

Title: **HaleyendorsesRubioforpresident**  
 Author: BY ANDREW SHAIN ashain@thestate.com  
 Size: 56.11 square inch  
 Columbia, SC Circulation: 128564



# Haley endorses Rubio for president

BY ANDREW SHAIN

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S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley said Wednesday she endorsed U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., for president because he is best suited to restore GOP principles of limited government and cutting debt to Washington.

"I want a president who understands they have to go back to Washington, D.C., and bring a conscience back to our Republicans," the Republican governor told a crowd of hundreds gathered outside a Chapin warehouse.

Haley said she made the decision as a mother who wants a safer, more prosperous nation for her children and as the wife of a veteran who wants more support for the military.

Haley did not say why she didn't choose one of the other candidates running in Saturday's GOP primary.

"We have good people running for president, and I thank them today for their sacrifice and their willingness to serve," she said. "But my job was to find the person I thought who could do it best."

"I wanted someone with fight. I wanted somebody with passion. I wanted somebody who has the conviction to do the right thing," she said. "But I

wanted somebody humble enough (who) remembers that you work for all the people."

Haley, the state's most popular GOP politician in polls and a rising national GOP star, was South Carolina's most coveted Republican endorsement in the 2016 presidential race.

"She embodies for me everything that I want the Republican Party and conservative movement to be about," Rubio told the Chapin crowd.

The governor's endorsement comes at a critical time for Rubio.

The Florida senator needs to do well in South Carolina after finishing fifth in New Hampshire following a rattled debate performance. Rubio trails GOP front-runner Donald Trump and U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas with just two days to go before Saturday's primary.

Haley joins U.S. Sen.

Tim Scott of North Charleston, the only African-American Republican in the Senate, and U.S. Rep. Trey Gowdy, the Spartanburg Republican who heads a panel investigating the Benghazi attack, in endorsing Rubio.

Haley backed the GOP establishment candidate considered to have the best chance of challenging

Trump and Cruz.

Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, who has shared advice on education issues with Haley and helped her raise money for her 2014 re-election bid, also was a contender to win Haley's endorsement. Bush's father and brother, both former presidents who won the S.C. primary, reached out to Haley in recent weeks.

But Bush has lagged in recent S.C. polls, falling to fifth in the six-candidate GOP field. Rubio is in third, according to most polls.

On Tuesday, Haley said she had not made up her mind about an endorsement.

She endorsed Mitt Romney in the 2012 presidential race. While the former Massachusetts governor won the GOP nomination, he lost the S.C. primary to former U.S. House Speaker Newt Gingrich, breaking the state's three-decade streak of voting for the GOP candidate who landed on the November ballot.

Haley and Rubio share similar backgrounds. Both are 44-year-old children of immigrants who were elected to office in the tea party fervor of 2010.

Rubio initially met Haley when they first were running for their current

offices. The senator spoke at the S.C. GOP's annual dinner in 2012 and started building relationships in the early-primary state. They have communicated while Rubio has been on the campaign trail.

During stops in South Carolina this week, the senator has said Haley would make a good vice president. Haley became a favorite to make vice presidential short lists after her handling of last year's Charleston slayings and her successful call to remove the Confederate flag from the S.C. State House grounds. She also gave the GOP response to President Barack Obama's State of the Union address last month.

Haley's endorsement, while later than expected, was not a surprise.

She had said she would not back Trump. She urged voters not to listen to the "angriest voices" in her State of the Union response and has criticized Trump for his combative campaigning.

Trump has said Haley is not doing enough to protect South Carolina from Syrian refugees and the possibility of Guantánamo prisoners being transferred to the Navy brig outside Charleston. Haley has protested both issues to federal officials.

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file photographs

SC Gov. Nikki Haley and U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., both were tea party favorites.

Title: **Kasich the best candidate to break through D.C. gridlock**

Author:

Size: 65.25 square inch

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## EDITORIAL

# *Kasich the best candidate to break through D.C. gridlock*

**T**HIS ELECTION CYCLE has certainly proven that millions of Americans are frustrated with their federal government.

That's understandable, given the gridlock and hyper-partisanship that blanket nearly every issue connected to Washington. The good news is that South Carolinians this week have a special opportunity to help fix the problem.

