

Title: **Why the Confederate flag is still in a box**

Author: BY CASSIE COPE ccope@thestate.com

Size: 92.69 column inches

Beaufort, SC Circulation: 11269



SOUTH CAROLINA

Why the Confederate flag is still in a box

S.C. legislators did not approve spending any money to display the Confederate flag

Instead, lawmakers unsuccessfully proposed moving flag, museum to Charleston from Columbia

Lawmakers hope to approve display plan next year

BY CASSIE COPE
ccope@thestate.com

COLUMBIA

The last Confederate battle flag to fly at the S.C. Statehouse sits today in storage at Columbia's S.C. Confederate Relic Room and Military Museum.

That is not the honorable display flag advocates were promised last summer as lawmakers heatedly debated furling the flag in the wake of the slaying of nine African-American parishioners at a Charleston church.

Ultimately, legislators voted to remove the flag from the Statehouse grounds and display it at the Relic Room, a little attended museum located off Columbia's Gervais Street. The details and cost of that display, they said, would be worked out when they returned to Columbia in January.

But lawmakers left Columbia this year without

acting on the flag, largely forgotten.

Deciding the flag's future display next year will require several decisions — including the cost, its location and how to display it.

Some want the flag and the Relic Room moved to Charleston, a proposal that some African-American lawmakers from the Midlands might welcome. But does Charleston — the birthplace of the Civil War but also the home of the Emanuel AME Church massacre — want the flag?

How the flag will be displayed also is undecided.

A state House Democrat warns there will be opposition to flying the flag again if that's proposed as part of that display.

Earlier this year, a proposal emerged to spend \$3.6 million to enlarge and

renovate parts of the Relic Room to include a flag display, but legislators did not consider that plan.

Instead, lawmakers approved studying a move of the Relic Room to Charleston. But Gov. Nikki Haley vetoed that plan, saying moving the museum never was discussed as part of the deal to furl the flag.

"It's not that much of a surprise to me at all that it's still in storage," said Relic Room director Allen Roberson, citing other more-pressing legislative priorities this year, including paying for road repairs. He also said it could take time to get an appropriate display correct.

Lawmakers hope to decide how to display the flag as soon as next year.

"We're going to resolve it, and it's going to be handled in a way I think the vast majority of South

Carolinians would feel comfortable with," said state Rep. Rick Quinn, R-Lexington, a central figure in the House vote last year that brought the flag down.

PROMISES MADE

On July 10, 2015, S.C. troopers handed the furled flag to museum director Roberson after bringing the

banner down in front of a crowd of thousands.

Roberson, who was then to carry the flag off the grounds, remembers he focused on not tripping. He also said his wife, who attended the event with his children, was concerned for his safety.

"She was worried that somebody could be up in a building ... and I could get shot."

After the ceremony, Roberson and another



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museum staffer climbed into an armored police car and delivered the controversial flag to the Relic Room, several blocks away.

Roberson transferred the 100 percent nylon flag to an acid-free textile box lined with acid-free paper, an environment designed to ensure the banner, which cost \$52, did not deteriorate.

A year later, the flag remains in that box.

Even though they had more than \$1 billion in new money to spend this year, legislators decided not to spend any money on the flag. Instead, they spent that money on other priorities, including about \$200 million in added money on road repairs and more than \$300 million in additional funding for S.C. schools.

Part of the reluctance to

address the flag issue again was cost.

The first proposal given legislators — calling for expanding the Relic Room and renovating parts of the museum to display the flag — came with an estimated price tag of \$5.3 million. After some lawmakers balked at that cost, a second proposal came in at \$3.6 million.

Lawmakers recoiled in “a little bit of sticker shock” at those price tags, Quinn said.

But, the Lexington Republican added, “There were promises made (during the House flag debate) to deal with it in an honorable way.”

And, Quinn added, those promises — that the flag would be honored appropriately at another location — were important to some legislators, who see the flag

as a symbol of heritage. The promises convinced flag supporters in the House to vote to remove the flag, Quinn said.

RESOLUTION NEXT YEAR?

State Sen. John Courson, R-Richland, expects lawmakers to decide on a flag display when they return to Columbia in January. He also wants displayed the flag that flew on the Statehouse dome until 2000, when the banner was moved to the Confederate monument on the grounds.

But state Rep. James Smith, D-Richland, said there will be opposition to any proposal that would involve flying — as opposed to displaying — the Confederate flag.

It offends the service of Confederate soldiers when people continue to fly the

flag because its meaning gets misused and abducted by other organizations, Smith said.

