mogul and reality TV star bowed out hours before the event was to begin. A statement issued by his campaign said Trump had a "significant business transaction" to attend to instead.

The no-show by the GOP front-runner came amid controversy over Trump's remaining silent when a questioner at a town hall

Thursday in New Hampshire called President Barack Obama a Muslim. Among those who have criticized Trump for his handling of the question was South Carolina U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, who also is running for the White House, but wasn't invited to the Greenville forum because his polling has been below 1 percent.

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Trump skips GOP candidate forum in Greenville

GOP, from A1

Unlike Wednesday night's CNN-sponsored debate in California, the candidates appeared individually answering questions from about 20 minutes from moderators Gov. Nikki Haley and Mike Needham, CEO of Heritage Action, which organized the "Take Back America" forum.

Jeb Bush took the stage first, promising to attack "crony capitalism" as he did as governor of Florida.

"I was a disrupter in Tallahassee and I will be a disrupter in Washington, D.C.," Bush said.

Like most of the candidates that took the stage after him, Bush called for shifting power back to the states instead of having so much federal control. He was booed, though, over Common Core, a conservative lightning rod that Bush supported

as a way to raise nationwide educational standards.

The issue has dogged him on the campaign trail. He did, however, get a round of applause when he said that he does not want the federal government determining those standards and curriculum if states want to pull out of Common Core — as South Carolina has.

Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker followed Bush, reiterating many of the same points he made during Wednesday's debate.

Walker vowed to rip up the nuclear deal with Iran on his first day as president and implement a plan to repeal the Affordable Care Act in its entirety.

He received roaring applause when he said, "absolutely Planned Parenthood should be defunded," another rallying cry for conservatives in response to video recordings made by an

anti-abortion group purportedly showing the organization discussing the harvesting of fetal tissue. Walker said federal money given to Planned Parenthood should be redirected to other to women's health care programs.

Walker praised Charleston's peaceful response to the June 17 killing of nine churchgoers at Emanuel AME Church as an example for the rest of the country for how to deal with racial issues.

"If you focus on things that bring people together, that's what you're going to get," Walker said.

The crowd greeted retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson by serenading him with "Happy Birthday."

Carson also called on Congress to defund Planned Parenthood, saying it should test Obama's "bluff" to veto it.

"Congress has tools also," Carson said. "They can defund everything. They can defund his breakfast."

Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, a tea party favorite who has urged Congress to shut down the government if necessary to deprive Planned Parenthood of funding, received the loudest applause. He immediately staked out his standing as a maverick, challenging his rivals to back up their talk to take on the establishment.

"If you want to be an outsider, fabulous," Cruz said. "Show me where you stood and fought against career politicians. We've had way too many Republicans whose number one virtue is, 'I got along great with Democrats.'"

Rick Santorum, who received a tepid response from the crowd, raised another of the

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 Author: BY CYNTHIA ROLDAN croidan@postandcourier.com
 Size: 170.65 square inch
 Charleston, SC Circulation: 110289

Republicans' hot-button campaign issues: illegal immigration. The former Pennsylvania senator said the nation's border with Mexico needs to be sealed to keep out criminals and radical Islamists. He blamed undocumented immigrants for what wages that have flat-lined over the last 20 to 25 years.

Florida Sen. Marco Rubio, continuing the momentum he gained during Wednesday's debate, stressed the need to update America's "outdated" higher education system. He said Social Security must be changed to avoid bankrupting the country.

"We can save Social Security and Medicare," Rubio said. "People like me, my Social Security and Medicare will look different than my parents."

Rubio and Haley discussed their common background — both are first-generation Americans whose parents came to the United States legally, and their frustration over undocumented

immigrants.

"America has become a hotel that checks in, but never checks out," said Rubio, while adding that the country has to repair what he called America's broken immigration system.

Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul reiterated his stands against big government and its involvement in people's private lives. He received a few boos when he said he wouldn't simply "tear up" the Iran deal on day one; that he would evaluate it and see if some of it should be kept.

Carly Fiorina, whom many hailed as the clear winner of Wednesday's debate for aggressively standing up to Trump, went straight on the attack against Planned Parenthood. The ex-Hewlett-Packard CEO again called on Democrats to defund the organization.

"We cannot be a nation that funds this kind of barbarity," Fiorina said, referring to the video tapes.

She shared a rare emotional

moment on stage, when Haley asked her to discuss the death of her daughter from a drug overdose.

"When someone is addicted, you watch them disappear before your eyes," Fiorina said. As Fiorina said goodbye, Haley said "This is what a smart and beautiful face looks like," a reference to Trump's disparaging remark about her looks.

Much of the crowd dissipated when Fiorina left the stage. What was left of it, welcomed Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal, whose low poll numbers kept him out of the prime-time debate earlier in the week.

Jindal criticized the Republican Party and Sen. Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, who has said that the effort by Congress' Republicans to defund Planned Parenthood was an "exercise in futility," because Obama would veto it.

"If we can't win the fight to defund Planned Parenthood, it is time to close up shop," said

Jindal of the Republican Party. "It is time ... to start a new party."