In Saturday's Republican presidential primary, voters committed to changing how their federal government functions should ignore the blather of candidates without real credentials to lead the country. Instead, voters should choose Ohio Gov. John Kasich and his actual record of improving federal and state governments.

Mr. Kasich is a pragmatic leader with experience as a congressman and governor. He was mostly successful in both jobs, playing a key role in balancing the federal budget and in turning Ohio's state budget to a surplus from a deficit.

He understands the fundamental lesson we all learned as children and that we teach our children now: Accomplishments only come from working with others.

He was elected to the U.S. House in 1982, the only Republican that year to defeat an incumbent Democrat. Twelve years later, after the Newt Gingrich-led GOP sweep of Congress, Mr. Kasich became chairman of the House Budget Committee. One former congressman told *The Atlantic* magazine last year that he was the "Paul Ryan of his day," a reference to the current House speaker and

most recent Budget Committee chairman with a reputation for austerity.

As committee chairman, Mr. Kasich helped negotiate the plan that balanced the federal budget for the first time in

decades. Mr. Gingrich, the former Georgia congressman who won the S.C. Republican presidential primary four years ago, called Gov. Kasich one of the four conservative visionaries of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

Mr. Kasich, 63, is in his second term as Ohio governor. Under his leadership, the state budget's projected \$8 billion deficit was transformed into a \$2 billion surplus. The unemployment rate has fallen to less than 5 percent (4.6 in December) from more than 9 percent. Taxes have been cut, and new industry has moved into the state.

That record alone is impressive. But Gov. Kasich stands out even more because of his leadership approach.

In a meeting with *The State's* editorial board, he said the country's welfare is more important than adhering to Republican Party ideology. "The party is my vehicle," he said, "not my master."

That view is important because the public has too often been hurt by partisanship that paralyzes government, wastes time or blocks meaningful improvements.

When many other Republican governors, including South Carolina's Nikki Haley, rejected extra Medicaid funding under Obamacare, Gov. Kasich accepted the money. He said it was more important to help Ohio's poor than to stand in stubborn opposition to everything that carries the president's name.

Still, he clings to bedrock GOP positions of cutting federal regulations, reducing federal taxes and fiscal restraint.

He refuses to pander to those upset about our nation's leadership. Rather than turning Americans' concerns into anger, he prefers to be positive. The United States fundamentally is in great shape, he says, although the country has problems. He believes those can be solved with proper leadership that includes listening, educating, and working with both Democrats and Republicans.

Other candidates in the Republican field have skills similar to Gov. Kasich's, including former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush and U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida. But we believe Mr. Kasich stands out because of his combined experience as a congressman and governor and because of his accomplishments.

Being president is different than running a company, where the highest-ranking executive can demand that his or her agenda be followed. The Constitution sets up three equal

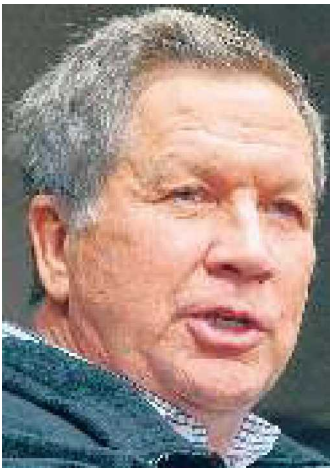
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branches of government, each acting as a balance to the others.

A president can't force his or her agenda on the country. A president's accomplishments are best achieved by leading the American people and the Congress. That's the government created by the Founding Fathers.

A president's leadership skills can't begin and end with insults, bullying and firing people. His or her skills must include diplomacy, toughness, listening and convincing.

On Saturday, South Carolinians can vote for candidates who are angry and scream for change. Or voters can choose John Kasich, a candidate whose leadership approach has delivered results.



Ohio Gov. John Kasich

Title: **Senator begins Year 2 of his filibuster of road-repair plan**  
 Author: BY CASSIE COPE [ccope@thestate.com](mailto:ccope@thestate.com)  
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# Senator begins Year 2 of his filibuster of road-repair plan

BY CASSIE COPE  
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The S.C. Senate started its much-delayed debate Wednesday of a proposal to repair the state's crumbling roads the same way it left the issue last spring — with state

Sen. Tom Davis, R-Beaufort, filibustering.