The Relic Room issued a news release earlier this month saying the museum currently does not have the space or funding to construct a separate, permanent display for the flag. The release also noted the museum is due for re-accreditation next year. “We want to make sure the final Statehouse battle flag exhibit is done as expeditiously, professionally, and accurately as possible.”

Smith wants to see resolution to displaying the flag next year. “I don’t see any reason to not move forward on what would be an appropriate display of a historic artifact.”

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Rachel Cockrell, registrar at the South Carolina Confederate Relic Room and Military Museum, holds up the Confederate flag that was taken down from the Statehouse a year ago.

Title: **FLAG HANGS IN THE CITADEL CHAPEL**
 Author:
 Size: 8.68 column inches
 Columbia, SC Circulation: 128564



FLAG HANGS IN THE CITADEL CHAPEL

The Confederate flag still hangs in Summerall Chapel at The Citadel, just as it has since 1939. In April, the U.S. House of Representatives rebuffed an effort to force removal of the symbol by cutting off federal dollars to the institution.

The effort, initiated by U.S. Rep. Adam Smith, D-Wash., and championed by U.S. Rep. Jim Clyburn, D-Columbia, would have prevented the Defense Department from giving federal money to ROTC programs at schools that fly the Confederate flag.

The House Armed Services Committee rejected the legislation, even though The Citadel Board of Directors voted last year 9 to 3 to remove the flag after the Charleston shootings. S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley spurned federal intervention in removing the symbol from The Citadel, calling instead for the the issue to be addressed through the state General Assembly.

— COMPILED BY RODDIE BURRIS

Title: **Flag's removal could drive tourism**
 Author: BY AVERY G. WILKS awilks@thestate.com
 Size: 35.96 column inches
 Columbia, SC Circulation: 128564



THE CONFEDERATE FLAG: 1 YEAR LATER

Flag's removal could drive tourism

NAACP, NCAA lifted boycotts of South Carolina

Columbia making bid to host NCAA men's basketball tournament

Industry, tourism also could benefit

BY AVERY G. WILKS
 awilks@thestate.com

Since the Confederate flag's removal from the State House grounds a year ago, boycotts of the state have been lifted, paving the way for a boost in tourism and the chance at high-profile sporting events.

The NAACP and NCAA last summer lifted their boycotts of South Carolina, put in place after the 2000 compromise that removed the flag from the State House dome to a nearby flagpole.

The state NAACP convention has returned to South Carolina after spending recent years in North Carolina and Georgia, said Dwight James, the S.C.

NAACP's executive director. Last year the convention was held in Spartanburg. This September it's slated for Columbia.

"The word is slowly getting out that the flag has been removed from the State House grounds," James said.

The changes also opened the door for Columbia to work on bringing an NCAA men's basketball tournament to the state's capital. A weekend-long tournament could bring \$10 to \$15 million to Columbia and the Midlands, according to Ron Morris, a former columnist for The State newspaper who has led the city's efforts.

Three collegiate conferences

since January have announced they will hold postseason sports tournaments in the Palmetto

State over the next few years. Whether those decisions were related to the flag's removal is unclear.

S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley, who called for the flag's removal last summer, had said during a 2014 gubernatorial debate that the flag was not hurting the state's efforts to draw industry – a conclusion for which she cited the lack of concerned chief executives calling her.

Since the flag was raised on a

SEE TOURISM, 10A

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TOURISM

pole on the State House grounds, Boeing, Volvo, Amazon and other companies established or expanded their operations in South Carolina.

But as cries mounted for the flag's removal last summer, business leaders coalesced behind the effort, saying the banner's furling

would support investment and industry in the state and would help attract a diverse and talented workforce.

Tourism also should see an uptick, some say.

The S.C. Chamber of Commerce has said tourists have avoided the state for years

because of the flag. Many would-be tourists wrote

emails to Haley after the Charleston massacre saying they would not visit the Palmetto State while the flag was still flying.

Tourism numbers could get a bump from the return of many African-American family reunions, which will generate revenue for hotels, restaurants and gas stations,

James said.

Staff writer Cassie Cope contributed to this story.

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Title: **Haley got lots of advice on flag issue**
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THE BUZZ

Haley got lots of advice on flag issue

BY CASSIE COPE AND
 AVERY G. WILKS

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Thousands of people shared their opinions with S.C. Gov. **Nikki Haley** about the Confederate flag and her push to remove it from the State House grounds last summer.

The deluge of more than 10,000 pages of emails included a range of opinions about the flag's public display. But some commentators offered advice for dealing with the divisive banner beyond taking it down or letting it fly.