During a discussion with reporters afterward, Jindal

took multiple jabs at Trump's campaign, saying that the idea of him as president is great, but the reality is different. He called Trump a narcissist multiple times.

"Let's not trust this egomaniac," Jindal said.

By the time New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie took the stage, the Bon Secours Wellness Arena was half empty. Christie roused those remaining with his criticism of higher education.

"These colleges ought to be required to tell us what they're spending our money and our children's money on," Christie said. "These colleges want to build monuments for themselves."

Reach **Cynthia Roldan** at (843) 577-7111.

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Charleston, SC Circulation: 110289



RICHARD SHIRO/AP

A volunteer passes out American flags to people as they arrive to hear Republican presidential candidates speak Friday at a presidential forum sponsored by Heritage Action at the Bon Secours Wellness Arena in Greenville.

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Charleston, SC Circulation: 110289



PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICHARD SHIRO/AP

Gov. Nikki Haley (above) and Mike Needham, CEO of Heritage Action, which organized the "Take Back America" forum, moderated the event.



Tea party favorite Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, received the loudest applause.



Title: **S.C. jobless rate sees biggest drop since 1983**
 Author: BY WARREN L. WISE wwise@postandcourier.com
 Size: 48.05 square inch
 Charleston, SC Circulation: 110289

S.C. jobless rate sees biggest drop since 1983

Tightening labor market shows need for skilled workers

BY WARREN L. WISE
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South Carolina companies are producing jobs. Filling them with skilled workers is another matter.

During the past 12 months, about 59,000 jobs have been created across the Palmetto State. The labor force grew by almost 52,000, and the number of those without jobs fell by nearly 7,000, according to the state Department of Employment and Workforce.

In August, the state saw its jobless rate plummet to 6.0 percent from 6.4 percent in July, its largest one-month drop since 1983.

The continuing need for a skilled workforce didn't escape the head of the state's job agency in her statement on the improving jobless numbers. "While we need to celebrate this, we

also must continue to invest in developing a pipeline of trained workers to meet the needs of the state's current and future employers," said Cheryl Stanton, executive director of the Department of Employment and Workforce.

Even a Federal Reserve Bank economist chimed in.

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S.C. jobless numbers see biggest drop since 1983

JOBLESS from Page B1

Rick Kaglic, a senior regional economist at the Charlotte branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, called Charleston "one of the star performers" in the Southeast region's economy, but he added, "One of the challenges Charleston faces as it moves forward is finding adequate skills to match up with the jobs being created there."

The Charleston metropolitan area continues to lead the state with the lowest unemployment rate of 5.3 percent, down from 5.5 percent in July.

Expansions at Boeing Co. and the prospect of thousands of new jobs being created by Daimler and Volvo Cars for two new \$500 million auto manufacturing plants in the region are helping to power the lower jobless figures in the Lowcountry.

Kaglic cited the Lowcountry's job growth after the recession when much of the rest of the state and nation were still struggling and pointed to "big scores" for the region with aircraft and auto production.

"You also have a lot of non-manufacturing jobs coming

in with the service sector," he said.

Buoyed by a healthy economy, the state's unemployment rate dropped for the third consecutive month as 2,771 people found work in August in the state, the Department of Employment and Workforce said. The state set a record with more than 2.1 million people working.

"These numbers reflect the fact that more South Carolinians are working than any time in history," Gov. Nikki Haley said in a statement Friday. "Whether it's another business expansion, another ground-

breaking or another drop in our unemployment rate, there are great things happening in our state, and we should continue to celebrate the South Carolina success that people all over the country and all over the world are talking about."

Kaglic labeled the latest jobless report "indicative of a regional economy on a very healthy growth trajectory."

Nationally, the jobless rate fell to 5.1 percent in August from 5.3 percent in July.

Reach **Warren L. Wise** at (843) 937-5524 or twitter.com/warrenlancewise.

Jobless data

The Charleston metropolitan area continues to lead the state with the lowest unemployment rate of 5.3 percent. How the tri-county numbers break down:

| Area | August | July | Aug. 2014 |
|-------------------|--------|------|-----------|
| Berkeley | 5.6% | 5.9% | 6.7% |
| Charleston | 5.1% | 5.3% | 5.9% |
| Dorchester | 5.6% | 5.9% | 6.7% |
| Charleston region | 5.3% | 5.5% | 6.3% |
| South Carolina | 6.0% | 6.4% | 6.5% |

—S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce

Title: **Give local officials power to alter monuments, senator says**
 Author: BY CASSIE COPE ccope@thestate.com
 Size: 25.73 square inch
 Rock Hill, SC Circulation: 34688



Give local officials power to alter monuments, senator says

BY CASSIE COPE
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State Sen. Darrell Jackson plans to pre-file legislation to allow local governments, school districts and colleges to rename or change historical monuments in their jurisdiction.

The Richland County Democrat also wants S.C. Attorney General Alan Wilson, a Republican, to issue an opinion on the constitutionality of part of the Heritage Act. That part requires a two-thirds vote of the Legislature to alter specific monuments and memorials or rename streets.

"There are people who

feel strongly that the constitutionality of that legislation is very questionable," Jackson said.

