

Title: **Who really voted to sack S.C. State's president?**
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COLUMBIA | A dispute is simmering over just how many – or how few – of the 39 members of the S.C. Legislative Black Caucus voted to seek the ouster of S.C. State University president **Thomas Elzey**.

State Sen. **John Matthews**, D-Orangeburg, and state Rep. **Terry Alexander**, D-Florence, said less than half of caucus members attended a hastily called meeting Wednesday.

Matthews, who said about 15 members were present, said he was the only senator in the room, filled with House members. Alexander, who attended the meeting but did not vote, said about a dozen black caucus members were on hand.

Matthews said the tally was either 8-5 or 8-4 to issue a no-confidence vote against Elzey for his handling of S.C. State's financial crisis. Matthews, an alum of the state's only historically black public college, said he opposed calling for the president to resign.

Caucus leaders declined Wednesday to reveal the vote results.

Rep. **John King**, a York Democrat who is the caucus' chairman-elect, said Friday he did not know how many lawmakers were present at the vote. But,

he added, it was a majority of the black legislators who have paid their caucus membership dues.

State Sen. **Darrell Jackson**, a Richland Democrat who did not attend the caucus meeting, said lawmakers opposing Elzey should have made their own public statement instead of saying they represented the entire black caucus.

"It did not help," Jackson said of the no-confidence vote. "There's a better process to help the school."

Alexander said he did not know the vote included a referendum on Elzey. He thought it was only about opposing a preliminary House budget plan that would close S.C. State for two years to fix the Orangeburg school's multimillion-dollar deficits.

The caucus' ouster vote took a hit when S.C. State trustees said last week they would respect the school's four-year contract with Elzey, which runs through June 2017. Elzey would receive the balance of his salary that is paid by the state – \$170,000 a year – through the end of that contract if he is fired without cause.

King does not see the trustees' decision as a rebuke of the caucus' no-confidence vote in

S.C. State's leader. He thinks trustees want more time to figure out how to rescue the school.

King said he wanted to keep the focus on the future of S.C. State and its 2,985 students – and not on the number of caucus members who voted to get rid of the school's president.

"I will not be distracted from what the real issue is," he said.

Haley lobbying for Kitzman

Gov. **Nikki Haley** said she always keeps her door open to legislators. But, last week, some state senators got a special invite.

The topic? **Eleanor Kitzman**.

Haley's bestie and campaign contributor – also a former S.C. insurance chief – faces a tough confirmation hearing Thursday before she can take the top job at the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control.

One invite to visit with the Republican governor went to state Sen. **Brad Hutto**, D-Orangeburg, who said he told Haley that he has several questions for Kitzman about her job experience.

Kitzman was forced out as

S.C. insurance commissioner by then-Gov. Mark Sanford in 2007. After a brief tenure as director of the state Budget and Control Board under Haley, Kitzman moved to Texas as insurance chief but failed to get reconfirmed to that post.

Questions about Kitzman have been "lingering," Hutto said, adding Haley assured him that her friend would have answers at Thursday's hearing.

Kitzman, on Tuesday, was giving no scoops.

Approached by a reporter at a Columbia coffee house, Kitzman said she would not speak to the media until after her confirmation hearings.

2016 in S.C.: Kasich and Rubio

GOP White House prospect **John Kasich** makes his Palmetto State debut this week, attending a House Republican Caucus reception Wednesday at the Hilton in Columbia.

The Ohio governor could meet Thursday with S.C. lawmakers who support his bid to require the federal government to have a balanced budget.

Kasich, who according to reports has not visited other early primary states, is not breaking regularly into the top 10 of na-

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tional polls among Republican presidential hopefuls.

Meanwhile, U.S. Sen. **Marco Rubio**, a Florida Republican also flirting with a presidential run, makes another S.C. appearance Thursday at a 10:30 a.m. book signing at a Greenville Barnes & Noble.

S.C. in 2016: Mr. Graham goes to Iowa U.S. Sen. **Lindsey Graham**, who will decide by May if he is running for president, is heading to Iowa this week.

