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To:
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Governor Nikki Haley News:

Washington Post: Republicans back away from Common Core as legislative roadblocks advance
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/govbeat/wp/2013/12/17/republicans-back-away-from-common-core-as-legislative-roadblocks-advance/>

Reid Wilson

Even as international studies show American students falling farther behind Asian and European students in math, science and reading scores, a group of Republican governors, mostly in Southern states, are distancing themselves from a set of education standards that most of their colleagues are embracing. The governors find themselves under pressure from opponents of Common Core standards.

Note: “I don’t think [Common Core is] as extreme as a lot of people paint it out to be. What I do think it is, is, you’re treating South Carolina kids like they’re California kids,” Haley said in a recent interview (A Haley spokesman, Doug Mayer, said in an e-mail: “The choice to accept Common Core was made by the previous administration and it’s now up to the legislature to reverse that and the governor supports efforts to do so.” Haley replaced Mark Sanford, another Republican.).

The State: Sen. Katrina Shealy wants to end the state income tax
<http://www.thestate.com/2013/12/17/3163873/state-house-sen-katrina-shealy.html>

Adam Beam

State Sen. Katrina Shealy says she has pre-filed legislation that would eliminate South Carolina's individual income tax. If it becomes law, South Carolina would become the eighth state in the country that does not collect individual income taxes. The others are Alaska, Florida, Nevada, South Dakota, Texas and Washington. In a news release, Shealy, R-Lexington, said her bill would lower the state's income tax rates by 1.4 percent each year until the tax is eliminated.

Note: In recent years, Republican lawmakers have suggested lots of changes to this tax structure. Gov. Nikki Haley proposed combining the 5 percent and 6 percent tax brackets, saving taxpayers an average of \$29 per year while cutting \$26 million from the state budget.

Associated Press: Senators' proposals would raise, end certain taxes
http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=NLsu9GEj

Proposals by state senators for the upcoming legislative session include eliminating South Carolina's individual income tax and increasing the state gas tax. Tuesday was the last day for senators to pre-file legislation for January. Republican Sen. Katrina Shealy wants to annually reduce the income tax, to eventually get rid of it. That would remove more than half of the state's general fund revenue. The state is expected to collect more than \$3.5 billion from the tax next fiscal year.

Note: Gov. Nikki Haley opposes any increase.

South Carolina Political News:

The State: Sen. Vincent Sheheen's Pre-filed Bills
http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=v4Bb2rFo

Adam Beam

When he's not running for governor, state Sen. Vincent Sheheen is a Democratic state senator from Camden. But because he is running for governor, Sheheen will probably be the most scrutinized state senator this year (with Lee Bright, who is running against Lindsey Graham, a close second.) Tuesday, Sheheen pre-filed seven bills for the 2014 legislative session. Here they are:

The State: Lee Bright Wants To Close S.C. Primaries
http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=923e2myE

Adam Beam

State Sen. Lee Bright, the leading challenger to U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, has pre-filed a bill that would close S.C. primaries. The bill, S.895, would not allow people to vote in a partisan primary "unless the person has registered as being a member of that party." The bill would also allow people to register to vote as Republicans or Democrats, allowing the State Election Commission to collect data on how many Republicans or Democrats are in the state. The bill would take effect "upon the signature of the governor," so it's possible it could be in effect for the 2014 primary elections.

The State: Rep. Roland Smith to announce election decision next month

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/12/17/3164050/election-2014-rep-roland-smith.html#storylink=cpy>

Adam Beam

State Rep. Roland Smith has decided whether he will run for reelection next year -- he's just not telling. Smith, the Aiken County Republican who is entering his 26th year in the House, told The Buzz he will announce his plans at the Aiken County Delegation meeting on Jan. 13 at 5 p.m. "I want to give my folks down here the opportunity to hear my announcement at the same time," Smith said.

