

Title: **Haley on Time's list of most influential people**
 Author: JAMIE SELF THE STATE
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Haley on Time's list of most influential people

JAMIE SELF

THE STATE

Gov. Nikki Haley's inclusion in Time's 100 most influential people burnished her reputation as a star in the national Republican firmament.

Haley's leadership during last year's turmoil catapulted her into the national spotlight and into Time's ranks, alongside U.S. presidential candidates and world leaders.

That's Haley, the national version.

The Lexington Republican is a leader who "put a face on South Carolina that we were all extremely proud of," U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-Seneca, wrote in Time.

"Whether dealing with the hate-filled shootings of the Charleston Nine at Mother Emanuel AME Church, the removal of the Confederate battle flag flying over State House grounds, the police shooting of Walter Scott or a 1,000-year flood ... Haley led with determination, grace and compassion."

Haley, the state version, inspires more ambivalence.

As governor, Haley has forged partnerships with Democrats and education advocates to develop and pass education reforms. But she also has confronted lawmakers — including members of her own party, which controls the Legislature — and other officials when they dare to stray from her agenda.

During a news conference Wednesday, for example, Haley called out Richland County Sheriff Leon

Lott, a Democrat, for not signing her anti-domestic violence pledge. Lott doesn't "seem to think any rules apply to him," Haley said.

Lott said he had planned to sign the pledge, which he did Thursday. A Haley aide tweeted Thursday that her office had received Lott's pledge.

Haley also has butted heads with Republican leaders in the state House and Senate over roads spending and ethics reform.

Earlier this year, Haley drew a rebuke from House Speaker Jay Lucas, R-Darlington, and other legislators for telling a group of real estate agents they would need a "good shower" after visiting the State House.

Those "middle-school comments" threatened to "poison the well," Lucas said from the House floor.

After a Senate maneuver stalled a proposal to require lawmakers to disclose their sources of income, Haley ripped a Democratic state senator. "There is no good excuse," she wrote on Facebook.

"Bless her heart," responded state Sen. Gerald Malloy, D-Darlington, earlier this month. "It seems to me that Gov. Hypocrite Haley has a bad case of short-term memory loss. It was not too long ago that the Ethics Committee in the S.C.

House of Representatives whitewashed hearings on Rep. Nikki Haley for her failure to disclose her own income."

Haley accused another lawmaker of spreading a rumor that one of her Cabinet directors was an atheist. The senator was on a panel investigating the Department of Social Services, which reports directly to the governor.

That lawmaker, state Sen. Katrina Shealy, R-Lexington, said Thursday Haley's "national image is great, and she's done a lot of good things in South Carolina," making the state "come off looking really, really good."

But from issuing letter grades to lawmakers during her first term to calling them out publicly for not supporting her agenda, Haley's aggressive style sometimes "backfires on her," Shealy said, adding "you can feel the tension."

But, Shealy added, "People don't seem to care what she does to us (legislators) because a lot of people out there don't like us. But they like her."

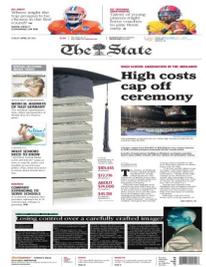
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HEIDI HEILBRUNN/STAFF

Gov. Nikki Haley has "put a face on South Carolina that we were all extremely proud of," U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham wrote in Time.

Title: **Losing control over a carefully crafted image?**
 Author: BY JOHN MONK jmonk@thestate.com
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ATTORNEY GENERAL ALAN WILSON

Losing control over a carefully crafted image?

BY JOHN MONK

jmonk@thestate.com

For six years as attorney general, Alan Wilson could do little wrong when it came to his public image. He has been talked about by many as a strong contender in the 2018 governor's race.

That has changed.

In the past month, Wilson, a 42-year-old Republican, has been gobsmacked by publicity that is every politician's nightmare.

In a filing in the S.C. Supreme Court, Wilson has been accused of trying to halt a State Law Enforcement Division investigation into possible public corruption in the Legislature.

Days later, two of Wilson's political allies were revealed by The State newspaper as potential subjects of the probe. And, during a March 30 news conference, Wilson hurled person-

al insults at the prosecutor who made the filing in the high court. At the news conference, Wilson also emotionally claimed that unnamed "cowards" and "haters" were out to get him.