The Seneca Republican will

attend some private meetings with potential supporters on Thursday and Friday, and will go to a meet-and-greet hosted by Iowa Adjutant General **Ron Dardis**, the Des Moines Register reported.

Graham visited the Hawkeye State in October to campaign for **Joni Ernst** who won a U.S. Senate seat the following month. He gave fellow Republican Ernst, whose campaign featured a much-talked-about ad about cutting the federal government, a gift of an old-school livestock castration device when she arrived on Capi-

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The roads (bill) race

For those who are counting, a roads bill developed by House members for six months won more sponsors last week than a bill based on Gov. **Nikki Haley's** plan.

A proposal put together by a House panel led by state Rep. **Gary Simrill**, R-York, which avoids a gas-tax hike in favor of putting a 6-percent tax on fuel wholesalers and giving some state roads to counties, won 63 bipartisan sponsors, a narrow majority in the 124-member

body. House Speaker **Jay Lucas**, R-Darlington, along with the chairmen of the House budget, judiciary, agriculture and commerce committees backed Simrill's bill.

Haley's plan was presented by Rep. **Tommy Stringer**, R-Greenville. Calling for a 10-cent-a-gallon gas-tax hike to fix roads in exchange for an income-tax cut, it netted 39 sponsors, all Republicans.

The Buzz is a weekly look back at state politics by reporters at The Columbia State.

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SEE **BUZZ** PAGE **A15**

BUZZ

FROM PAGE **A3**

Elzey for his handling of S.C. State's financial crisis. Matthews, an alum of the state's only historically black public college, said he opposed calling for the president to resign.

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HALEY LOBBYING FOR KITZMAN

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S.C. IN 2016: MR. GRAHAM GOES TO IOWA

U.S. Sen. **Lindsey Graham**, who will decide by May if he is running for president, is heading to Iowa this week.



The Buzz

Andrew
Shain

thebuzz@
thestate.com

The Seneca Republican will attend private meetings with potential supporters on Thursday and Friday, and will go to a meet-and-greet hosted by Iowa Adjutant General **Ron Dardis**, the Des Moines Register reported.

Graham visited the Hawkeye State in October to campaign for **Joni Ernst**, who won a U.S. Senate seat the following month. He gave fellow Republican Ernst, whose campaign featured a much-talked-about ad about cutting the federal government, a gift of an old-school livestock castration device when she arrived on Capitol Hill.

Who knows what kind of gifts Graham will bring home as he raises money to travel around the country to test the waters for a White House bid?

THE ROADS (BILL) RACE

For those who are counting, a roads bill developed by House

members for six months won more sponsors last week than a bill based on Gov. **Nikki Haley's** plan.

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Haley's plan was presented by Rep. **Tommy Stringer**, R-Greenville. Calling for a 10-cent-a-gallon gas-tax hike to fix roads in exchange for an income-tax cut, it netted 39 sponsors, all Republicans. Most notable was House Majority Leader **Bruce Bannis-**

ter, R-Greenville.

Nineteen House members hedged their bets by sponsoring both roads bills, including House President Pro Tempore **Tommy Pope**, R-York, and Education Committee chairwoman **Rita Allison**, R-Spartanburg.

HARPO'S 'BREAKING BAD' MOMENT?

"Either I miscommunicated or they took me quite literally when I said, 'Turn them over to me.' "

— *Columbia defense attorney and former S.C. Democratic Party chairman* **Dick Harpootlian**, after barrels of chemicals used to make the drug PCP appeared in his law firm's driveway Thursday morning. Harpo had asked people with knowledge of the chemicals' whereabouts to turn them over to federal agents.

Reporters **Jamie Self** and **Sammy Fretwell** contributed. Reach Shain at (803) 771-8619

Title: **Agencies want 750 new employees**
 Author: By CASSIE COPE ccope@thestate.com
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Agencies want 750 new employees

S.C. agencies hope to 'inch our way back' from the impact of the Great Recession

By CASSIE COPE
ccope@thestate.com

State agencies want roughly 750 full-time employees added to the state's payroll in the budget that takes effect July 1.

S.C. House budget writers will start deciding this week whether to add the jobs to the state's payroll.