Here's a sampling of what The Buzz found, sifting through the documents released Wednesday in response to a public records request. The

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BUZZ

flag), another would represent the present (a unity flag, not designed yet) and the third would represent the future (a world peace flag, also not designed yet).

A contest for drawings of the unity and world peace flags would be well received, she said. Whatever contestants come up with would "satisfy all involved."

A revered flagpole

Mike, from Lexington, simply wanted the flagpole.

"I would like to request that when the flag is removed from the State House grounds, I would like to ob-

tain the flagpole," he wrote to the governor.

The grandmother council

Elizabeth from Waco, Texas, suggested Haley appoint a committee of women over age 60 who are "grandmothers, quilters, seamstresses, or creative fabric artists." The group would ponder two "21st Century flag" designs that S.C. residents could vote on, she said.

"This 'grandmother council' (an idea derived from the Iroquois culture) approach to making the world safer for and kinder to our grandchildren and their descendants is an appropriate choice at several levels," she

wrote.

"Who would criticize such a gathering, for one thing? And who could criticize the voters having the final say?"

Wanted: Art contestants

Brian, an elementary art teacher from Myrtle Beach, said the state should hold an art contest for students grades three and up to design a flag that would replace the Confederate flag.

Cynthia from Hollywood, S.C., suggested flying three flags at the State House. One would represent the past (Confederate

SEE BUZZ, 10A

care about that? No."

care about that? No."

A new job for Haley

Bobby from Lawrenceburg, Tenn., congratulated the governor on unwittingly taking on a new job. He thanked Haley for increasing membership in the local Ku Klux Klan chapter.

"You were nominated recruiter of the year. We have received thousands of calls since this started."

STATE SENATOR SUGGESTS SHUTTING DOWN "THE MEDIA"

In the midst of a national uproar on race relations and

police-community interactions, state Sen. **Katrina Shealy**, R-Lexington, took to social media on Friday to point her finger at "the media."

"I bet we would see a change" if "we could shut down all media for one month except for weather reports," the Lexington Republican wrote in a Facebook post titled "America's Biggest Problem."

Shealy said "race" and law enforcement are not the country's biggest challenges, but that it "could very possibly (most likely) be the

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Media!!!”

She added: “The media sensationalizes everything that happens stirring the pot, fueling an already blazing fire.”

The post came at the end of a week marked by fatal police officer-involved shootings in Louisiana and Minnesota, and a gunman’s attack Thursday night in Dallas that left five officers dead and seven more wounded.

Predictably, Shealy’s comments caught flak from re-

porters and other First Amendment advocates online.

“Bless your heart,” she responded to some on Twitter.

Reached by phone Friday, Shealy said the comment was “tongue-in-cheek” – aimed at asking, “If people couldn’t see violence for a period of time, would it make a difference?”

“I don’t know what the answer is. What do you do?” she told The Buzz. “We’ve gotten to a point where that’s

all you see, and the more you see of it, the worse it gets. What’s going to happen tonight?”

After the fallout, Shealy said she’s going to stop posting similar thoughts on Facebook.

“I’m just going to post more pictures of my grand kids.”

Shealy also called for media, law enforcement and other stakeholders to sit down at the table and have a serious discussion about why

the tragic shootings are happening with such frequency.

“How do you make it better without making it worse? Not that we need to get rid of the media – I love y’all,” she said, adding, “Send them some hugs and kisses for me.”

Reporter *Jamie Self* contributed.

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Title: **Latest flag flareup highlights problems with Heritage Act**
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 Columbia, SC Circulation: 128564



CINDI ROSS SCOPPE
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Latest flag flareup highlights problems with Heritage Act

THE SECESSIONISTS are right: Gov. Nikki Haley broke the law when she ordered the Coastal Carolina flag flown from the State House dome to celebrate the school's national baseball championship.

And the governor, as usual, brushed aside the criticism, ignored the legalities and said, essentially, why should I obey a law that doesn't make sense?

That pattern of breaking the law and acting as though it simply doesn't matter would make Hillary Clinton blush. But this is not a column about Gov. Haley, who clearly acted with the best of intentions.

This is a column about the Heritage Act, which the Legislature amended on July 9, 2015, in order to remove the Confederate flag from the State House grounds — a mandate carried out on a sunny morning one year ago today, in a solemn seven-minute ceremony attended by 10,000 and punctuated by understandable but unseemly cheers and chants.

That was good for our state, but it produced unrealistic expectations, and unforeseen consequences.