Senators had promised road repairs would be at the top of their agenda when they returned to Columbia in January. However, they spent five weeks in a vain attempt to work out a compro-

mise before taking up the issue Wednesday.

If the Senate wants to raise the state's gas tax to pay for road and bridge repairs, senators will have to vote to sit him down, ending his filibuster, Davis told his fellow senators.

"I am going to put this

entire system on trial," Davis said, promising to expose the misuse of taxpayer money.

To pass a roads plan, senators must reach a compromise among competing interests who want the state's roads agency restructured, a demand of reformers;

income taxes cut, a demand of Republican Gov. Nikki Haley; and a recurring revenue stream to pay for up to \$29 billion in road repairs and improvements over the next 24 years.

Davis wants to restruct-

**SEE ROADS, 8A**

## ROADS FROM PAGE 3A

ture the Transportation Department and S.C. Transportation Infrastructure Bank, a state entity that finances road projects.

But supporters of increasing the state's 16.75-cent-a-gallon gas tax say the reforms Davis wants will pass only if more money from driving-related fees is sent to the Transportation Department to pay for road repairs.

A road-repair proposal won't pass unless it includes restructuring, some tax cuts and some tax increases, said state Sen. Joel Lourie, D-Richland, who has sponsored an amendment that includes all of those components.

Davis' filibuster means senators will have to work nights and weekends to reach a compromise, Lou-

rie said. "But the public should demand that this Senate vote on a roads bill in the very near future."

Wednesday, Davis ripped as inadequate a proposal to restructure the commission that oversees the Transportation Department.

The state's roads agency — now legislatively controlled — should be controlled by the governor, Davis said. The governor also should appoint the agency's director. That would provide direct accountability to a statewide elected official, Davis said.

If that is not possible, the governor should appoint all Transportation commissioners, Davis said. Those commissioners then would hire a director.

Davis also supports abolishing the controversial S.C. Transportation Infra-

structure Bank and putting its borrowing ability under the Transportation Department. Then, the bank's borrowing could be used to address statewide road needs, he said.

Davis has criticized the Infrastructure Bank as a pork-barrel agency, controlled by the leaders of the House and Senate.

Davis also opposes increasing the gas tax, saying a tax hike is unnecessary to repair the state's roads. Instead, the state should rely on growth in its revenues to pay for repairs. This year, he noted, lawmakers have added \$1.2 billion to spend, including more than \$750 million in added revenues that should recur in the state budget year after year.

But Senate President Pro Tempore Hugh Leath-

erman, the Florence Republican who also heads the Senate panel that writes the state budget, said Wednesday he does not plan to propose paying for roads repairs with projected revenue growth.

The state has other spending needs besides roads, including spending more on education in response to a Supreme Court ruling directing the state to do more for poor, rural schools, Leatherman said.

Last year, Davis pushed for using a one-time state surplus to pay for road repairs. Ultimately, lawmakers sent \$216 million to county transportation committees to be spent on state roads.

Cassie Cope: 803-771-8657, [@cassielcope](mailto:@cassielcope)



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Davis

GERRY MELENDEZ [gmelendez@thestate.com](mailto:gmelendez@thestate.com)

An area of Old River Road near Elliott's Landing & Campground in Rimini was closed to motorists after flooding damaged the area with debris and fallen trees.

Title: **Trump vows to protect jobs in trade deals**  
 Author: BY TIM FLACH [tflach@thestate.com](mailto:tflach@thestate.com)  
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# Trump vows to protect jobs in trade deals

Promises to be tough on terrorists

Ignores Haley's endorsement of Rubio

BY TIM FLACH  
[tflach@thestate.com](mailto:tflach@thestate.com)  
 SUMTER

Republican presidential contender Donald Trump promised Wednesday to make the American economy stronger and protect jobs from being sent overseas.

"We're going to be rich again, we're going to be strong again, we're going to be respected again," he told a crowd estimated at 4,000 at the Sumter Civic Center. "We're going to start winning again."

Trump sounded familiar themes as he sought to rally voters to support him in South Carolina's Republican Presidential Primary on Saturday.