The added jobs include brand new positions – attorneys to prosecute violent crimes and sex crimes,

Social Services case workers to investigate cases of abuse and neglect, and advocates for vulnerable children and adults.

But they also include positions that already exist. In those cases, the agencies want to move employees – now paid with non-state dollars, including federal money – back onto the state payroll.

The requests for added workers

come as state agencies try to rebuild after absorbing cutbacks during the Great Recession.

"It forced us to cut state government severely," said state Rep. Mike Pitts, R-Greenville, who sits on the House budget panel. "You don't drop \$1 billion out of ... a general fund budget without it

THESTATE.COM

More photos from Friday's graduation ceremony for a new class of state law enforcement officers

SEE **AGENCIES** PAGE **A12**

AGENCIES

FROM PAGE **A1**

hurting."

The state-paid workforce has shrunk by nearly 10,000 full-time employees compared with two decades ago. But the requests for new state-paid workers face stiff competition in the state budget.

Pressure is building for lawmakers to use the state's \$7 billion general fund to pay for other needs including:

- An added \$1.5 billion a year that the state Transportation Department says it needs to maintain and expand the state's crumbling roads

- An added \$600 million a year that would be needed to fully fund the amount state law says should be spent per-student in K-12 education

- An added \$82 million due local governments from the state, according to state law, over the total amount they received last year

In addition, Republican Gov. Nikki Haley's proposal to cut the state's income

taxes has been introduced in the House. Critics say her proposal, which would phase in tax cuts over 10 years, would cut \$119 million out of the general fund during its first year and, eventually, reduce state revenues by \$1.8 billion a year, money that could go to roads, education and other state services. However, Haley says the general fund would not be hurt, arguing the tax cuts would be offset by growth in state revenues.

'INCH OUR WAY BACK'

The requests for more state-paid workers come as the state's general fund – largely revenues that South Carolina takes in from personal and business income taxes, and sales taxes – is getting back to where it was before the Great Recession.

The state's general fund in 2008 was \$6.9 billion. It dropped by a little more than \$1 billion to \$5.7 billion in 2010.

Five years later, the general fund is projected to be roughly \$6.9 billion again for the fiscal year that begins July 1.

When cuts took place during the recession, law enforcement agencies were among those that paid a price, receiving less state money as legislators tried to protect spending on K-12 education, said Pitts, who chairs the House budget panel subcommittee that hears requests from law enforcement agencies.

And some of those agencies say they need new employees now, in part because of changes in the way that the state now operates.

For example, during the recession, the state decided to save money on its costly prison system by incarcerating fewer nonviolent offenders.

But to do that – and keep the public safe at the same time – the state's Probation, Parole and Pardon Services said it needed 118 new full-time employees in

its initial budget request, in part to reduce the number of offenders each one of its parole agents supervises.

One new probation and parole officer, Jeremy Brown, graduated Friday from the S.C. Criminal Justice Academy.

Brown, 24, said he decided to work in probation and parole after he interned for the department and took criminal justice classes as an undergraduate student at the University of South Carolina Upstate.

Former inmates have trouble readjusting to life after prison, and probation and parole agents help them find a place to live, a job and improve their education, "giving them a couple steps in the right direction," Brown said.

The probation agency initially requested 75 new agents to reduce the case-loads of its officers. But the agency, which reports directly to the governor, cut that number to 44 to match Haley's executive budget.

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When the parole agency presented its budget request to a House subcommittee, its director Jerry

SEE **AGENCIES** PAGE **A13**

AGENCIES

FROM PAGE **A12**

Adger said reducing case-loads would help the agency retain its parole officers and boost morale.

Other law-enforcement agencies are lining up to ask for more workers as well.

This year, for example, the attorney general's office is asking for eight new full-time employees, including an anti-gang coordinator, two sex crime prosecutors and three violent crime and gang prosecutors.

Attorney General Alan Wilson said he is concerned with the backlog of cases involving criminal sexual conduct with a minor. "We want to move those cases more quickly." The attorney general's office state budget was cut in half during the recession – to \$3.6 million in 2012 from \$7.8 million in 2009. Today, it is \$5.4 million, a little less than it was a decade ago.

