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Subject: Morning Clips – Monday, April 4, 2016

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Governor Nikki Haley News:

Post and Courier: Lawmakers, Gov. Nikki Haley push for ethics reform

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160404/PC1603/160409891>

Cynthia Roldan

Pressure for the Senate to pass a pending ethics reform bill is mounting as a dispute between the attorney general and a special prosecutor appointed to investigate Statehouse corruption continues. Goose Creek's Sen. Paul Campbell is among several Republicans calling for advancement of the bill this week. It has been stalled in the Senate since the early weeks of the 2015 legislative session. Campbell stressed it's time to get it done since all bills that don't pass during this second half of the two-year session die. The bill creates an independent panel to lead investigations of potential misdeeds by lawmakers instead of having individual ethics committees for the House and Senate. It also makes changes to a handful of issues, such as having elected officials disclose their private income.

Note: Gov. Nikki Haley has also been pushing for the bill's passing on social media, writing on her Facebook page Monday that if the bill gets amendments they "will kill the bill." "Legislators are either for ethics or they are not." Haley wrote.

Independent Mail: Litterbugs beware: April is 'zero tolerance' month in S.C.

<http://www.independentmail.com/news/litterbugs-beware-zero-tolerance-campaign-in-full-swing-2f72f793-cf20-693e-e053-0100007fb1f3-374418481.html>

Nikie Mayo

Greg Smith, Anderson County solid waste manager, says what South Carolina needs is a cultural shift. That's what it will take, he says, to keep the Palmetto State litter free. But until that shift happens, litterbugs, beware. April is Zero Tolerance for Litter Month in Anderson County and throughout South Carolina. Gov. Nikki Haley has issued a proclamation to that effect. The annual campaign is done in cooperation with the nonprofit PalmettoPride and the South Carolina Litter Control Association.

Gov. Pat McCrory News:

Associated Press: Activists try to calm fears over transgender bathroom access

<http://bigstory.ap.org/urn:publicid:ap.org:9dd20835a5434507a78d0a3e68fee2e1>

David Crary

Stung by setbacks related to their access to public restrooms, transgender Americans are taking steps to play a more prominent and vocal role in a nationwide campaign to curtail discrimination against them. Two such initiatives are being launched this week — evidence of how transgender rights has supplanted same-sex marriage as the most volatile, high-profile issue for the broader movement of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender activists. One initiative is a public education campaign called the Transgender Freedom Project that will share the personal stories of transgender

people. The other, the Trans United Fund, is a political advocacy group that will engage in election campaigns at the federal and state level, pressing candidates to take stands on transgender rights. "What happened in North Carolina, as terrible as it was, has really galvanized people," he added. In the aftermath of the North Carolina legislature's action, several LGBT leaders headed to the state to join in protests and plot strategy for trying to overturn the new law.

The Herald: Protesters sing 'let it pee' outside governor's mansion

<http://www.heraldonline.com/article69732037.html>

With signs that read "Y'all mean all" and "Bigotry is a bad business model," more than 200 people marched down Jones Street and protested North Carolina House Bill 2 across from the Executive Mansion in Raleigh on Saturday afternoon. "Triangle Families against HB2" was a peaceful event that lasted about two hours. HB2 overturned an expanded Charlotte anti-discrimination ordinance and established statewide groups of people who are protected from discrimination. Gay, lesbian and transgender residents are not among those protected. At the protest, dozens of children stood with their parents, dressed in rainbow colors and holding signs. Protesters sang songs such as "Let Us Pee," a modification of the Beatles' "Let it Be." Officials at the Governor's Office could not be reached to comment late Saturday.

General Assembly News:

Post and Courier: Palmetto Sunrise: Senate back in session this week

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160404/PC1603/160409783>

Gavin Jackson

State senators start the sprint portion of the legislative session when they return to the capital city on Tuesday. The senators return with election filings now complete, providing them a clear view of their reelection chances and whether they can strike bipartisan compromises without spooking their bases too badly. The first issue will be ethics reform, which is the final bill with priority debate status in the chamber. With a Statehouse corruption investigation hitting the rocks recently, the ethics bill-- which creates an independent panel to lead investigations of potential misdeeds by lawmakers instead of having individual ethics committees for the House and Senate--is expected to gain momentum, Cynthia Roldan reports.