He avoided any comment on Gov. Nikki Haley's endorsement of Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida.

Trump instead berated Democrats for what he said has been the mishandling of the economy, saying many trade deals have been concluded with "such stupidity, such gross incompetence."

He again called for building a wall at the Mexican border to prevent loss of jobs to those coming across without approval.

"When that wall is built, there are no illegal immigrants coming across," he said.

He also took a look ahead at a potential challenger, dismissing

Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton as "an Obama clone."

Trump promised to be tough on Middle Eastern terrorists. "We're going to have to knock the hell

out of them," he said.

Trump's approach to national security is vital today, S.C. Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster told the crowd.

"This is a new time in the life of America," said McMaster, who has endorsed Trump. "Terrorism has been unleashed."

The rally attracted Trump supporters from across the Midlands.

"Everybody else is an empty

suit," said restaurant operator John Rogan of northeast Richland County. "When he takes on a job, he gets it done."

His message also appeals to Christopher Jeffcoat of Lugoff, who calls himself a swing voter.

"He's an obvious leader, rather than being a whiner," Jeffcoat said. "That's what we need now."

Trump spoke for 41 minutes and stayed to sign autographs for about 15 minutes afterward.

 **ONLINE**

For a video from Donald Trump's stop in Sumter on Wednesday, go to [thestate.com](http://thestate.com).



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GERRY MELENDEZ gmelendez@thestate.com

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump speaks to a packed house inside the Sumter Civic Center on Wednesday.



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## RIVALS FOR MAINSTREAM POSITION

# Rubio emerges as GOP's anti-Trump, anti-Cruz option

**Bolstered by Gov. Haley's endorsement, U.S. senator from Florida vying for mantle of the GOP's mainstream alternative**

**Pressure on Rubio to finish second in S.C.; if he fails, political scientist questions "how long his candidacy can be viable"**

**Avoiding GOP debacle?**

BY JAMIE SELF  
 jself@thestate.com

The Republican presidential hopefuls have two days to win support from S.C. voters – and a big question to answer.

Who will be the GOP's anti-Trump, anti-Cruz candidate – promising to unite the party and, more importantly, beat the Democratic nominee in No-

vember?

U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida became the most-likely-to-succeed Wednesday, winning the endorsement of S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley.

But with Donald Trump and U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas

holding first and second in most S.C. polls, seizing the third-place ticket out of South Carolina could be the best hope for Rubio – or another GOP candidate – to remain viable.

And third place might not be enough.

Saturday's primary could be the last shot for a mainstream

**SEE RIVALS, 6A**

## RIVALS FROM PAGE 1A

GOP candidate to break out, preventing the nomination of an anti-establishment candidate – Trump, who won New Hampshire, or Cruz, who won Iowa. Party elders fear either would fare poorly in the general election.

"South Carolina is huge for the Republicans," at least those hoping to avoid an anti-establishment candidate winning the nomination, said Scott Buchanan, a political scientist at The Citadel.

"If Rubio doesn't make it into second, I'm hard-

pressed to see how long his candidacy can be viable."

Polling third in most recent S.C. surveys, Rubio faces competition from others to be the anti-Trump, anti-Cruz candidate, including Ohio Gov. John Kasich, former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush and retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson.

However, Buchanan said, "If he (Rubio) were to come in third in South Carolina" – after third in Iowa, then sliding in New Hampshire – "that's not a harbinger of good things for Rubio or for the Re-

publican establishment.

### 'ALL FAIR IN POLITICS AND WAR'

Voters nationally are looking to South Carolina to see who emerges at the top. After Saturday, the GOP nominating contest will speed up. Nevada Republicans caucus Tuesday. Then, contests explode south and west, making scarce the campaign stops that give voters a chance to meet candidates one-on-one.

Hoping to gain an advantage in the campaign's final days, candidates and their allies are deluging

S.C. voters with negative TV ads and fliers.

Some ads cast Trump, the New York billionaire propelled by populist rage and seemingly unsullied by criticism, as a potty mouth who lacks conservative or S.C. values. A flier mailed out this week from the anti-Trump Our Principles PAC says Trump built his famed New York City tower with "illegal immigrants," supports universal, government-run health care and is soft on abortion.