"We're trying to inch our way back to a place where we feel that we can adequately represent the state's interests across the board," Wilson said.

FALLING STATE WORKFORCE

Law-enforcement agencies aren't alone in saying they need more workers.

The size of the state-paid work force has shrunk by almost 10,000 employees since 1994 – to 28,071 full-time employees paid with state taxpayers' dollars in

2014 from 37,824.

That number can be misleading, however.

Some operations have become more efficient in the computer and internet ages.

Other state agencies employ thousands of workers who are paid with either federal money or with money from other sources – tuition revenue, for instance, in the case of public colleges.

Accounting for those positions, state employment is down more than 12,000 – to 66,570 for the current budget year from 77,644 two decades ago – despite the state's growing population.

In large part, that drop is because of the recession – which dropped state-paid employment to a low of 25,104 on June 30, 2011 – forcing reductions in full-time employees across state agencies, said Brian Gaines, spokesman for the Budget and Control Board.

As employees left, agencies weren't able to hire replacements, he said. "With the loss of state funds, agencies just were not able to fill those positions as people were leaving."

Sometimes, the consequences were tragic.

The state's embattled Social Services Department, for instance, has come under intense criticism for children dying while under its supervision.

Last year, agency officials said Social Services

needed more than 200 additional workers.

Current staffers were overwhelmed with too many child cases to manage effectively, they said. That work load, combined with the agency's low pay, led to a high turnover rate among staffers, meaning the agency did not have enough feet on the street.

'A RELIEF FOR THE AGENCY'S ... LEADERSHIP'

During the recession, some state agencies also moved employees off the recurring state payroll as general fund money shrank. As a result, full-time employees were paid with one-time money or other dollars, such as grant money.

One of those agencies, the Department of Mental Health, is requesting \$10.1 million in next year's budget to move 128 existing employees – now paid with money from other sources that is not guaranteed every year – back onto the state's payroll.

Mental Health has 4,300 full-time employees today.

STATE EMPLOYEES

South Carolina's general fund budget is paying roughly 10,000 fewer state employees than two decades ago

STATE-PAID EMPLOYEES

2014 – 28,071
 1994 – 37,824

TOTAL AUTHORIZED STATE EMPLOYEES (*)

2014-15 – 66,570
 1994-95 – 77,644

(*) Includes workers paid with state and federal money, and revenues from other sources, including fees and college tuition

But only 2,719 are on the state's payroll. That workforce is down from 5,558 total employees in 2008, including 3,328 on the state's payroll.

"It is a relief for the agency's senior leadership that the General Assembly has, for the past three budget cycles, been supporting the Department's requests to gradually replace its reliance on (one-time money) for ongoing operations," said Mark Binkley, director of administrative services for Mental Health. "We are hopeful that the agency will soon end that reliance."

Mental Health Department gained a certified law enforcement officer at Friday's Criminal Justice Academy graduation.

New graduate William Busha Jr. will work as a public safety officer for Mental Health at a psychiatric hospital in Anderson.

In the past, Busha said there have been problems with how law enforcement dealt with mentally ill people found on the street.

"It's not always, 'OK, this person's crazy. Let's throw handcuffs on them and take them to the jail,'" he said.

Reach Cope at (803) 771-8657.

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WANTED: MORE STAFFERS?

State agencies are requesting roughly 750 full-time, state-paid employees from S.C. House budget writers this week. That number is lower than the 900 jobs that agencies initially requested because some agencies cut their requests to match Gov. Nikki Haley's executive budget. Here's a look at what the agencies initially sought:

Administration Department: 106 new full-time employees – 100 guardian ad litem and six for veterans affairs

Agriculture Department: Two full-time employees to expand "Certified S.C. Grown" marketing

Attorney General's Office: Eight new full-time employees, including two sex-crime prosecutors and three violent crime/gang prosecutors

Clemson University: 41 new full-time employees – 16 for the center for human genetics, 20 for student academics and five for the International Center for Automotive Research