South Carolina News:

Associated Press: Education Dept awards \$120 million to districts

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=N8HOu6ZF

Philip Elliott

Students will earn an associate's degree and a high school diploma at the same time. Every student will have a laptop to take home at night. And teachers will be retrained to let students move at their own pace. All are pilot programs the Education Department is funding with \$120 million in grants to five school groups, Secretary Arne Duncan said Tuesday.

Note: Houston Independent School District and a consortium of 18 districts clustered under the banner of the Kentucky Valley Educational Cooperative received just shy of \$30 million each. Arkansas' Springdale School District will collect \$25.9 million and a consortium of four rural districts led by South Carolina's Clarendon County School District 2 will receive almost \$25 million.

Post and Courier: New report shows poor minorities in the South are disproportionately shut out of insurance options under Obamacare

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20131217/PC1610/131219482/1006/new-report-shows-poor-minorities-in-the-south-are-disproportionately-shut-out-of-insurance-options-under-obamacare>

Lauren Sausser

Nearly 5 million poor, uninsured adults will have no subsidized coverage options under the Affordable Care Act next year. Three-quarters of them live in the South and more than half are minorities, according a new report by the nonprofit Kaiser Family Foundation. In South Carolina, 104,000 white adults and 83,000 black adults with very low incomes will not qualify for Medicaid or a subsidy to help pay for health insurance next year.

Associated Press: House Ethics to consider colleague's case

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=19Tu58Tj

A House panel is considering ethics allegations against Rep. Harold Mitchell. The House Ethics Committee on Tuesday will consider the accusations and his explanations. The Spartanburg Democrat told his colleagues last month that he kept poor records and did not properly pay his bills. Mitchell said he did not use his campaign account for personal benefit. Allegations include that he illegally withdrew cash, did not have required receipts, did not report donations, paid for non-campaign items, and misreported a loan payment.

Post and Courier: Boeing narrowing list of 777X contenders this week; moving on after union leaders rejected offer

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20131217/PC05/131219492/1177/boeing-narrowing-list-of-777x-contenders-this-week-moving-on-after-union-leaders-rejected-offer>

Warren L. Wise

Boeing will winnow the list of 54 sites in 22 states competing to land production of the forthcoming 777X passenger jet to just a few finalists this week. "This week we are narrowing that list down to a handful, from which our final decisions will be made," said Ray Conner, president and CEO of Boeing Commercial Airplanes in a letter to company employees Tuesday. A final decision will come after the new year. Conner

said the Chicago-based aerospace company is moving on in its site selection process after Machinists union leaders rejected last week's contract offer.

Associated Press: Washington state courts Airbus amid Boeing tension

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=I8KpJUAh

Mike Baker

Even as they try desperately to hang on to Boeing Co., officials in Washington state have been courting the main competitor of the aerospace giant. During the past several months, state officials have traveled to the U.S. headquarters of Airbus SAS in Virginia, moved to connect Airbus with Washington state suppliers, and signed a five-year confidentiality agreement with the company to allow further exploration of business opportunities, according to records obtained by The Associated Press under public disclosure laws.

Associated Press: S.C. DHEC wants to reduce pregnancy-associated deaths

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20131217/PC1610/131219495/1177/sc-dhec-wants-to-reduce-pregnancy-associated-deaths>

Meg Kinnard

South Carolina health officials are launching a new effort to review deaths associated with pregnancy. This week, the Department of Health and Environmental Control announced the creation of a committee that will meet regularly to try to find ways to make pregnancy, and the months that come after it, safer for South Carolina women. The South Carolina Pregnancy-Associated Maternal Mortality Review Board, which is holding its first meeting next month, will review all cases of women who died either during pregnancy or shortly thereafter.

The State: Potato Farm Sparks Call For Public Meeting

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=FtTvu1JB

Sammy Fretwell

Saying "it's a shame" the public was kept in the dark about a massive potato farm along a scenic river, a statewide conservation group called Tuesday for a public meeting to discuss the farm and its potential effect on the Edisto River's North Fork. The Conservation Voters of South Carolina asked supporters to contact Gov. Nikki Haley and Department of Health and Environmental Control director Catherine Templeton to ask for a public airing of the farm's plan.