Then, a top aide, Adam Piper, was discovered hatching a plot to publicly smear Wilson's legal opponent, special prosecutor David Pascoe. Wil-

son did not discipline Piper.

These events spell trouble for Wilson's future, some say. "It just looks to the average fellow that the attorney general is trying to push something aside," said Neal Thigpen, a state Republican party activist for more than 40 years and a former political science professor at Francis Marion University in Florence, which Wil-

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WILSON

son attended. Thigpen also is a friend of Wilson's father, Joe Wilson, a Republican congressman from South Carolina since 2001.

"Logically, you would have to say, this could have an effect on whether Alan makes the race or not," Thigpen said. "This could be damaging - regardless of the outcome" of the court's deliberation.

Asked Friday about his political future and whether it had been affected by the Supreme Court controversy, Wilson's office released a short statement.

"The attorney general is focused on doing the best job possible as attorney general," said Wilson spokeswoman Hayley Thrift. "Our filings speak for themselves."

WORSE THAN A SEX SCANDAL?

Wilson, like Gov. Nikki Haley, is from Lexington County. They were elected to statewide office the same year.

But even she said recently that the now-month-old Wilson-Pascoe dispute is "an embarrassing mess" and called on the Supreme

Court to end it.

In his filings in the state Supreme Court, Pascoe has accused Wilson of trying to halt Pascoe's and SLED's ongoing State Grand Jury investigation of legislators' possible criminal violations.

Pascoe has asked the Supreme Court to decide whether Wilson has the authority to intervene in the investigation after the attorney general recused himself because of conflicts and appointed Pascoe as prosecutor instead. Pascoe also has asked the court to keep Wilson from firing him, as Wilson would like.

College of Charleston political science professor Gibbs Knotts said the stakes are high for Wilson in the current controversy.

Although all the facts aren't known in the Wilson-Pascoe battle, and the S.C. Supreme Court has yet to rule, controversies involving finances or public corruption and alleged cover-ups - as the current dispute is rife with - are the worst kind of publicity for a politician, Knotts said.

"Even sex scandals aren't as bad," Knotts said. "If people view this as some type of corruption

scandal, that could be damaging for Wilson's future prospects."

But Wilson has won his office in two statewide races and "at this point, until we have more information, he is a person who is known across the state and who would be a contender for future office," Knotts said.

Some remain strongly loyal to Wilson.

Laura Hudson, head of the S.C. Crime Victims' Council, said, "All of our crime victims are very much in favor of Alan continuing his career. I don't see any reason why not. He's done so much for victims of criminal domestic violence and forming a human trafficking task force and using the bully pulpit of the attorney general's office to get things done."

Longtime Republican political operative Bob McAlister said of Wilson's fate: "It's too early to know. A lot is dependent on what the Supreme Court does. But this is important to know - Alan Wilson has done a lot of good things as attorney general."

CONSERVATIVE BASE

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In addition to building up his crime-fighting credentials, Wilson has used his position to take legal and political stands that are popular with the highly conservative and fundamentalist religious base that votes in Republican primaries, said Clemson University political scientist David Woodard.

On the political front, before South Carolina's February GOP presidential primary, Wilson traveled the state, boosting his profile by hosting forums for most all of the Republican presidential front-runners, Woodard noted.

In South Carolina, that's something that, normally, a congressman would do, not someone like Wilson, who holds statewide elective office. The gatherings gave Wilson the chance to share his message of limited government, states rights, socially conservative values and strict constitutional interpretation before thousands of South Carolinians – helpful if he chooses to seek a higher office.

On the legal front, Wilson has used his office to take stands similar to those of conservative Republicans nationwide: filing legal actions to fight transgender equality bathroom access and to weaken the authority of the EPA to enact regulations environ-

mentalists say are needed but big business interests say are burdensome.

Even Wilson's losing legal stands play well with many in the conservative electorate.

Last year, he fought a long and failing taxpayer-financed federal court battle to stop the legalization of same-sex marriage. And his office continues to defend a death penalty appeal in a case in which a federal judge overturned the verdict and denounced a prosecutor for comparing a black defendant to "King Kong."