Clemson Public Service Activities: 39 full-time employees, including eight for 4-H and youth programs, and 13 for agribusiness and emerging farmers

College of Charleston: Two new full-time employees for computer science program enhancements

Commerce Department: Four full-time employees, including one for the office of innovation

Confederate Relic Room: Eight new full-time employees

Consumer Affairs: One full-time employee

Corrections Department: 41 new full-time employees, including employees for a mental health remedial plan and youthful offender officers

Education Department: 19 new full-time employees – including five for First Steps, five for virtual education and seven for the Governor's School for Science and Mathematics

Election Commission: Six new full-time employees to supervise county election boards and conduct compliance audits

Ethics Commission: Four full-time employees – two auditors and two investigators

Forestry Commission: 38 full-time employees, including 17 to increase firefighting capacity and 16 for landowner assistance

Human Affairs Commission: Three new full-time employees, including two investigators

Judicial Department: 16 new full-time employees, including two Circuit Court judges and their staff, two Family Court judges and their staff, and information technology staff

Lieutenant Governor's Office: Six new full-time employees, all vulnerable adult guardian ad litem

Mental Health: 161 new full-time employees, including 20 new employees for school-based services and 13 new employees for information security

Natural Resources Department: 37 full-time employees, including 15 positions for information technology support and five for freshwater fish hatcheries

Parks, Recreation and Tourism: 17 full-time employees – two welcome center positions and 15 positions for welcome center facility management

Probation, Parole and Pardon Services: 118 new full-time employees, including 75 parole agents to cut caseloads

Social Services: 188 new full-time employees, including eight for adult protective services, 32 for child welfare caseworker assistants, 60 for economic services statewide recruitment and 60 for statewide retention and recruitment

State Fiscal Accountability Authority: 19 new full-time employees

State Law Enforcement Division: 54 new full-time employees, including 15 for alcohol enforcement, five for counter-terrorism and arson, and 16 investigators

State Library: Two new full-time employees for information technology

State Museum: Five new full-time employees – two for education outreach and three for upkeep and maintenance

Vocational Rehabilitation Department: Seven new full-time employees for school-to-work transition services and job-driven vocational training

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TIM DOMINICK/TDOMINICK@THESTATE.COM

Fifty-one graduates of the Basic Law Enforcement class at the S.C. Criminal Justice Academy receive their certificates in a ceremony Friday.



The Basic Law Enforcement class at the Criminal Justice Academy receives certificates.

Title: **S.C. State students look into unknown**
 Author: BY JENNIFER BERRY HAWES jhawes@postandcourier.com
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S.C. State students look into unknown

If school closes, where will they go?

BY JENNIFER BERRY HAWES
jhawes@postandcourier.com

Last Sunday, Kris Bennett gathered with other South Carolina State students for a memorial to three students killed in the Orangeburg Massacre back

on Feb. 8, 1968. They remembered the sacrifices of civil rights activists and lit a memorial flame on their campus, the state's only public historically black college. Two days later, Bennett was sitting in

a language class when a few cellphones went off. Then more chimed.

As her professor lectured, unaware of the legislative fire storm igniting across the state, cellphone ringtones

Please see **UNIVERSITY**, Page A4

Inside

Alumni gather in show of support. **A7**

At struggling S.C. State, students look into the unknown

UNIVERSITY from Page A1

filled the classroom. Bennett peered at her own screen.

The Charleston County School of the Arts graduate and her peers sat stunned.

A state House subcommittee — and since then, a second one — had voted to close their financially ailing college for at least three semesters starting this fall. All of S.C. State's nearly 3,000 students would have to transfer or, if their academic performances aren't high enough, simply leave.



Bennett
 County: Charleston

Now, as the Legislative Black Caucus calls for President Thomas Elzey's ouster and lawmakers argue over the proviso, as

alumni protest and accusations of financial incompetence fly, students like Bennett sit as the innocent victims unsure what their futures hold.

With just one year of college left, Bennett wants to graduate from the school where her mom was the first female basketball player to see her jersey retired. "It's too much to digest at the moment," Bennett said. "The fact that this comes in mid-semester has really upset students. You just don't drop a bomb like that."