The flag wasn't even off the pole before the focus shifted to what comes next. Its most ardent

opponents suffered under the delusion that South Carolinians' desire to remove a flag that caused such pain to their neighbors would translate into a crusade to remove other reminders of the ugly parts of our past. Its most ardent defenders suffered under the same delusion — or perhaps paranoia.

When it became clear that they were all wrong, we got ... a lawsuit. "Hell no" rallies with a flag wheeled in on a portable pole. Congressional efforts to dictate state policy. And most bizarrely, those bullying complaints about the governor raising the flag of our new national champs.

None of that has made much difference, which is good, because that's not how we're supposed to resolve our differences in a representative democracy.

What Gov. Haley should have said after the secessionists complained was: "Oh my goodness, I had no idea this was against the law. I'm sorry I violated the law. But that's a law we need to fix." Because *of course* the state ought to be able to run a national champion's flag up the state's most important flag pole, just like we did (illegally) when USC won back-to-back baseball championships in 2010 and 2011 and (legally) when Clemson won a

football championship in 1981.

That's not the only change needed to the Heritage Act, which brought the flag off the State House dome in 2000 but included some shortsighted and troublesome provisions.

Greenwood Mayor Welborn Adams told The Associated Press that if the governor could violate that law, he ought to be able to as well. Of course, that's not the way to solve his problem, which is that the law prohibits him from replacing the segregated plaques on a city war monument with integrated plaques. Neither is the lawsuit Mr. Adams filed claiming the Legislature has no right to tell his city what it can and can't honor. The Heritage Act is not, as far as I can tell, unconstitutional. It's simply a bad law, from top to bottom.

At top is that language forbidding anything but the U.S. and S.C. flags flying over the State House. That's unnecessary: No one is going to hoist a controversial banner atop the dome without a legislative order. And like most unnecessary laws, it has those unintended consequences — like prohibiting the spontaneous celebrations a governor ought to be able to initiate when the state has something big to celebrate.

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At bottom is that sweeping section that says no state or local property “dedicated in memory of or named for any historic figure or historic event” can be “relocated, removed, disturbed, or altered” without approval by two-thirds of the House and Senate.

The Legislature has no more business telling cities and counties they can’t rescind honors than it would have saying they must. The Legislature has all the business in the world telling colleges and other state government entities what they can and can’t celebrate. It simply exercised bad judgment here.

Ideally, regardless of who’s making the decisions, most if not all monuments would stay;

names, be they of roads, buildings, bridges or culverts, not so much.

But as long as we’re stuck with them, the best defense is a good offense. Greenwood should erect signs in front of its war memorial declaring: “We prefer not to celebrate segregation, but the S.C. Legislature has mandated that we must.” The Citadel might try that approach to the Confederate flag in its chapel. Clemson ought to invest in some larger signs, which explain why it doesn’t want to be associated with a man who urged whites to massacre blacks and why the school is appalled that it can’t restore “Tillman Hall” to its original name.

Other entities shackled with

honors to dishonorable people and regrettable events should do likewise. What better way to preserve our history than to tell its full story, no matter how ugly it might be?

Ms. Scoppe can be reached at cscoppe@thestate.com or at (803) 771-8571.

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Title: **Abortion-bill signing was disgraceful**

Author:

Size: 6.82 column inches

Columbia, SC Circulation: 128564



Abortion-bill signing was disgraceful

Gov. Nikki Haley’s photo-op commemorating her signing of the 20-week abortion ban is abhorrent in so many ways.

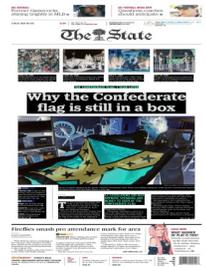
Using special-needs children as props is the lowest kind of publicity stunt.

Signing the bill at a Christian school makes it clear that in South Carolina, there is no separation of church and state: If you do not believe in the God of Nikki Haley and our legislators, your beliefs will not be honored as reflected by our laws.

I hope that the flagrant misuse of the power of government as represented by this bill signing makes it that much easier for the Supreme Court to find this law unconstitutional.

*- Agnes F. Pomata
Wadmalaw Island*

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THE CONFEDERATE FLAG: 1 YEAR LATER

Why the Confederate flag is still in a box

S.C. LEGISLATORS DID NOT APPROVE SPENDING ANY MONEY TO DISPLAY THE CONFEDERATE FLAG

BY CASSIE COPE

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That is not the honorable display flag advocates were promised last summer as lawmakers heatedly debated furling the flag in the wake of the slaying of nine African-American parishioners at a Charleston church.

Ultimately, legislators voted to remove the flag from the State House grounds and display it at the Relic Room, a little attended museum located off Columbia's Gervais Street. The

details and cost of that display, they said, would be worked out when they returned to Columbia in January.