Cruz, according to other ads, is "dangerously inconsistent," flip-flopping on whether the United

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States should intervene in Syria. He is accused of once praising Edward Snowden, who leaked classified documents exposing U.S. spying programs, then condemning him as a traitor.

Anti-Rubio ads say he's an immigration shape-shifter who is short on executive experience and does not show up for his U.S. Senate job.

And Bush, like Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton, is "tied to the past with ideas from the past," supporting Common Core and bank bailouts, other ads say.

The race to shape public opinion also has taken on a subversive element.

Cruz's campaign was accused of announcing Carson's withdrawal from the GOP contest before the Iowa caucus. In the last GOP debate, Trump complained about robo-calls lying to S.C. voters, telling them that he is no longer running.

Rubio's campaign is blaming Cruz for robotic calls that say the U.S. senator from Florida is for amnesty for undocumented immigrants and letting Syrian refugees in the

country.

Also, a Facebook page – posing as that of U.S. Rep. Trey Gowdy – falsely said the Upstate congressman was switching his endorsement to Cruz from Rubio. The page since has been disabled.

"It is living up to its billing," Buchanan said of the S.C. campaign. "All is fair in politics and war."

If current polls are predictive, Trump will win the state by double digits. That would leave Cruz and Rubio jockeying for second place.

A battleground for Trump, Cruz and Rubio is evangelical voters, expected to make up more than half of S.C. GOP primary voters.

Rubio is hoping to peel some of the state's faithful away from Trump, the favorite candidate of evangelicals. Thursday, for example, former Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal will stump for Rubio at Columbia International University, a Christian school.

Some recent polls show Rubio tying or surpassing Cruz, suggesting he could have a shot at closing in on Trump.

## HALEY'S SUPPORT 'A BIG DEAL'

Haley's backing could help Rubio, political observers say.

Rubio also is counting on a boost from the support of Gowdy of Spartanburg, popular because of his role in investigating the Benghazi attacks, and U.S. Sen. Tim Scott of North Charleston. Scott is the only African-American Republican in the U.S. Senate and among the most popular politicians in the state.

Rubio has "three superstars who are trusted" backing him, said Katon Dawson, a longtime S.C. GOP insider and former state party chairman.

"It's a big deal for Gov. Haley to put her name on the line," Dawson said of Haley's endorsement of Rubio. The governor's backing should persuade undecided voters who are "looking for something to head them one way or another to take another look at Rubio."

Both Rubio and Cruz have talented teams running their S.C. campaigns. Asked who will finish ahead, Dawson said confidently, "Rubio will beat

Cruz."

Then, he hedged: "He should beat Cruz."

Dawson said front-runner Trump also faces higher stakes in Saturday's primary.

"For once, the spread that Trump gets is what's going to matter," he said, adding Trump has been predicting he will take 40 percent of the primary's vote, much like Newt Gingrich in 2012.

A win that big would be "a check-all that he's passed the conservative test in South Carolina," Dawson said. "At the end of the day, we're going to find out whether Trump's campaign was a Ponzi scheme or for real."

A Trump win in South Carolina would be huge for the billionaire developer and reality-TV star, Buchanan said. With the exception of Gingrich's win in 2012, South Carolina voters picked the eventual GOP nominee since 1980.

That increases the pressure on Rubio.

"If the establishment is serious about Rubio," Buchanan said, "tell Bush, tell Kasich, tell Carson: 'Guys, go away.'"

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## Elections 2016

*Donald Trump has led every S.C. GOP presidential primary poll this year by margins as high as 22 points and as narrow as 14 points. U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz has finished second in all but four polls this year. In those polls, U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio either topped or tied Cruz. A look at where the candidates stand, according to an average of polls:*

Donald Trump: **34.5 percent**

U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz: **17.3 percent**

U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio: **16.8 percent**

Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush: **10 percent**

Ohio Gov. John Kasich: **9.7 percent**

Ben Carson: **6.2 percent**

SOURCE: Real Clear Politics



Cruz



Rubio

Title: **Supports Ted Cruz**  
 Author:  
 Size: 38.13 square inch  
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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Supports Ted Cruz

To the editor,

This is an open letter to Gov. Nikki Haley:

As an influential leader, your words can have an enormous impact in our Republican primary. So I am writing you to encourage your endorsement of the only principled constitutionalist in the race, because, quite frankly, this country is out of time.