"I thought Wilson had been doing pretty well, and insulating himself from any criticism up until now, but this (current publicity) is a setback," Clemson's Woodard said.

"If Wilson has any chink in his armor, that will encourage people to come out and run against him," Woodard said.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Many of the state's 10,000-plus lawyers are watching the Wilson controversy, said Greg Adams, who teaches legal ethics at the University of South Carolina law school.

"I've certainly heard a number of lawyers, not just criminal lawyers, talking about his comments being out of bounds, uncivil, in

violation of our oath of office – and being unethical," Adams said.

Under the lawyers' code of professional conduct, attorneys can argue a case passionately in court, but they take an oath to be civil to each other outside court, Adams said.

Even if Wilson wins the case in the Supreme Court against Pascoe, "the lawyers with whom I've talked have reached the judgment that Wilson has not handled this in a professional way," Adams said.

Wilson's conduct contrasts with that of Pascoe, who has made no public comment about the Supreme Court litigation and is perceived as "simply trying to get an issue resolved," Adams said.

Wilson has said if the Supreme Court allows him to fire Pascoe, he wants the SLED and State Grand Jury investigation to go forward with a new special prosecutor.

But John Crangle, executive director of S.C. Common Cause and a longtime observer of ethics in state government, said that by seeking to fire Pascoe and making personal attacks on him while Pascoe is in the midst of an ongoing public corruption investigation, Wilson has handled himself poorly – no matter what he says.

Thigpen said, "Even if Alan wins in the Supreme Court over Pascoe, this whole thing has to be viewed as a minus for him."

Priorities

S.C. Attorney General Alan Wilson has:

- Emphasized prosecution of Internet child sexual predators and human traffickers
- Prosecuted, through his office and special prosecutor David Pascoe, public corruption allegations against former House Speaker Bobby Harrell. In October 2014, Harrell pleaded guilty to misuse of campaign funds and resigned from office.
- Highlighted criminal domestic violence as a major state issue
- Backed passage of Emma's Law, a tougher drunk driving bill
- Involved the state in federal legal actions opposing many of President Barack Obama's initiatives, including Obamacare and bringing Guantanamo Bay prisoners to South Carolina

About Alan Wilson

Age: 42

Family: Adopted son of U.S. Rep. Joe Wilson, R-S.C. Married to Jennifer, with two children

College: Francis Marion University, 1996; University of South Carolina Law School, 2002

Experience: Attorney general since 2010. Previous work experience: clerk to a state judge, 11th Judicial Circuit assistant solicitor and assistant attorney general. Holds rank of lieutenant colonel in the National Guard; served a year in Iraq.

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Title: **Haley PAC raising fall campaign cash**
 Author: ANDREW SHAIN THE STATE
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Haley PAC raising fall campaign cash

ANDREW SHAIN

THE STATE

A pro-Gov. Nikki Haley political group has raised \$515,000 to elect legislative candidates this year that back her agenda.

Great Day SC raised the money from six contributors, including a pair who donated to a previous pro-Haley political group, according to a filing provided to *The State* newspaper. Only one Great Day SC contributor was from South Carolina.

Great Day chief Tim Pearson — Haley's top strategist, and former campaign manager and chief of staff — said Great Day SC, formed in February, is not ready to disclose how its money will be spent.

Great Day's filing did not include any expenditures.

However, Pearson has been paid more than \$1 million tied to Haley since she first ran for governor in 2009.

Pearson received \$119,000 from Haley's re-election campaign at the end of March, according to records filed with the state Ethics Commission. He had not been paid by the campaign since May.

Over the past seven years, Pearson has been paid \$607,000 for running the governor's two campaigns, \$270,400 as her chief of staff in the governor's office and \$179,600 as an adviser to the first pro-Haley political organization, The Movement Fund.

Pearson, who left as Haley's chief of staff in October 2012, remains a presence in Haley's office. He attends her news conferences

and other events, including updates with public-safety officials during the October flood.

He did not respond to a request for comment about his compensation tied to the governor.