But lawmakers left Columbia this year without acting on the flag, largely forgotten.

Deciding the flag's future display next year will require several decisions – including the cost, its location and how to display it.

Some want the flag and the Relic Room moved to Charleston, a proposal

the flag is now, and a timeline of events that led to the Confederate flag's removal from the S.C. State House grounds a year ago.

➔ MORE INSIDE

INSIDE: How the flag's removal is affecting tourism, sports, **9A**

PALMETTO: A look at S.C. battle flags at the Confederate Relic Room and S.C. State Museum, **1C**

SCOPPE: Latest flag flareup highlights problems with Heritage Act, **2C**

SEE FLAG, 11A

➔ ONLINE

THESTATE.COM: A video on where

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FLAG

that some African-American lawmakers from the Midlands might welcome. But does Charleston – the birthplace of the Civil War but also the home of the Emanuel AME Church massacre – want the flag?

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positional emerged to spend \$3.6 million to enlarge and renovate parts of the Relic Room to include a flag display, but legislators did not consider that plan. Instead, lawmakers approved studying moving the Relic Room to Charleston. But Gov. Nikki Haley vetoed that plan, saying moving the museum never was discussed as part of the deal to furl the flag.

"It's not that much of a surprise to me at all that

it's still in storage," said Relic Room director Allen Roberson, citing other more-pressing legislative priorities this year, including paying for road repairs. He also said it could take time to get an appropriate display correct.

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Part of the reluctance to address the flag issue again was cost.

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But, the Lexington Republican added, “There were promises made (during the House flag debate) to deal with it in an honorable way.”

And, Quinn added, those promises – that the flag would be honored appropriately at another location – were important to some legislators, who see the flag as a symbol of heritage. The promises convinced flag supporters in the House to vote to remove the flag, Quinn said.

MOVE THE RELIC ROOM TO CHARLESTON?

What time legislators spent on the flag issue this year centered on a proposal by state Rep. Chip Limehouse, R-Charleston, to study moving the Relic Room to Charleston.

In Columbia, the Relic Room draws few visitors – only 24,700 last year, about one-third of them children who enter the museum for free.

That compares with the State Museum’s approximately 181,000 visitors.

Ticket sales for the Relic Room generated about \$100,000 of the military museum’s \$826,000 budget last year. Taxpayers picked up the rest.

In Charleston, which draws more tourists, the museum would attract more admission-paying visitors, Limehouse said.

Ultimately, legislators approved Limehouse’s study as part of the state budget, deferring any action on displaying the flag.

However, Haley vetoed that budget proposal, saying it was important to legislators, who she worked with to bring

down the flag, “to develop a proper, respectful place for” the banner at the current Relic Room location.

“Never in any of those conversations ... did they talk about moving it to Charleston,” Haley said last month. The proposal arose because a couple of legislators or former legislators want the museum moved to Charleston, she said. “We talked about Columbia – never did we talk about Charleston – and I have to stay true to my word on that.”

House members sustained the governor’s veto.

Even though Limehouse, who retired from the S.C. House this year, pushed to look at the move, not all in Charleston would welcome the flag.

State Sen. Marlon Kimpson, D-Charleston, said it would send the wrong message to relocate the flag to the city where the shooting took place.

“This city has been through tremendous tragedy,” Kimpson said. “It is time to close the chapter on allowing that symbol to polarize this state.”

There has not been a discussion at all in the Senate about displaying the flag, Kimpson said. “People are ready, quite frankly to move on.”

Charleston County Council Chairman Elliott Summey said he would be absolutely against moving the flag and Relic Room to Charleston.

There is “no sense in opening old wounds,” he said, especially because of what the community has been through during the past 18 months.

State Sen. John Courson, R-Richland, also opposes moving the Relic Room.

“That’s just not going to happen,” Courson said. It and the State Museum, both housed in the same building, feed off each other for attendance, he said.

The military museum is an important archive of the state’s history, said state Rep. James Smith, D-Richland. “I’m for keeping the Relic Room in Columbia.”

However, others wouldn’t mind if the Relic Room – and the flag – went somewhere else.

“(It) wouldn’t hurt my feelings, as someone who lives in Columbia, to have it be out of Columbia,” said state Sen. Darrell Jackson, D-Richland. “I wouldn’t feel either joyful or sad if it moved.”

Jackson noted Charleston is where the Civil War began.

But others say the Relic Room – which chronicles the state’s entire military history, not just the Civil War – has important ties to the Midlands.