Note: Gov. Nikki Haley is already gearing up for the debate on the issue that has been one of her top priorities for years. "Legislators are either for ethics or they are not," Haley wrote on her Facebook page recently.

Greenville News: Senator shuts door on more gun hearings this year

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/2016/03/30/senator-shuts-door-more-gun-hearings-year/82417020/>

Tim Smith

Three gun bills recently approved by a Senate panel will be the only gun bills receiving a hearing this year in the Senate, the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee says. The news is a blow to advocates of other legislation, including bills to expand the waiting period for background checks prior to gun sales, proposed following the murders of nine people at a Charleston church in June. Sen. Larry Martin, a Pickens Republican and chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, told The Greenville News he personally does not support the expanded waiting period bills or other gun-control measures such as gun registration or a ban on assault weapons, so he will not allow them a hearing.

Morning News: Database would track refugees in South Carolina if passed

http://www.scnw.com/news/local/article_c665753a-f8fd-11e5-97eb-bfdd205921de.html

Joshua Lloyd

In the wake of terror attacks across Europe, the South Carolina Senate passed a bill last month that would create a database of refugees placed in the state under the federal Refugee Resettlement Program. The bill, which passed 39-6 on March 23, would require refugees to register with the state's Department of Social Services within 30 days of resettlement in South Carolina. That registry would not be available to the public, according to the bill. South Carolina is the first state in the country to consider this type of refugee registry system. After a refugee is enrolled by a sponsor, DSS must provide information to the state's Law Enforcement Division, which is required to confirm the refugee does not "pose a public safety risk." The South Carolina House of Representatives will take up discussion on the bill after its return from break on April 12.

Times and Democrat: Lawmakers hopeful on SCSU debt deal

http://thetandd.com/news/local/article_e5e11840-abda-50d9-b64d-a2c22f2fb308.html

Dale Linder-Altman

Despite different views on how it should be done, local lawmakers say the House and Senate will agree on a plan to restructure South Carolina State University's \$18 million debt to the state. "We recognize that S.C. State is very important to the state and the economic development of Orangeburg," said Sen. Brad Hutto, D-Orangeburg. "Since the new board has come on board, it's made great strides in handling its financial issues," he said. "We recognize that and see the value of that. By the end of June, we will have come up with a plan to aid S.C. State and put it on an economically stable path." The House wrote a plan into its 2017 budget that would forgive a \$12 million loan and give the institution \$4.6 million to fix up Truth Hall, S.C. State's largest dormitory. The Senate's plan, approved last week by a finance subcommittee, would forgive \$1 million a year as long as S.C. State makes payments of \$355,000 and maintains a balanced budget.

SC Agency News:

The State: SC DOT reducing open records fees

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/politics-columns-blogs/the-buzz/article69775457.html#storylink=apmobile>

Cassie Cope

The S.C. Department of Transportation is reducing the fees it charges for public information requests in an effort to be more transparent. The state's transportation agency will no longer charge for staff time in fulfilling requests that take less than two hours to complete. That includes time researching, retrieving and copying information or documents. Staff time required beyond two hours will be charged at \$20 per hour flat rate for each person working on the request. Copies of the first 25 pages from a requested document are free. Beyond that, copies cost 10 cent per page.

Note: "One of our goals is to significantly improve the public's access to (Transportation Department) records and how taxpayers' money is being spent," agency head Christy Hall said in a statement.

Note: It is unclear if the Transportation Department's change in fees for public records will be extended to other cabinet agencies under Republican Gov. Nikki Haley. Her office did not respond for a request to comment last week.

Associated Press: SC Transportation Dept cutting fees for public info requests

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=eLiw80C3

SC State Wire

The South Carolina Department of Transportation is cutting fees it charges for public information requests. The State newspaper reports Monday (<http://bit.ly/1oum31U>) the change means the agency won't charge for staff time for requests that take less than two hours to complete. That includes time researching, retrieving and copying information or documents. Beyond two hours, staff time will be charged at \$20 per hour flat rate for each person working on the request. Copies of the first 25 pages from a requested document are free. Beyond that, copies cost 10 cent per page.