However, John Crangle, state director for the government watchdog Common Cause group, said lawmakers should regulate how closely nonstate employees, who do not have to follow state ethics laws, work with the governor's office.

"It's a political transgender problem. Who should get access to the governor's office?" Crangle said. "She does not let you or I come into her office and talk about those matters."

Crangle asked if Pearson has the security clearance needed to hear briefings reserved for members of Haley's staff.

Pearson does not have a security clearance and does not attend those briefings, the governor's office said.

After paying Pearson, Haley's campaign has drawn down almost all the \$539,000 left over in her 2014 re-election account. The campaign had \$39,700 remaining in that account at the end of March, according to its filings.

Great Day gives Haley a chance to push her agenda during her second and final term as governor. There are no limits on the contributions the political group, registered with the Internal Revenue

Service, can accept from individuals and companies.

Pearson declined to say how Great Day would spend its contributions. But, last month, he said the group would not back the state Senate run of state Rep. Stephen Goldfinch, R-Georgetown, who voted for a House roads-funding plan that included raising the state gas tax.

Other likely targets of Great Day include Senate President Pro Tempore Hugh Leatherman, R-Florence, and Senate Ethics Committee chairman Luke Rankin, R-Horry. They have fought Haley's efforts to increase income disclosure by lawmakers.

Great Day contributors included Florida pharmaceutical entrepreneur Rama Mantena and New Jersey health care mogul Vivek Garipalli, who donated \$872,000 combined to The Movement Fund, nearly half of the \$1.8 million that fund raised overall.

Mantena donated \$100,000 to Great Day, while Garipalli kicked in \$250,000.

Other Great Day contributors included:

- » New River Auto Mall of Hardeeville, \$100,000
- » Financier Rex Sinquefield of Westphalia, Mo., \$50,000
- » Construction equipment dealer Yancey Brothers Co. of Austell, Ga., \$10,000
- » Creative Solutions Healthcare of Fort Worth, Texas, \$5,000

Title: **Manufacturers look to youth to build labor pool**
 Author: RUDOLPH BELL dbell@greenvillenews.com
 Size: 67.42 square inch
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Manufacturers look to youth to build labor pool

Manufacturers mingled with high school students at state conference

Campaign in place to encourage young people to go into factory work

RUDOLPH BELL

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GREENVILLE

With factory jobs more plentiful than they used to be, the labor supply has tightened for South Carolina's manufacturers.

The situation has them reaching out to youths in an effort to maximize their chances of finding enough future employees.

The approach was on display Thursday at the TD Convention Center during the final day of the South Carolina Manufacturing Conference and Expo.

Manufacturers set up booths on a concrete floor and mingled with hundreds of high school students at a job fair.

Charles Bayles, quality manager for one of the employers, the Mack Molding plastic parts factory in Inman, said he made sure to be honest with the students about

the nature of some factory jobs.

"I don't glamorize it," Bayles said. "I let them know there are some jobs that are going to be in hot areas of the plant."

At the same time, he said, there are other jobs in climate-controlled areas.

Bayles said Mack Molding recently invited middle school students for a factory tour.

"We have Spartanburg High scheduled to come in," he said. "We're always looking for local talent."

Entry-level operators at the company are initially on the payroll of a contract labor company and make \$10 an hour. If they perform well, they eventually go onto the Mack Molding payroll and get a raise to \$12.35 an hour.

As of March, more than

237,000 South Carolinians worked in manufacturing, about 14 percent more than at the start of 2011, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Lewis Gossett, president of the South Carolina Manufacturers Alliance, said members of the group are offering "good jobs with great pay and great benefits that will literally change the lives of families all over South Carolina. We just need to show that they're there and what they're all about."

During a panel discussion at Thursday's conference, Gossett said the historical evolution of South Carolina's workforce explains why some parents have a negative perception of factory work that they pass on to their children.

South Carolinians "came from the fields into the factories, and we didn't want our kids to go back into the fields," Gossett said.

"Then we went from the factories to graduate schools, and professional schools, and white-collar jobs and we didn't want our kids to go back to the factories. But now the factories are the place where it's happening."

The manufacturers alliance earlier this month rolled out a marketing campaign to encourage young people to go into manufacturing.