While its military collection has a statewide focus, the Relic Room has a big Midlands component, including flags from most of the Civil War companies formed around Lexington, Saluda and Edgefield, museum director Roberson said.

“We have a purpose here,” he said.

RESOLUTION NEXT YEAR?

Jackson said he has been involved with Confederate flag discussions since he was a freshman senator.

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After last year's emotional debate, Jackson said there was not much appetite this year to debate again where the flag should go. "It was not a conversation."

However, Courson expects lawmakers to decide on a flag display when they return to Columbia in January. He also wants displayed the flag that flew on the State House dome until 2000, when the banner was moved to the Confederate monument on the grounds.

But Smith said there will be opposition to any proposal that would involve flying - as opposed to displaying - the Confeder-

ate flag.

The division the symbol causes and its historic meaning are both reasons the flag should be displayed, not flown, in a museum, Richland Rep. Smith said.

Flying the Confederate flag by a government entity would violate the terms of surrender by the Confederate soldiers, Smith said.

If people want to fly the Confederate flag on their own lawns and homes, that's one thing, Smith said. But that is different from the state and government entities flying the flag.

Smith quoted a speech by Confederate Gen. Wade Hampton: "When you furled it forever you pledged your soldierly honor to observe inviolate the terms on which you surrendered."

It offends the service of Confederate soldiers when people continue to fly the flag because its meaning gets misused and abducted by other organizations, Smith said.

"To place it in the context of history is to put it in a case in a museum, not flying it," Smith said.

The Relic Room issued a news release earlier this month saying the museum currently does not have

the space or funding to construct a separate, permanent display for the flag. The release also noted the museum is due for re-accreditation next year. "We want to make sure the final State House battle flag exhibit is done as expediently, professionally, and accurately as possible."

Smith wants to see resolution to displaying the flag next year.

"I don't see any reason to not move forward on what would be an appropriate display of a historic artifact."

Cassie Cope: 803-771-8657, @cassielcope

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THERE WERE PROMISES MADE (DURING THE HOUSE FLAG DEBATE) TO DEAL WITH IT IN AN HONORABLE WAY.

State Rep. Rick Quinn, R-Lexington

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Rachel Cockrell, registrar at the South Carolina Confederate Relic Room and Military Museum, holds up the Confederate flag that was taken down from the State House a year ago.



JUNE 20, 2015
People gathered on the State House grounds to show support for taking down the Confederate battle flag.

Title: **Why the Confederate flag is still in a box**
Author: BY CASSIE COPE ccope@thestate.com
Size: 199.64 column inches
Columbia, SC Circulation: 128564



JUNE 24, 2015
State Sen. Clementa Pinckney's casket passes the Confederate flag at the State House.



JULY 9, 2015
South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley signed the bill that would remove the Confederate Battle Flag.



JULY 10, 2015
A large crowd gathered to watch the South Carolina Highway Patrol Honor Guard remove the flag.

Title: **Secession group to fly Confederate flag again at State House**
 Author: BY BRISTOW MARCHANT bmarchant@thestate.com
 Size: 63.70 column inches
 Rock Hill, SC Circulation: 34688



SOUTH CAROLINA

Secession group to fly Confederate flag again at State House

Rally marks one-year anniversary of flag's removal

Law enforcement: Heavy security presence expected

"We've fought that battle, and we've agreed to move on," Democratic S.C. senator says

BY BRISTOW MARCHANT

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One year after thousands watched as the Confederate flag was removed from a flagpole on the State House grounds, the divisive banner will rise again at the South Carolina Capitol.

At least temporarily. The South Carolina Secessionist Party will raise the rebel banner Sunday during a ceremony to mark the one-year anniversary of the flag coming down.

The Secessionists, who support South Carolina leaving the Union again, plan to raise the flag on a 30-foot aluminum pole

with a plastic base in the same spot where it flew before, near the Confederate Soldier Monument on the State House's front lawn. The ceremony starts at 11 a.m. The flag will be removed at the end of the rally.

A Confederate memorial honor guard will take part in the flag raising, which supporters plan to make an annual event.

James Bessenger, the chairman of the Secessionist Party's board, expects the event to draw a crowd of hundreds, based on interest on the party's Facebook page.

The group has not changed its plans to assemble in light of the latest mass shooting, when police officers were shot and killed in Dallas late Thursday during a protest.

Bessenger said he was contacted by S.C. capitol police Friday to ask if the rally would be postponed in light of the police shootings in Dallas during a protest about police violence against African-Americans. He said Public Safety did not formally ask the group to change its plans.