SC Political News:

Associated Press: Sen. Graham to Arab world: US hasn't changed despite Trump

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/7588580ba37049c1ac2f3fbb4df624ca/us-senator-tells-arab-world-us-hasnt-changed-despite-trump>

Maram Mazen

Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham sought to reassure the Arab world Sunday over the prospect of Donald Trump becoming president, saying in Cairo that Congress would continue to play a primary role in foreign policy, "regardless of what Mr. Trump says or does." "The Congress is going to be around no matter who is president," Graham told reporters after meeting with Egyptian President Abdel-Fatah el-Sissi as part of a Republican congressional delegation touring the Middle East. "All of us, regardless of what Mr. Trump says or does, we are going to keep being who we are, so don't let the political scenes at home get you too upset," Graham said. "That's what I told the president." Graham's comments regarding the front-runner for his party's nomination reflect a growing concern in Washington over the effect a Trump presidency could have on U.S. foreign policy and international relations.

SC Election News:

Post and Courier: GOP rivals try to line up S.C. delegates in case of contested convention

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160403/PC1603/160409921>

Robert Behre and Schuyler Kropf

The political drama over South Carolina's role in choosing the next Republican presidential nominee usually ends once the state's primary is held, but that's not the case this year. A quieter but equally intense contest has begun as the campaigns and their supporters try to line up possible delegates in case front-runner Donald Trump doesn't win the nomination on the first ballot at the Republican National Convention. All 50 of the state's GOP delegates will be committed to vote for Trump, who dominated its Feb. 13 primary, but they are bound to support him only on the first ballot. After that, they're free to make another choice. State Republican Chairman Matt Moore said he has never seen more interest in the party's process of choosing national delegates.

Independent Mail: Candidates for Anderson-area Senate seat say turnout is key to GOP runoff

<http://www.independentmail.com/news/candidates-for-anderson-area-senate-seat-say-turnout-is-key-to-gop-runoff-2f725a9d-2bed-0e71-e053-01-374421531.html>

Kirk Brown

Both Republican candidates in Tuesday's runoff for the South Carolina Senate District 4 seat agree that voter turnout will be a crucial factor in the contest. State Rep. Mike Gambrell of Honea Path collected 46 percent of the votes in the March 22 primary, while Williamston Town Councilman Rocky Burgess received 32 percent. In last month's primary, about 8 percent of registered voters cast ballots in the sprawling district that includes eastern and southern Anderson County, part of Abbeville County and western Greenwood County. Elections officials say the turnout might be even

lower Tuesday.

South Carolina News:

Post and Courier: In S.C.'s lowest criminal courts, the poor suffer without attorneys, study by ACLU, lawyers finds

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160403/PC16/160409926>

Andrew Knapp

Poor defendants in South Carolina are sometimes put on trial without the attorneys they need in the state's lowest criminal courts, where jail sentences can be short but have long-lasting consequences, legal advocates said in a new study. Others are never told of their Sixth Amendment right to a lawyer and are shuttled through the process, bringing fines that impoverish them further or incarceration that can wipe away their jobs, according to the report by the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers and the American Civil Liberties Union. Many more don't have representation at bond hearings, sending them to jail for time periods that can amount to a maximum sentence before they are convicted. The dearth of lawyers for the indigent — those living below the poverty line — is a national dilemma, but the researchers found it particularly troublesome in South Carolina's low-level criminal courts, where the highest jail sentence is typically 30 days, where judges are not required to have law degrees and prosecutors are often police officers.

Associated Press: Second suspect charged in interstate vehicle shootings

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

SC State Wire

A second man faces attempted murder charges after cars travelling on Interstate 20 last week were the targets for gunmen on an overhead bridge. Lexington County sheriff's deputies said Sunday that 22-year-old Brandon Coleman of Batesburg was charged with seven counts of attempted murder. Investigators say he fired several shots from a pistol at eastbound I-20 traffic as he stood on the Quattlebaum Road bridge early Wednesday. Deputies say seven people were in the three vehicles struck by bullets.

WACH: Gun purchasing system still raising questions in SC

<http://wach.com/news/local/gun-purchasing-system-still-raising-questions-in-sc>

Leah Holloway

In light of mass shootings that have taken place around the country this past year, gun safety and the process of purchasing a gun has become a huge topic nationwide. The Columbia Gun and Knife Show held on the South Carolina state fairgrounds, along with other gun stores in the state, allow you to purchase guns with a background check and no permit to carry. People with a permit to carry have a little easier time to purchasing a firearm. But some argue the current background check system has its flaws. Event organizers believe the current system works the way it is. Some concern goes back to Charleston shooter Dylann Roof, who was allowed to purchase a weapon despite a drug arrest two months earlier. The law permits gun shop owners to sell the gun if a background check takes longer than three days to complete.