Called South Carolina Future Makers, the campaign includes videos of Gov. Nikki Haley talking to young workers about jobs they landed at companies such as BMW, Bridgestone and Boeing.

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C. ALUKA BERRY

Workers at Komatsu in Newberry.

Title: **South Carolina responds to EPA lead concerns**
 Author: NATHANIEL CARY NCARY@GREENVILLENEWS.COM
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South Carolina responds to EPA lead concerns

NATHANIEL CARY

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South Carolina's water regulatory agency told the Environmental Protection Agency it has asked water systems to share more information with the public about lead sampling results and the location of lead service lines but that the state doesn't have the information and utilities may not have it either.

The response came in a letter from the Department of Health and Environmental Control after the EPA asked every state to provide answers to a series of questions about the status of monitoring for lead in drinking water following the health crisis in Flint, Michigan.

The EPA asked each state to work with its public water sys-

Lead

Continued from Page 1A

"The surveys themselves were not submitted to the Department and may, or may not, still exist with the public water systems after more than 20 years," Reece said.

The state has shared the EPA's request with water systems and is in the midst of holding Lead and Copper Rule workshops with systems across the state, she said.

The response from DHEC to the EPA came as South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley said the lead issue had drawn widespread attention and that South Carolinians were concerned about the potential for lead in their drinking water.

Haley asked DHEC Director Catherine Heigel for a full accounting of its water quality monitoring program specific to lead and a list of communities that have or are currently experiencing elevated lead levels in drinking water and DHEC's plan to eliminate the risk of lead from drinking water systems.

Haley's letter was dated March 18, the day after an investigation by *The Greenville News* revealed that the water agency had failed to monitor some water systems that had shown lead counts above

tems, especially its largest water providers, to increase transparency by providing the public with an inventory of which customers may be receiving water through lead or partial-lead service lines.

Every public water system was required to complete an inventory when the Lead and Copper Rule went into effect in the early 1990s, but those surveys weren't required to be turned into DHEC and may no longer exist, said Myra Reece, DHEC's director of environmental affairs, in a response letter to DHEC on March 29.

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the EPA action level of 15 parts per billion.

"Citizens of South Carolina are concerned about the potential for lead contamination in their drinking water as the negative effects of lead exposure include developmental delays in children and organ damage in all exposed," Haley said in her letter. "We should take this opportunity to assure South Carolinians that the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) is diligently performing its role in monitoring and enforcing safe drinking water standards."

Heigel's response detailed changes the department was making to its monitoring program post-Flint, many which were mentioned in *The News* investigation. She listed the 28 water systems, all small or medium-sized rural systems, which had lead levels that exceeded the EPA standard.

The state was conducting a study of each of the 28 systems to determine the reason for the exceedance, she said.

"One of the goals of the study is to determine whether affordable treatment options are available for use to reduce lead below the action level," Heigel said.

DHEC has established an Office of

Rural Water to find solutions to water and wastewater issues faced by small rural systems and is conducting follow-up sampling with each of the 28 water systems that have had a lead exceedance in the last five years, said Jennifer Read,

DHEC spokeswoman. The most recent sampling at 10 of those systems, including samples taken at three systems this year, continue to show exceedances, according to DHEC.

Heigel told Haley that DHEC is working with professional member organizations to encourage water systems to be transparent with their data.

Discussions are ongoing with water systems about the EPA's request that public water systems put lead-line locations and sampling data on their websites, DHEC's Read said.

"We will use the feedback we receive during these discussions to help inform future policy decisions at the state and federal level," she said.

At issue is an inventory list of lead or partial-lead service lines that may not exist. Greenville Water System told *The News* last month it estimated it had fewer than 3,000 lead "goose-necks" used to connect service lines to the water main,



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but it didn't know where those lines were located.

Many service lines in the state were installed decades ago, and individual paper records may exist on notecards, but most water systems don't have accurate counts of the materials in their systems, officials have said.

After a USA Today Network investigation last month revealed lead levels in 2,000 water systems affecting the drinking water of more than 6 million customers across the country failed to meet EPA standards, the EPA asked states to provide more transparency to custom-

ers about lead sampling results and the makeup of its service lines.