A slow, painful death

S.C. State isn't closing, not yet anyway. The plan faces a long and winding road ahead through the full House and then the Senate.

But the legislative blowup, in the middle of Black History Month, has rattled students, alarmed parents and terrified

faculty and staff who would be terminated.

Rep. Jim Merrill, a Charleston Republican who's the new chairman of the education subcommittee that sent forth the plan, said shuttering S.C. State temporarily would save it from a certain death by slow financial blood-letting.

The toughest part, Merrill said, is knowing students would suffer.

"This is honestly a very basic question of what would be worse for the kids — a painful

experience that's inconvenient now, or do nothing and leave it up to fate? I dare say the second would be more painful," he said.

S.C. State faces serious financial problems in the wake of past corruption convictions of its board chairman and others, allegations of mismanagement involving millions, the firing of past presidents and top ad-

ministrators, and steep drops in enrollment. Elzey, who brought his financial background to the school in 2013, has asked the state for millions to pay its immediate bills, plus potentially millions more to keep the school's head above floodwaters of debt.

"Our greatest concern is that it not die a slow and painful death," Merrill said. "The intent is to start S.C. State again with its core curriculum intact, with a leaner and more efficient staff."

Under the proviso, S.C. State would close as of July 1 and pay tuition for current students with 2.5 GPAs or higher and who qualify to transfer to another public college or historically black university. Those tuition payments would last for up to four years. State officials would factor in lottery scholarships and federal assistance to determine what they would pay for each student. Payments

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would end for students whose GPAs fall below 2.5.

But where up to 3,000 students might go remains unclear.

Spokespeople from The Citadel, University of South Carolina and Clemson University all said they weren't aware of talks with their schools about admitting S.C. State students.

And how much would it cost to pay several thousands of students' tuition for four years?

Merrill said legislators don't have an estimate yet.

Regardless, that money should be used to pull the school out of its financial mess rather than to close it temporarily, Bennett argued.

"You should just give that back to the school," she said. "It makes no sense."

Many of the proviso's details remain to be tweaked, including the 2.5 GPA threshold. "I'm not wedded to that," Merrill said.

S.C. State officials didn't respond to a request for estimates of how many students have 2.5 GPAs or lower.

However, at 14 percent, the school has the state's second-lowest four-year graduation rate among public research and comprehensive colleges. And only 36 percent graduate in six years compared to the state average of 61 percent, according to S.C. Commission on Higher Education data.

Merrill wonders if the school can do better. "I really want to emphasize that the state and S.C. State, we owe these kids," he said.

'People like me'

Michael Allen, head of the school's Charleston alumni chapter, credits it with what has turned into a 35-year career with the National Park Service. It started with an internship while he was a student. Allen's wife also is an alumna, and now their daughter is a junior.

"What we are in life personally and professionally we owe to S.C. State," Allen said. "That's why our daughter is there."

Buildings on the once-thriving campus bear proud names like Sojourner Truth and Martin Luther King Jr. And it remains a key producer of black teachers, nuclear engineers, entrepreneurs and others.

Yet, its students tend to come from low-income school districts, ones like those the S.C. Supreme Court ruled recently have not provided students the educational opportunity required by the Constitution.

About 92 percent of S.C. State students receive financial aid. Many are the first in their families to go to college.

Bennett recalls visiting S.C. State and seeing three African-American men walking in laboratory jackets. She felt drawn to the racial diversity lacking at many educational institutions.

While most of the state's public colleges and universities measure full-time black faculty by mere handfuls, S.C. State employs more than a third of the state's African-American professors, both tenured and non-tenured. As of fall 2013, it employed 122 black professors compared to nine at The Citadel, nine at MUSC, 19 at Coastal Carolina and 22 at the College of Charleston.

"I want to see people who look like me doing something positive with their lives," said Bennett, whose high school was mostly white. "Everyone was really warm and welcoming. I didn't feel like a number."

U.S. Sen. Tim Scott, a North Charleston native, will deliver the school's commencement address. Will it be the school's last? He doesn't think so.