We don't need a Reagan right now, we need someone better — we need someone even more educated in — and devoted to — the Constitution. For the last hundred years, we've been progressively walking — and now running — away from our founding documents, and we're all suffering for it. So now is the time to reverse the damage and get back to our foundational principles.

More people are aware of this than you might think — look at the rise of the Tea Party despite all the negative media spin, and more recently the neighbor-debating-neighbor caucus results in Iowa.

I will no longer settle for a Republican candidate who

doesn't completely believe in the spirit of the Constitution (I have before, and we wound up with John McCain and Mitt Romney, both dismal failures to an awkward-off-the-teleprompter born-and-raised Marxist — the most easily beatable candidate on policy issues and experience in years).

I will not have my name attached to someone who "will just get it done," with no history (or even so much as lip-service) to the Constitution. I will not vote for a candidate who supports the blatantly unconstitutional NSA spying of all of us, and justifies it with, "You don't understand, these are different times" or "We're at war, so these things are necessary" attitudes. The ends do not justify the means.

Compromising with progressive Democrats to grant amnesty to those who broke into our country and knowingly violated our laws — I couldn't look my children in the eyes and say, "I voted for him because he's a good speaker and I was told he could beat Hillary." The idea we need a perfect speaker or

the best-looking candidate or the most-liked in D.C. is insane. We're up against the weakest Democrat field in modern history, people are hungry for principled honesty, and real voters are more energized and informed than ever. What we all need is a revolutionary candidate, not someone who will negotiate with progressive liars or compromise constitutional principles to "get things done."

I will not compromise, because there is simply no time left. I will vote for a constitutionalist with a history of defending the Constitution and a history of doing what he says he's going to do — regardless of which political party's banner he's running under. And if that means a third party (or no vote at all), and if that leads to a loss in the general election to a progressive Democrat again (because too many people may vote for reasons other than foundational principles), then so be it. But I don't think that will be the case.

I think things have gotten so bad that normal people are fed up and just know the United States is broken. To fix it, I

just hope they choose a constitutionalist and not a strongman or yet another principle-compromising Republican in our primary. Please don't be on the wrong side. It's never too late to do what's right and publicly support the most constitutional candidate with a verifiable record — Ted Cruz — and then make sure he follows through with his promises after he's elected. That's what I'll be doing.

*Dan Hannon  
Murrells Inlet*

### Great photo, great work

To the editor,

I just want to compliment Chris Sokoloski on her great photography skills.

I just read my newspaper and the picture of the two wrestlers was nothing short of magnificent. That is incredible timing to catch the two wrestlers completely upside down and the faces on the spectators is priceless. We are lucky to have such talent for our local paper. Keep up the great work.

*Gordon McNeil  
Pawleys Island*



Title: **Expansion provides parenting help to more poor mothers-to-be**  
 Author: BY SEANNA ADCOX ASSOCIATED PRESS  
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## Expansion provides parenting help to more poor mothers-to-be

BY SEANNA ADCOX  
 ASSOCIATED PRESS  
 COLUMBIA

More of South Carolina's poor mothers-to-be will get parenting help at home through a \$30 million public-private partnership that aims to reduce pre-term births and child hospitalizations.

Republican Gov. Nikki Haley announced Tuesday the state's collaboration with nonprofits, companies and private donors to increase those helped through the Nurse-Family Partnership, a Denver-based nonprofit that pairs registered nurses with first-time mothers on Medicaid.

The nurses make home visits – typically one or two monthly – from early in a mother's pregnancy through the child's second birthday.

Haley said the voluntary program aims to put babies and their mothers on a successful path, while reducing state costs and the problems that come with generational poverty, including domestic abuse.

"These new moms want to be the best moms they can be, but they need guidance," she said.

More than 1,200 families in South Carolina now receive the one-on-one intervention. As of Dec. 31, nearly 3,700 moms had collectively received parenting assistance since the program began operating in the state in 2008.

Iantheya Brown, 26, of Columbia, says she's a "super mom" to her 3-year-old son Jameer largely because of the support from her visiting nurse.