A drinking water watchdog and affiliate faculty member at Virginia Tech, Yanna Lambrinidou, told the USA Today Network that the EPA's request is "critically important" and said resistance from some states to posting details online was troubling and an impediment to the public knowing whether utilities are testing water from the right customers' taps, meaning those with the lead service lines that are most likely to have lead-contaminated water.

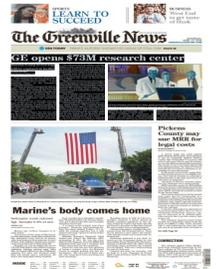
When dealing with issues of public health and safety, "the more transparen-

cy the better," said John Tynan, political director for Conservation Voters of South Carolina.

"Given that drinking water is something that everyone needs, and that there is the potential for lead to be in it if you're in certain areas or have certain types of water, utilities, we would hope, would be willing to provide the information necessary for homeowners to make informed decisions easily and quickly," Tynan said.

Transparency of lead line and sampling data was a topic at a recent DHEC workshop for public water systems, Tynan said.

Title: **GE opens \$73M research center**
 Author: RUDOLPH BELL DBELL@GREENVILLENEWS.COM
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GE opens \$73M research center

Manufacturing technology
will be explored at facility

RUDOLPH BELL

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General Electric executive Rick Stanley was waiting for the completion of a certain project before retiring — a new research center on the company's Greenville campus.

GE held the grand opening for that facility, called Advanced Manufacturing Works, on Friday, clearing the way for Stanley to retire next week as chief technology officer for GE Power, the conglomerate's largest industrial business with 38,000 employees and customers around the globe.

"I wanted to see it through with the team at the end of my career," said the 58-year-old Stanley, a board member at the Peace Center and State Ports Authority who plans to stay in Greenville following retirement.

"It's really a happy day for me and for the company," he said after joining GE Power CEO Steve Bolze and Gov. Nikki Haley on stage as part of an elaborate ceremony.

GE will use the \$73 million, 125,000-square-foot research center just off

of Feaster Road to develop new manufacturing processes and rapidly build prototypes for various business lines — though most of the work will be related to the power-producing turbines the company has made in Greenville since 1968.

High-level GE Power executives gave news reporters a tour of Advanced Manufacturing Works, showing them various technologies being explored there. They include 3D printing, laser drilling, advanced ceramic composites and autonomous robots.

Jeff Connelly, GE Power's vice president for global supply chain, said the idea for the research center surfaced after Bolze asked him in 2012 to examine the global capabilities of GE Power.

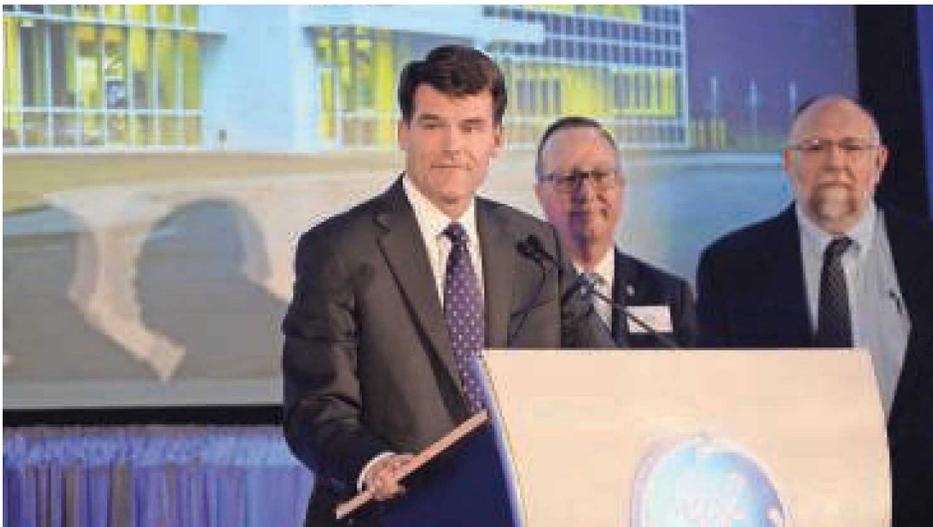
Consulting with engineering and supply chain leaders, "The common theme that I heard was that we don't have the ability to iterate new ideas when it comes to manufacturing," said Connelly, who worked in Greenville in the early 1990s but is now based at GE Power's head-

quarters in Schenectady, New York.