"South Carolina State has served tens of thousands of low-income and minority students for decades, and will continue to do so in the years to come," Scott said.

He also encouraged school leaders to give legislators a detailed plan to steer their financial ship forward. "Thousands of hardworking, dedicated students in Orangeburg are depending on it," Scott said.

New USC Orangeburg?

Many students wonder what they would return to in a year or two, if the school must close.

Perhaps they would come back to a USC Orangeburg, one of the plans floating around. The University of South Carolina already runs a network of satellite campuses.

"It would be the most natural and easiest plan to implement," Merrill said.

Then again, Clemson University is a land-grant college as is S.C. State.

Weighing heavily is the reality that S.C. State would lose its national accreditation if it closes even temporarily, and reapplying for it would take about two years. It's already on probation.

S.C. State's finances must be addressed first. Neither USC nor Clemson wants to touch an institution with debt that could push \$100 million, Merrill said.

"You can't tote around \$73 million in bonded indebtedness, \$12 million in debts to contractors and suppliers, and another \$6 million owed to the state and not have an effect," Merrill added.

But if S.C. State becomes part of another university system, its 119-year history would close. And black leaders promised to fight that idea.

"You can't erase all that history by closing the school for two years and turning it into USC Orangeburg over finances," Bennett said. "It's a legacy."

Still a bulldog

Closing the school even temporarily will kill it, said Rep. Chip Limehouse, a Charleston

Republican.

Next week, he will push his plan to order a third-party forensic audit of S.C. State. He also wants to appoint a trustee, such as a bankruptcy judge, who could order unilateral cuts to the university.

Gov. Nikki Haley also stopped short of endorsing a plan to close S.C. State but said she wouldn't give the school more money for now either.

"Frustrations are running high," Haley told The Post

and Courier. "What we need to do is kind of pull back and remind S.C. State they need to take some actions here. They need to hear this call."

As the debate raged, Elzey urged students to stay calm and keep studying.

"It's a terrible thing to put this kind of burden on our students, particularly those students doing what they came here to do — which is transform their lives," Elzey said.

Travis Gladden, a student at the school along with his brother, was home studying when his mom hol-



Gladden

tered from the living room as the news came on: "Travis, your school is closing!"

The senior education major plans to become a math teacher, and that includes graduate school at S.C. State. His brother, Nathan, is a freshman.

"We just have to have faith in God that the school isn't going anywhere," Gladden said.

Kedrick Pasley always wanted to attend S.C. State partly

Title: S.C. State students look into unknown
Author: BY JENNIFER BERRY HAWES jhawes@postandcourier.com
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Pasley

because his parents are alumni. His younger sister, a School of the Arts senior, also wants to carry on that legacy.

But now, as Pasley sits halfway through his junior year, he wonders if he'll be able to graduate from the school.

"I want my senior year to go out with a bang," said Pasley, who's the school mascot.

After a successful four years at School of the Arts, a predominantly white school, the communications major wanted to experience an historically black university. It will help him personally and professionally, he said.

His mother, Rita Pasley, remains certain he — and the school — will succeed. "He'll be back in the bulldog suit next week," she said.

Jeremy Borden contributed to this report.



Online

POLL: If S.C. State University is forced to close, what should happen to its 3,000 current students? Go to postandcourier.com/polls to vote.

READ MORE: To read more about the financial problems plaguing the school, go to postandcourier.com/SCState.

Lawsuit filed

A group of former and current South Carolina State University students is suing the state, claiming South Carolina has caused the institution's financial problems by funding competing programs at traditionally white schools.

Using the same approach as similar lawsuits in Mississippi and Maryland, Orangeburg attorney Glenn Walters says the state has perpetuated a segregated system in violation of federal law.

At the same time, he says there have also been mistakes at S.C. State, a historically black university.

"There has to be this mea culpa — everybody has to admit their sins. ... What we want is a constructive dialogue and in order to have that dialogue, we have to be honest about the past," he said.

The lawsuit was filed Friday at the end of a tumultuous week for S.C. State.

