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For immediate release

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Gov. Nikki Haley Announces Swati S. Patel As Chief Of Staff
Patel Takes Over From James H. Burns; Holly Pisarik Will Be Chief Legal Counsel

COLUMBIA, S.C. – Governor Nikki Haley today announced Swati S. Patel as her new Chief of Staff.

Patel takes over as Chief of Staff from James H. Burns, who recently announced plans to return to Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP, where he was a partner before joining Gov. Haley's team in 2014.

"When James Burns joined our team last year, he had an immediate, positive impact," said Gov. Haley. "He was the right person to lead us into a second term. We have been incredibly blessed by his leadership and integrity – and by the sacrifice of his entire family – during one of the most challenging periods in our state's history, and we couldn't be prouder to forever call him a member of Team Haley."

Patel has served as Chief Legal Counsel for Gov. Haley since January 11, 2011 and served as transition counsel in the Office of Gov.-elect Haley.

"I can't think of anyone who is more widely respected or uniquely qualified to lead our team than Swati Patel," said Gov. Haley. "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's career in public service spans eighteen years – in the executive and legislative branches – and includes ten years as a legal counsel in the Governor's Office. Patel was appointed Deputy Legal Counsel in 2003 and then Chief Legal Counsel in 2007 by Gov. Mark Sanford, and she joined Gov.-elect Haley's team as transition counsel in November 2010.

A native of Anderson, S.C. and mother of two, Patel received a Juris Doctor from the University of South Carolina School of Law and is a graduate of the University of South Carolina. Patel worked as Assistant Counsel to the House Judiciary Committee, and Staff Counsel to the Judicial Merit Selection Commission and the House Legislative Ethics Committee. From 2006 to 2007, Patel was a staff attorney with the Legislative Council, drafting legislation for the state House of Representatives and Senate.

Holly Pisarik, special assistant to Department of Social Services Director Susan Alford, will replace Patel as Chief Legal Counsel. Pisarik previously served in Gov. Haley's Cabinet as Director of the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (LLR). Before coming to LLR, Pisarik was an attorney at Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP, practicing in the area of healthcare law. Pisarik also served as a health educator and public information officer at Florida's Department of Health.

Pisarik, a mother of three, graduated from the University of South Carolina Law School, where she earned the Bronze Compleat Lawyer Award. She earned her undergraduate degree in business administration, with an emphasis on healthcare administration, from Winthrop University in Rock Hill, S.C.

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NIKKI R. HALEY

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