Associated Press: Solar farm developers target New York with lease offers

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

Mary Esch

Less than a year after New York banned fracking, dashing the hopes of farmers who had hoped to reap royalties from natural gas leases, the commercial solar industry is courting landowners for

energy production. Buoyed by Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo's renewable energy plan and the extension of the 30 percent federal tax credit in December, solar companies in recent months have blanketed rural areas with mailings seeking leases on farmland for solar arrays spanning 20 acres or more. While some farmers welcome the opportunity to earn up to \$2,000 an acre annually for the next 20 years or so, some agricultural advisers, community leaders and lawyers are urging caution. Note: "We expect to have operational projects in every utility load distribution zone in New York by the end of 2017," said Cypress Creek spokesman Jeff McKay. The company already has operational sites in North and South Carolina, Texas, Indiana, Missouri, Minnesota, Oregon and Georgia, he said.

The State: 450th anniversary of Spanish settlement on SC coast marked

<http://www.thestate.com/living/travel/article69806047.html>

April marks the 450th anniversary of the founding of the Spanish settlement of Santa Elena on what is now the South Carolina coast and the Santa Elena Foundation is observing the occasion. Santa Elena, founded in 1566 to protect Spanish shipping interests, was the first capital of Spanish colonial Florida. The site of the settlement was rediscovered in the 1970s beneath a golf course at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot on Parris Island. A symposium scheduled for April 15 will focus on the significance of the settlement. Later in the month, a replica of a Spanish galleon of the era docks in Port Royal.

Local News:

Associated Press: NCharleston traffic stops halved since Walter Scott shooting

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=k1H7Kllt

SC State Wire

Police in North Charleston are making half the number of traffic stops since a motorist ran from an officer and was shot repeatedly in the back last year. More than 26,000 motorists were pulled over in the nine months after Walter Scott's fatal shooting on April 4, 2015, compared with 54,000 in the same period the year before, The Post and Courier of Charleston reports (<http://bit.ly/1pVgA5d>). "You could call this a 'Walter Scott effect' locally," said Epp, who studies the intersection of policing and race relations. Police said for years that traffic stops of small-time violators were needed to root out larger problems in a city once notorious for violence. North Charleston had the highest rate of traffic stops of any South Carolina law agency. Civil rights activists spoke out against the "pretext" or "investigatory" stops. The video of Scott's death that might be leading officers to subconsciously hold back from enforcement, but the department also was incorporating a community policing philosophy, city officials said. Officers also now wear cameras.

Associated Press: Simpsonville officials to meet after police chief suspended

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=16MBUf5l

SC State Wire

Officials in a South Carolina city that fired and then rehired its police chief are meeting in private after the law officer was suspended without pay. Multiple media organizations report that Simpsonville's city council is holding a special meeting Monday behind closed doors to discuss an employee's job, promotion or release. Supporters of suspended Police Chief Keith Grounsell plan to protest hours later at city hall. The police chief's suspension comes after months of tension between Grounsell and a bitterly divided city council.

The State: Richland poll workers say they were overpaid for recent elections

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/article69768987.html#storylink=apmobile>

Sarah Ellis

As the Richland County elections office wrestles with county leaders over a request for more money, some poll workers say they have been overpaid by the elections office. Jim Reid received a \$360 check for working as a poll clerk for the two presidential primaries in February. That's \$60 for attending one pre-election training session, \$120 for each day worked and another \$60 for – he's not sure. He got an identical check for working the city of Columbia's November election and runoff. "You can call it a bonus, you can call it anything you want, but it's \$60 I didn't earn," Reid said at a March meeting of the county elections commission. Richland County elections director Samuel Selph said the county always has paid poll workers \$60 for training for each election day even if they do not attend training sessions before each election.

Beaufort Gazette: Beaufort County school board to place sales tax on Nov. ballot

<http://www.islandpacket.com/news/local/community/beaufort-news/article69746107.html>

Rebecca Lurye

Beaufort County residents will decide this November whether to authorize a 10-year, one-percent, educational sales tax, school board members decided Saturday. The board voted during a work session on Saturday to place the penny sales tax referendum on the general election ballot. If approved, the tax is expected to generate about \$282 million over the course of 10 years for the construction of new schools and other capital projects to extend the life of existing facilities, such as roof and HVAC replacements. The tax would also reduce property owners' taxes on debt service by one-third over the period of time the tax is in place, beginning in March 2017 and expiring automatically in 2027.