— The Times and Democrat

Title: **Governor: Domestic violence task force's mission is urgent**
 Author: By Seanna Acox Associated Press
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Governor: Domestic violence task force's mission is urgent

By SEANNA ACOX

Associated Press

COLUMBIA — Gov. Nikki Haley told members of her domestic violence task force Tuesday to take the problem personally, saying if their effort fails, people die.

The Republican governor led the first meeting of the group she created last month to come up with recommendations for stemming South Carolina's generational cycles of domestic abuse.

She told more than 40 people gathered at the Department of Juvenile Justice that their task involves evaluating how people respond to victims, not how the victim thinks.

"Part of changing the culture is to stop trying to figure out how the victim thinks. We're never going to fully understand the victim because we don't live in their shoes," Haley said during the 30-minute meeting. "It's not about why; it's about our response."

The group's final report is not due until Dec. 31. But Haley laid out deadlines calling for interim reports due over four phases.

South Carolina has long ranked among the nation's worst states in violence against women.

"If you think you don't know anyone involved in a domestic violence situation, you're not being honest with yourself," Haley told the group. "We have no option to fail, because if we fail, someone dies."

The task force's members represent wide-ranging fields, including law enforcement, courts, churches, health care, social services and cosmetology.

Domestic violence survivor Elizabeth Gray said she endured years of abuse from her ex-husband before getting away through the help of Sistercare in 2010. He was arrested just once — for breaking a restraining order — despite 13 police reports and more than 30 incidents, she said.

"There are a lot of cracks in the system," said the West Columbia mother of two, who's on the task force and hopes more survivors share their stories with the group. "It's very easy to get into an abusive relationship. It's very hard to get out."

Haley created the task force after legislators advanced their own proposals for curbing the problem. Haley reiterated her stance Tuesday that no legislation will solve it.

The Senate Judiciary Committee voted overwhelmingly last month to advance Chairman Larry Martin's bill to the Senate floor for debate.

A House study committee, created last August, introduced its proposal last month. Both bills would create tiered penalties for abusers, giving prosecutors more options.

Title: **Gov. Haley represents everyone**

Author:

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Gov. Haley represents everyone

To the editor:

In response to Erin McKee of Mt. Pleasant, Gov. Haley does in fact represent every union member in South Carolina.

Gov. Haley does not represent the unions.

The governor does not create jobs. The governor helps foster an environment where by businesses can flourish.

Business owners, mostly small business, create jobs. Unions have proven that they inhibit and discourage the growth of jobs.

Boeing is in South Carolina because we discourage unions and Boeing is providing fertile ground for job creation all over the state with the opportunity for the creation of small support businesses.

I am not sure who Ms. McKee is taking to, but she needs to carry his message far away from Georgetown and Charleston counties.

The job boom that has occurred in South Carolina since the recession is among the greatest in the nation, and they are not union jobs.

Bill Hills
Murrells Inlet

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South Carolina News

Hospital sets up mobile flu facility

SPARTANBURG — Spartanburg Medical Center has built a mobile medical facility outside of its emergency room to help cope with the onslaught of patients seeking treatment for the flu or flu-like symptom.

The 50-bed mobile facility, called SC Med 2 and acquired in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina to deal with major emergencies, has heating and air-conditioning and will house critical care units.

The unit was erected on Monday.

Dr. Chris Lombardozi, the hospital's chief medical officer, said hospitals in the Upstate have been "very full" for at least the past three months.

Panel proposes temporarily closing SC State

COLUMBIA — A House budget-writing panel has proposed closing South Caro-

lina's only public historically black college for a year to get its finances in order.

Rep. Jim Merrill says it's time to stop "messaging around the edges" of South Carolina State University's financial mess.

Under his subcommittee's proposal, the state would take on the university's debts, thought to be in the tens of millions of dollars.

Merrill says part of the problem is lawmakers' inability to get concrete answers on what the school owes

Gov. Nikki Haley's spokeswoman says the governor understands the panel's frustrations.

The proposal advanced 3-1 Tuesday to the full Ways and Means. Democratic Rep. Gilda Cobb-Hunter of Orangeburg cast the "no" vote.

Even if the idea becomes part of the House's budget, it appears doomed in the Senate.

Associated Press