So GE decided to create a specific site for exploring technologies with the potential to dramatically change how things are made, Connelly said.

Kurt Goodwin, the executive in charge of Advanced Manufacturing Works, said the goal is to "keep putting new processes and manufacturing technology in the factories, keep making them competitive, and keep building out jobs there. That's the real payoff."

GE first announced the research center in the summer of 2014. It has filled 48 of 80 planned jobs, Goodwin said.



HEIDI HEILBRUNN/STAFF

GE Power President and CEO Steve Bolze speaks during the celebration of GE's Advanced Manufacturing Works grand opening in Greenville on Friday.

Title: **Haley highlights efforts to help former prisoners find jobs**
 Author: BY SEANNA ADCOX Associated Press
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Haley highlights efforts to help former prisoners find jobs

BY SEANNA ADCOX
 Associated Press

COLUMBIA

Gov. Nikki Haley told prisoners Monday a better life beyond the barbed-wire fencing starts with a legal job, and it's her job to help them find one.

"Every one of you deserves better. I don't know what got you in here, but I know you deserve not to come back," she told about 90 inmates at Manning Correctional Institution in Columbia, a pre-release center for men within six months of being released. "I want you to have a job so you've got something that makes you feel productive and worthy of living a good life."

Haley was visiting the state Department of Employment and Workforce's "work ready initiative" at Manning.

About 450 former inmates have completed the program since its launch in November 2014. According to the agency, 98 report they're currently employed. Exact numbers and where they work are unknown. But the agency plans to cross-match wage records to better track the program's results.

The program is intended to be the link between training for a job and actually landing one.

Inmates at Manning were already learning construction trades such as brick masonry and carpentry. The initiative added the teaching of computer, interview and "life" skills — such as proper attire and how to explain their incarceration. Inmates also craft a resume and apply for jobs online. Some inmates have been in prison so long, they don't know how to work a computer, said Department of Corrections Director Bryan Stirling.

"Before, they would still have job training, but we would basically give them a bus ticket and drop them off at the bus station and have them fend for themselves," he said.

Only inmates imprisoned for non-violent offenses qualify for the program. Other criteria include having a discipline-free record and a GED or high-school diploma. Nearly 470 are currently enrolled.

The program is too new

for Corrections to have a recidivism rate for participants.

But if an ex-offender gets a job, they're much less likely to commit crimes for money, Stirling said.

The program is "good not only for these folks but for public safety," he said. "If they're working and busy, they won't get in trouble."

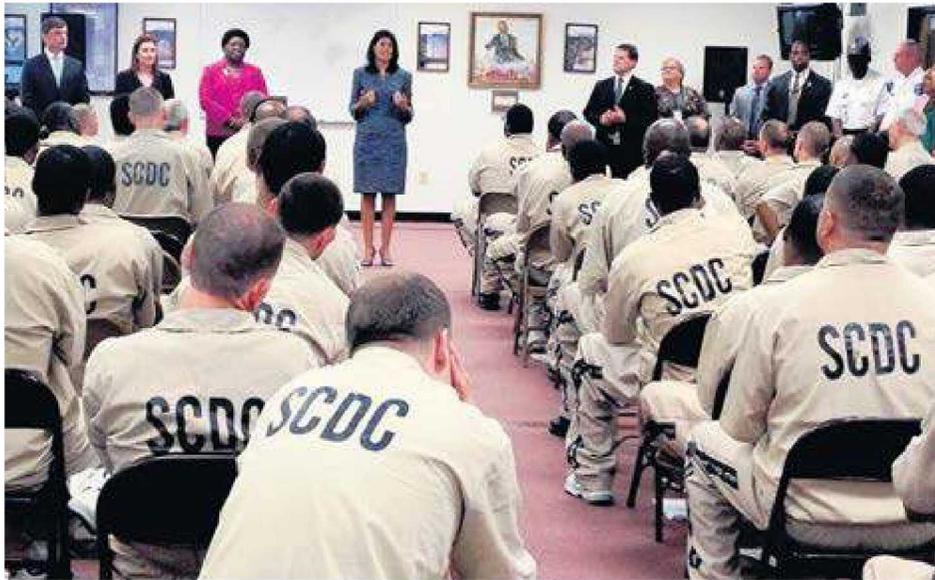
The employment agency is asking employers to give ex-prisoners a chance. So far, they've put 200 businesses on the "second chance" list. Incentives "to help employers feel more comfortable" include federal tax credits, a federal insurance program and on-the-job training credits, said DEW Director Cheryl Stanton.