"I had fears of becoming a lost soul, a statistic, another young black woman lost in her pain and failed dreams," she said. But through encouragement and goal-setting, she said, she instead earned a speech pathology degree and is pursuing her master's. "Nurse Pam made me feel like I could do anything. Now I'm giving Jameer that same message."

The state's Medicaid agency hasn't previously been involved with Nurse-Family Partnership. The announcement means 3,200 additional mothers will receive help over the next four years, said Christian Soura, director of the state Department of Health and Human Services.

The contract calls for his agency to pay \$13 million – about 30 percent of that coming from state taxes – while donors are contributing \$17 million, part of which will pay for the program's evaluation. The largest donor, The Duke Endowment, has committed to paying \$8 million of that.

Four years from now, the state will pay Nurse-Family Partnership a bonus of up to \$7.5 million. Whether state taxes pay that, zero or some-

where in between depends on the demonstrated savings, Soura said.

Reviews must show that most of the assisted families live in the state's poorest communities, that there's been a reduction in pre-term births and child hospitalizations for injuries, and that participating moms are waiting for a "healthy spacing" before their second child.

Roxane White, president and CEO of Nurse-Family Partnership, said the state-wide "Pay for Success" initiative is a first for the nonprofit.

Haley said the program is part of her administration's efforts in lifting up rural

South Carolina. Democrats have been critical of the state's dismal poverty rankings and Haley's refusal to expand Medicaid to more poor adults as the federal health care law intended.

"It's not about money, it's about outcomes," Haley said.

South Carolina ranks fifth-worst in child poverty, with 27 percent of all children – about 280,000 – living in families with incomes below the federal poverty level.

Medicaid, the government health care program for the poor and disabled, pays for more than half of all births in South Carolina and 85 percent of births to teen mothers, Soura said.

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# Haley undecided on endorsing candidate

BY ANDREW SHAIN  
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Four days before voters head to the polls for the S.C. Republican presidential primary, the state's most coveted GOP endorsement remains unclaimed.

Gov. Nikki Haley said Tuesday she has not made up her mind on endorsing a 2016 GOP presidential candidate. She did not provide a timetable for a decision and did not rule out foregoing an endorsement.

"I'm doing what I think a lot of people in South Carolina are doing, which is I watched the debate (on Saturday in Greenville), I'm trying to go through all the situations, I'm looking at all the different candidates that are there, and I'm trying to figure out who that person would be," she told reporters at the S.C. State House. "The decision is whether an endorsement would matter, and whether I jump out there or stay out of it."

Haley said she wants a candidate who will keep the country safe and un-

derstands the problems states face with federal regulations.

"I want someone who will hold Republicans accountable," she added.

Haley said she is getting phone calls "non-stop" from presidential candidates and their supporters. Former President George W. Bush, brother of GOP hopeful Jeb Bush, visited Haley on Monday.

The governor declined to say who is on her short list, but she ruled out backing GOP front-runner Donald Trump.

The New York billionaire criticized Haley on Monday, saying she had failed to protect South Carolina from Syrian refugees and the possibility of Guantanamo prisoners being transferred to the Navy brig outside Charleston. Haley has sent letters to federal officials voicing her objection on both issues.

"It's unfortunate when a candidate comes into

South Carolina and doesn't know South Carolina's issues," Haley said Tuesday, referring to Trump's comments.

Haley added she already deals with a president who battles states for authority, Democrat Barack Obama, and that Trump's comments were "quite Obama-like."

Haley's backing is considered a good catch for a presidential prospect. She is one of the state's most popular Republican politicians and a rising national GOP star.

Haley became a favorite to make GOP vice presidential short lists for her handling of last year's Charleston slayings and her successful call to remove the Confederate flag from the State House grounds. Last month, the 44-year-old daughter of Indian immigrants gave the nationally televised Republican response to Obama's State of the Union address.

Speculation has centered on Haley backing one of the GOP establishment candidates, U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida or former Florida Gov. Bush. Haley communicates

regularly with both. Her Washington, D.C.,-area strategist, Jon Lerner, works for a pro-Rubio super PAC.

Bush helped raise money for Haley's re-election campaign. Bush's father and brother, both former presidents, also have spoken to Haley in the past few weeks.