"We had a special board meeting (Friday), and the

board decided to continue with the rally," Bessenger said.

Bessenger said the rally also would honor the slain law enforcement officers in Dallas with black ribbons and raise a law enforcement emblem alongside the battle flag.

Because of the Dallas shooting, members of the Upstate Black Lives Matter chapter will not be attending the rally Sunday.

On a recent conference call, the Upstate chapter and others were "all in

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FLAG RALLY

agreement that we didn't really want to focus our attention on the flag at this time," said Greenville's Derrick Quarles, president of the activist group's Upstate chapter.

Quarles said "it's a very sensitive time around the nation," and the group did not want the rally to result in violence.

Bessenger said the push to remove the flag was the

result of "political correctness," which also has been a talking point in the presidential campaign. "People are sick of hearing that people's feelings are hurt," he said.

"Our history is being erased," he said, comparing the push to remove the Confederate battle flag to the Islamic State's looting of Middle Eastern museums and destruction of historical artifacts. "It's

like cultural Marxism."

But Quarles had a different interpretation.

Bringing the flag down was "the correct thing to do because of the history and the legacy attached to the flag, which, in my opinion, is a heritage of racism and hate toward blacks and minorities," he said.

State Sen. John Matthews, D-Orangeburg, said there was no chance

of the flag returning to the State House grounds.

"We've fought that battle, and we've agreed to move on," Matthews said. "We want to put the focus on health care, on education, and it does no good to have this back out there. ... We've decided to move on into the 21st century."

Security has been a concern at the State

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House since the Confederate flag debate flared up last year after the racially motivated shooting at Emanuel AME Church in Charleston. Nine black parishioners were killed by a white gunman during a Bible study and images surfaced of the gunman draped in the flag.

Focus quickly shifted to the flag at the State House. A week after the shooting, a protester climbed the pole that flew the flag and pulled the flag down.

Gov. Nikki Haley soon called for the flag to come down, after receiving a

torrent of emails on the subject, and the state Legislature voted by a two-thirds majority to remove it.

After the flag came down last year, a pro-flag rally organized by a Ku Klux Klan group attracted angry counter-protesters – including members of the New Black Panther Party. The clash resulted in scuffles, five arrests on charges of breach of peace, disorderly conduct and assault. Other people received emergency attention.

Without discussing

details, a S.C. Department of Public Safety spokesman said there would be a similar number of law enforcement agencies involved Sunday as there were at last year's KKK rally. Eight state or local agencies contributed officers to that event, from Public Safety and the State Law Enforcement Division to the Richland and Lexington sheriff's offices, the city of Columbia and the University of South Carolina campus police.

Their plans include preparations for counter-protesters, said S.C. Highway Patrol Lt. R. Kelley

Hughes. "We don't anticipate issues, but we will be prepared and will take appropriate enforcement action, if necessary."

The Secessionists and Confederate memorial honor guard were the only groups to alert state officials they would be gathering Sunday.

But Bessenger said he expects to have company.

"I expect there will be some kind of ruffraff," he said.

Reporter Jamie Self contributed. Bristow Marchant: 803-771-8405, @BristowatHome

Title: **Latest flag flare-up highlights problems with S.C.'s Heritage Act**
 Author: BY CINDIROSS SCOPPE The (Columbia)State
 Size: 75.48 column inches
 Rock Hill, SC Circulation: 34688



Latest flag flare-up highlights problems with S.C.'s Heritage Act

BY CINDI ROSS SCOPPE

The (Columbia) State

The secessionists are right: Gov. Nikki Haley broke the law when she ordered the Coastal Carolina flag flown from the State House dome to celebrate the school's national baseball championship.

And the governor, as usual, brushed aside the criticism, ignored the legalities and said, essentially, why should I obey a law that doesn't make sense?

That pattern of breaking the law and acting as though it simply doesn't matter would make Hillary Clinton blush. But this isn't a column about Gov. Haley, who clearly acted with the best of intentions.

This is a column about the Heritage Act, which the Legislature amended on July 9, 2015, in order to remove the Confederate flag from the State House grounds — a mandate carried out on a sunny morning one year ago today, in a solemn seven-minute ceremony attended by 10,000 and punctuated by understandable but unseemly cheers and chants.

That was good for our state, but it produced unrealistic expectations,

and unforeseen consequences.

The flag wasn't even off the pole before the focus shifted to what comes next. Its most ardent opponents suffered under the delusion that South Carolinians' desire to remove a flag that caused such pain to their neighbors would translate into a crusade to remove other reminders of the ugly parts of our past. Its most ardent defenders suffered under the same delusion — or perhaps paranoia.