The State: Spokeswoman: No SC National Guard Members Involved In Afghanistan Helicopter Crash Tuesday

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=eD0uuqHE

Jeff Wilkinson

No South Carolina National Guard soldiers were involved in Tuesday's helicopter crash in southern Afghanistan that killed six U.S. service members, a Guard spokeswoman said. The deputy governor of southern Zabul province told the Associated Press a NATO helicopter crashed in the remote district of Shajau and U.S. officials later confirmed that Zabul was the location of the U.S. soldiers' crash. One person on board the aircraft was injured and survived, sources told the AP.

The State: Long-dead Stinney will have new trial hearing on Jan. 21

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/12/17/3163875/long-dead-stinney-will-have-new.html#storylink=cpy>

John Monk

The case of a 14-year-old from Clarendon County who was executed by the State of South Carolina for a double murder 69 years ago will get a hearing in Sumter on Jan. 21. Attorneys representing relatives of Stinney – the youngest person to be executed in the 20th century – had filed a motion in Clarendon County in late October seeking the hearing. "I think the hearing will probably take most of the day," 3rd Circuit Solicitor Chip Finney said Tuesday.

Local News:

Sun News: School overcrowding issue again discussed

<http://www.myrtlebeachonline.com/2013/12/16/3908262/school-overcrowding-issue-again.html>

Vicki Grooms

Some Horry County school board members are siding with Carolina Forest parents who want a new K-6 elementary school model for the Carolina Forest attendance area to help alleviate overcrowding at Ocean Bay Middle School, but several options remain on the table and a final vote is expected at the board's next

meeting. "I think the community is speaking loudly and clearly," said board member Karen McIlrath, who said she had been reaching out to parents through social media.

Associated Press: Inmate dies in Charleston County jail

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=8jDjltIE

Authorities say a Charleston County jail inmate has been found dead hours after he suffered a seizure while being booked. Deputies said the inmate was found unconscious on the floor of the jail's medical unit around 11:40 p.m. Monday. Authorities say he had been arrested earlier in the day on a bench warrant out of North Charleston and had a seizure during booking. But deputies say the medical staff checked him, determined he didn't need to be taken from the jail and placed him in the medical unit. An autopsy has been ordered. The name of the inmate has not been released.

National News:

Associated Press: Budget bill moves toward final passage in senate

[http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/U/US_BUDGET_BATTLE?](http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/U/US_BUDGET_BATTLE?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&CTIME=2013-12-17-11-59-13)

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Andrew Taylor

A bipartisan budget bill that would ease some but not all of painful budget cuts that would otherwise slam the Pentagon and domestic agencies passed a pivotal test in the Senate on Tuesday. The Senate advanced the measure over a filibuster threshold on a 67-33 vote that ensures the measure will pass the Democratic-led chamber no later than Wednesday and head to the White House to be signed into law. Top Senate Republicans opposed the bill but didn't try to engineer its defeat. It won sweeping GOP support in the House in a vote last week.

Reuters: Former Microsoft exec to oversee Obamacare website overhaul

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/12/17/us-usa-healthcare-delbene-idUSBRE9BG11D20131217>

Susan Cornwell and Steve Holland

Kurt DelBene, a recently retired Microsoft executive who headed the software giant's Office unit, will spearhead efforts to continue the overhaul of the federal government's website for health insurance, the government said on Tuesday. DelBene, who starts his new job on Wednesday, will replace Jeffrey Zients, a long-time aide to President Barack Obama who starts a new job as top economic adviser at the White House in the new year. As head of Microsoft's most profitable division, DelBene was in charge of providing complex software and services, including Word, Excel, PowerPoint and the Microsoft Exchange e-mail system.

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