Republican Gov. Nikki Haley urged lawmakers to remove the Confederate flag from the State House grounds after the racially motivated slaying of nine African-Americans in June, including state Sen. Clementa Pinckney. The House and Senate voted to furl the flag in July.

Now, some want other monuments removed, including a State House statue of white supremacist "Pitchfork" Ben Tillman, a former S.C. governor and U.S. senator who was a member of a post-Civil War militia

responsible for lynching African-Americans. Others want the Tillman name removed from buildings at Clemson and Winthrop universities.

If Jackson's proposal becomes law, the colleges could act without the Legislature's approval. The Citadel also could remove a Confederate naval jack from a campus chapel. A Greenwood war memorial that separates slain soldiers by race also could be changed at the local level.

Jackson was one of the authors of the Heritage Act but now is for revisiting the law. "We perhaps went too far," Jackson said. For the state to tell

local governments what they can do with monuments is the equivalent of the federal government telling the state what to do, he added.

However, GOP lawmakers, who control the Legislature, likely will block Jackson's proposal.

State Sen. John Courson, R-Richland, said he and other Senate Republicans would be opposed to reopening the Heritage Act. "I don't think one can sanitize history," Courson said. "It is what it is."

In addition, S.C. House Speaker Jay Lucas, R-Darlington, said in August the House will not consider changing or removing other monuments.

Reach Cope at (803) 771-8657.

Title: **Jobless number declines sharply**
 Author: By BRUCE SMITH
 Size: 24.64 square inch
 Hilton Head Island, SC Circulation: 20015



Jobless number declines sharply

South Carolina hasn't seen such a large one-month drop in more than 30 years.

By BRUCE SMITH

The Associated Press

CHARLESTON — South Carolina's unemployment rate had its largest one-month decline in more than 30 years during August, a sign the state economy is continuing to gain strength, economists say.

"This is another sign that the economy in South Carolina is robust," said Frank Hefner, the director of the Office of Economic Analysis at the College of Charleston.

The Department of Employment and Workforce reported Friday that the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate dropped from 6.4 percent in July to 6 percent in August. It was the third straight month that unemployment has dropped and the largest one-month decline since 1983.

The department reported the number of people unemployed dropped by almost 8,000 during August while 2,700 new jobs were created in August. The difference between the two numbers is likely people who dropped out of the workforce or stopped looking for work.

Total employment has increased to almost 2.1 million people and during the past year the state's labor force has grown by almost

52,000 workers.

"These numbers reflect the fact that more South Carolinians are working than any time in history," Gov. Nikki Haley said in a written statement.

The department reported that government jobs led the increase in employment, adding 1,400 new positions during August.

"This is a good jobs report and it's consistent with what we have been seeing though 2015," said Joseph Von Nessen, an economist at the University of South Carolina's Darla Moore School of Business. "But the employment growth rate is the single best gauge we have of the overall economy."

That rate, he said, has been a solid 2.8 percent in 2015, up from about 2 percent last year.

While August proved good news for the state's employment picture, the state's unemployment rate was still higher than the national jobless rate of 5.1 percent.

That's not unusual, Von Nessen said.

"South Carolina is a more rural state, and so we see higher unemployment in rural areas that brings the rate up. It's normal for us to lag the nation," he said.

Title: **Jobless number declines sharply**
 Author: By BRUCE SMITH The Associated Press
 Size: 24.8 square inch
 Beaufort, SC Circulation: 11269



Jobless number declines sharply

South Carolina hasn't seen such a large one-month drop in more than 30 years.

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The Associated Press

CHARLESTON — South Carolina's unemployment rate had its largest one-month decline in more than 30 years during August, a sign the state economy is continuing to gain strength, economists say.

"This is another sign that the economy in South Carolina is robust," said Frank Hefner, the director of the Office of Economic Analysis at the College of Charleston.

The Department of Employment and Workforce reported Friday that the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate dropped from 6.4 percent in July to 6 percent in August. It was the third straight month that unemployment has dropped and the largest one-month decline since 1983.

The department reported the number of people unemployed dropped by almost 8,000 during August while 2,700 new jobs were created in August. The difference between the two numbers is likely people who dropped out of the workforce or stopped looking for work.

Total employment has increased to almost 2.1 million people and during the past year the state's labor force has grown by almost 52,000 workers.

"These numbers reflect the fact that more South Carolinians are working than any time in history," Gov. Nikki Haley said in a written statement.

The department reported that government jobs led the increase in employment, adding 1,400 new positions during August.

"This is a good jobs report and it's consistent with what we have been seeing though 2015," said Joseph Von Nessen, an economist at the University of South Carolina's Darla Moore School of Business. "But the employment growth rate is the single best gauge we have of the overall economy."

That rate, he said, has been a solid 2.8 percent in 2015, up from about 2 percent last year.

While August proved good news for the state's employment picture, the state's unemployment rate was still higher than the national jobless rate of 5.1 percent.

That's not unusual, Von Nessen said.

"South Carolina is a more rural state, and so we see higher unemployment in rural areas that brings the rate up. It's normal for us to lag the nation," he said.