When it became clear that they were wrong, they tried to bypass the democratic process: A lawsuit. Hell no rallies with a flag wheeled in on a portable pole. Congressional efforts to dictate state policy. And most bizarrely, those complaints about the governor raising the flag of our new national champs.

None of that has made much difference, which is good, because that's not how we're supposed to resolve our differences in a representative democracy.

What Gov. Haley should have said after the secessionists complained was this: "Oh my goodness, I had no idea this was against the law. I'm

sorry I violated the law. But that's a law we need to fix." Because of course the state ought to be able to run a national champion's flag up the state's most important flag pole, just like we did when USC won back-to-back championships in 2010 and 2011 (when it was against the law) and when Clemson won a championship in 1981 (when it was not against the law).

That's not the only change needed to the Heritage Act, which brought the flag off the State House dome in 2000 but included some shortsighted and troublesome provisions.

Greenwood Mayor Welborn Adams told The Associated Press that if the governor could violate that law, he ought to be able to as well. Of course, that's not the way to solve his problem, which is that the law prohibits him from replacing the segregated plaques on a city war monument with integrated plaques. Neither is the lawsuit Mr. Adams filed claiming the Legislature has no right to tell his city what it can and can't honor. The Heritage Act is not, as far as I can tell, unconstitutional. It's simply a bad law, from

top to bottom.

At top is that language forbidding anything but the U.S. and S.C. flags flying over the State House. That's unnecessary: No one is going to hoist a controversial banner atop the dome without a legislative order. And like most unnecessary laws, it has those unintended consequences — like prohibiting the spontaneous celebrations a governor ought to be able to initiate when the state has something big to celebrate.

At bottom of the Heritage Act is that sweeping section that says no state or local property "dedicated in memory of or named for any historic figure or historic event" can be "relocated, removed, disturbed, or altered" without approval by two-thirds of the House and Senate.

The Legislature has no more business telling cities and counties they can't rescind honors than it would have saying they must. The Legislature has all the business in the world telling colleges and other state government entities what they can and can't celebrate. It simply exercised bad judgment here.

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Author: BY CINDI ROSS SCOPPE The (Columbia) State
Size: 75.48 column inches
Rock Hill, SC Circulation: 34688

Ideally, regardless of who's making the decisions, most if not all monuments would stay; names, be they of roads, buildings, bridges or culverts, not so much. But as long as we're stuck with them, the best defense is a good offense.

Greenwood should

erect signs in front of its war memorial declaring: "We prefer not to celebrate segregation, but the S.C. Legislature has mandated that we must." The Citadel might try that approach to the Confederate flag in the chapel. Clemson ought to invest

in some larger signs, which explain what Ben Tillman was and why school is appalled that it can't restore "Tillman Hall" to its original name. Other entities shackled with honors to dishonorable people and regrettable events should do

likewise. What better way to preserve our history than to tell its full story, no matter how ugly it might be?

Scoppe is an associate editor at *The (Columbia) State*. Write to her at cscoppe@thestate.com.



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The Highway Patrol Honor Guard removed the Confederate flag from the Statehouse grounds during a brief ceremony on July 10, 2015.

Title: Greer plans service in wake of shootings
Author: MICHAEL BURNS MDBURNS@GREENVILLENEWS.COM
Size: 28.52 column inches
Greenville, SC Circulation: 113473



Greer plans service in wake of shootings

MICHAEL BURNS

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Following a violent week that culminated with the killing of five Dallas police officers in the deadliest day for U.S. law enforcement since Sept. 11, 2001, Greer Mayor Rick Danner and City Councilman Wayne Griffin are inviting the public to gather for a Prayer Service of Hope and Peace on noon Monday at Greer First Baptist Church.

The nondenominational, hour-long event at 201 W. Poinsett St., Greer, is expected to be similar to the one Greer officials held for Charleston shooting victims last summer. "In light of recent violent events, it seems like the right time for this service," Danner said. "We invite all in the Upstate to join us for this community

gathering." The deaths in Dallas, where seven police officers were wounded, followed two highly publicized police shooting deaths of black men earlier this week. Last summer, after the shooting deaths of nine black people by a white man at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in

Charleston, Greer officials held a service at Maple Creek Missionary Baptist Church, where Danner called for the removal of the Confederate flag from Statehouse grounds. That removal soon came about at the urging of Gov. Nikki Haley. Follow Michael Burns on Twitter @MikeNearGreer



MICHAEL BURNS

Balloons to honor victims of last summer's shooting at a church in Charleston are released following a prayer service in Greer.