Post and Courier: Charleston hospitals prepare for potential cyber threats

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160404/PC16/160409909>

Lauren Sausser

So far, Charleston hospitals have been spared a major cyber attack, but two recent security breaches at hospitals in Washington and Hollywood, Calif., have called into question how vulnerable other medical centers might be. "MUSC is vulnerable to those kinds of attacks, but to be fair, every other hospital in America is vulnerable to these kind of attacks, as well," said John Rasmussen, chief information security officer at the Medical University of South Carolina. "We prepare all the time for incidents like this." The hacking at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital in Washington last week forced hospital personnel to use paper medical records after the facility was crippled by a virus that shuttered its computers for patients and staff.

Post and Courier: Google South Carolina brings wireless Internet to Moncks Corner ball field

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160404/PC05/160409884>

The Moncks Corner Ballpark is going wireless. The field is getting free WiFi courtesy of Internet search and ad giant Google. Google invested \$60,000 in the project and plans to take it further by adding WiFi to other areas, it said in a written statement. An expansion at the Berkeley County recreational site is expected to start next year. "Creating free access to online information at the new ballpark is a great way (to) ensure the Moncks Corner community has access to information they need online," said Rob Sanchez, operations manager for Google South Carolina's data center in Mount Holly Commerce Park off U.S. Highway 52. The technology company said it has provided more \$430,000 to create WiFi hotspots across the Lowcountry, including Marion Square and Waterfront Park in downtown Charleston.

WIS: Five Points turns blue for World Autism Awareness Day

<http://www.wistv.com/story/31628520/five-points-turns-blue-for-world-autism-awareness-day>

Caroline Patrickis

Landmarks around the world are turning blue in honor of World Autism Awareness Day, including one here in the midlands. Kicking off Autism Awareness month, the Five Points fountain turned blue on Saturday. It's a campaign designed to raise awareness about Autism and help shine a light on a disorder that one in 68 children will battle, according to the Centers for Disease Control. This year more than 60 businesses across the Midlands will offer specials for World Autism Day. The Autism Academy of South Carolina is holding events throughout the month of April in addition to dyeing the Five Points fountain blue.

World News:

Associated Press: Trove of data on offshore accounts prompts probe, questions

<http://bigstory.ap.org/urn:publicid:ap.org:b34c28e21ac249c2af49973b844c48c9>

Frank Jordans

The release of a vast trove of documents and other data on offshore financial dealings of wealthy, famous and powerful people around the world is raising questions over the widespread use of such tactics to avoid taxes and skirt financial oversight. Reports by an international coalition of media outlets on an investigation with the Washington-based International Consortium of Investigative Journalists brought to light details of offshore assets and services of politicians, businesses and celebrities, based on a cache of 11.5 million records. Among the countries with past or present political figures named in the reports are Iceland, Ukraine, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Russia and Argentina.

Associated Press: A look at offshore accounts used to hide wealth, avoid taxes

<http://bigstory.ap.org/urn:publicid:ap.org:6a706c022d924de68abd5f28bd98751f>

Elaine Kurtenbach

An investigation published by an international coalition of more than 100 media outlets, based on 11.5 million records of offshore holdings, details how politicians, celebrities and other famous people use banks, law firms and offshore shell companies to hide their assets. The International Consortium of Investigative Journalism, a nonprofit organization based in Washington, said an anonymous source provided internal documents from the Panama-based law firm Mossack Fonseca, one of the world's biggest creators of shell companies. Ramon Fonseca, a co-founder of Mossack Fonseca, said the documents were obtained illegally by hacking but confirmed that many of them were real. He denied his firm has engaged in any wrongdoing. This is a look at offshore accounts and how they are used...

Associated Press: Russia says Putin is 'main target' in leaked documents reports, not linked to offshore activity

<http://bigstory.ap.org/urn:publicid:ap.org:20361fa6877d49118b7289876fa6fa5a>

Russia says Putin is 'main target' in leaked documents reports, not linked to offshore activity .

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