But establishment hopefuls, who normally win the GOP nomination, have languished in an primary season dominated by insurgent candidates. Trump is the favorite to win in South Carolina after his victory in New Hampshire. U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas, the Iowa winner, is polling second in advance of South Carolina's GOP primary Saturday.

S.C. polls this week show Rubio gaining, challenging Cruz for second. But Bush has fallen to fifth, trailing Ohio Gov. John Kasich, who finished second in New Hampshire.

Haley supported Mitt Romney in the 2012 presidential race. While the former Massachusetts governor won the GOP nomination, he lost the S.C. primary to Newt Gingrich, breaking the state's three-decade streak of voting for the candidate who landed on the November ballot.

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Haley

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# Senate to start debating road repair plan

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After five weeks of letting a road-repair bill sit atop its calendar, S.C. senators are set to begin debating Wednesday how to repair the state's crumbling roads.

Senate President Pro Tempore Hugh Leatherman, R-Florence, said he is happy the Senate is getting to the road-funding debate. Leatherman added he expects amendments to the proposal,

signaling the debate will take time.

"The Senate is ready to hunker down and start dredging through the amendments in hopes of shaping a compromise," said state Sen. Joel Lourie, D-Richland, who with Sen. Ray Cleary, R-Georgetown, introduced a proposal last week to amend a House-passed roads bill.

Cleary and Lourie's amendment addresses four parts of the House bill, which passed that chamber last year by a 87-20 vote. That proposal had enough support to override a threatened veto by Republican Gov. Nikki Haley.

How do the House and Senate proposals compare? A look:

**Senate amendment —** Increases the state's gas tax by 12 cents a gallon, hikes the maximum state sales tax on vehicles to \$600 from \$300, increases the fee to get a drivers license to \$50 every 10 years, and imposes every-two-year fees of \$120 on alternative-fuel vehicles and \$60 on

**SEE ROADS, 8A**

## ROADS FROM PAGE 3A

hybrid vehicles. The tax hikes, phased in over three years, are projected to raise at least \$665 million a year for road repairs.

**House plan —** Increase the state's gas tax by the equivalent of 10 cents a gallon and increase the maximum state sales tax on vehicles to \$500. The proposal is projected to raise \$427 million a year.

### TAX CUTS

**Senate amendment —** \$398 million in tax cuts, including adjusting the state's income-tax brackets and reducing the property tax paid by manufacturers. A taxpayer with taxable income of between \$40,000 and \$50,000 a year would save \$191 a year.

**House plan —** The plan would cut the average S.C. taxpayer's income taxes by \$48 a year by adjusting the state's income-tax brackets. When phased in, after two years, that tax cut would reduce the state's general fund revenues

by roughly \$50 million a year, according to 2015 estimates.

### DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**Senate amendment —** The eight-member commission that oversees the Transportation Department would be expanded to 10 members. The state's 10 Councils of Government, regional planning districts, would nominate three candidates for each commission seat and the governor would choose one. That commission now is legislatively controlled. Some Republicans oppose the proposal, saying the governor should have more control over the roads agency.

**House plan —** The governor would appoint the Transportation Department's eight commissioners with legislative approval. One would come from each of the state's seven congressional districts; one would be a statewide appointment. The commission then would appoint a secretary to run the agency with the Senate's approval.

### S.C. TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE BANK

**Senate amendment —** The proposal would send \$237 million, raised from the state sales taxes on vehicle sales, to the Infrastructure Bank to expand and improve interstates. It also would add two more members — to be appointed by the Senate majority and minority leaders — to the board that oversees the Infrastructure Bank. Senate critics want the bank abolished, saying it is an example of pork-barrel politics at its worst.

**House plan —** The Infrastructure Bank board would be expanded to 13 members, including the seven Transportation Department commissioners from congressional districts. Three appointments would be made by the speaker of the House and three by the Senate president pro tempore. The plan also would reduce the threshold for eligible projects that the bank can consider to \$25 million from \$100 million.

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FILE PHOTO/TIM DOMINICK [tdominick@thestate.com](mailto:tdominick@thestate.com)

The Senate finally is getting to the road-funding debate after five weeks on its calendar.



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