Of the roughly 900 inmates released from prisons statewide monthly, 100 of them leave from Manning, Stirling said.

While the program is limited, last month Corrections began registering every prisoner in DEW's database for job seekers as they're released, he said.

Haley said the program's still being developed, but the ultimate goal is that "every person who leaves the fence has a job" waiting for them.

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SEANNA ADCOX AP

South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley talks at Manning Correctional institution Monday in Columbia to inmates who are scheduled to be released.

Title: **SC lawmakers down to the wire to pass bills**
 Author: BY JAMIE SELF jself@thestate.com
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SC lawmakers down to the wire to pass bills

Lawmakers have until May 1 to approve legislation, sending them to other chamber

Sen. Lee Bright's transgender bill among proposals likely to fizzle out

Plans to ban abortion at 20 weeks stalled but only temporarily, supporter says

BY JAMIE SELF

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Lawmakers in the House and Senate have one week left to pass bills from one chamber to the other before their policy hopes are — almost certainly — dashed for this legislative session.

Next Sunday is the crossover deadline. If a bill fails to pass in either the House or Senate and cross the lobby to the other chamber by that date, it will need a steep two-thirds vote just to stay alive.

A look at proposals that need a vote this week to beat the odds:

IMPROVING RURAL SCHOOLS

Operating in the shadow of a school equity lawsuit, state lawmakers introduced a handful of bills this year aimed at improving the state's ailing K-12 public schools, deemed unconstitutional by the S.C. Supreme Court two years ago.

Several proposals have

cleared the House, including defining what a S.C. high-school graduate should know and giving the S.C. Department of Education authority to take over a school district in financially dire straits.

But the bill likely to have the most impact on the bank accounts of poor, rural school districts only just passed committee last Tuesday and hit the House floor.

First proposed by Gov. Nikki Haley, the bill would commit up to \$200 million a year in state spending to help school districts renovate and build school facilities.

Given its broad support, the bill likely will clear the House this week and sail smoothly into the Senate.

FIXING S.C. ROADS

Last week, the Senate Finance Committee OK'd a bill that would spend an added \$315 million on roads, including \$200

million a year to borrow more than 10 times that amount for roads.

The Senate and House have passed their own preferred road spending plans, but the chambers have failed to agree on a single path forward.

Senate Minority Leader Nikki Setzler, D-Lexington, said he'd like to see the Senate pass its roads plan and send it to the House this week. That's the surest way to make sure "there's no slip between the lip and the cup" on a roads fix before the legislative session ends.

TRANSGENDER BATHROOM BILL HAS STEEP CLIMB

State Sen. Lee Bright's bill to require transgender people to use the bathroom assigned to their biological birth sex has one week to get to the Senate floor and pass there to avoid the crossover deadline.

The Spartanburg Republican needs nine votes from Senate General Committee members to bring the bill directly to the Senate floor, skipping a committee vote. Bright said Friday he needs three more votes toward that nine.

Even if Bright succeeds, Democrats say they will block the bill on the Senate floor.

DISTURBING SCHOOLS

One of four bills that would change the state's disturbing schools law, which allows law enforcement to arrest students for misbehavior, managed to get a hearing last week.

But the bill's chances of being passed this year took a hit when a House panel decided to hold onto it for another week to make some changes. That ends the bill's chance of getting a House vote be-

SEE BILLS, 4A



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fore Sunday's crossover deadline.

The panel's chairman, David Weeks, D-Sumter, said it's possible the bill could go directly to the floor.

But House Judiciary Chairman Greg Delleney, R-Chester, said that is unlikely because it would require the unanimous consent of the GOP-controlled House to bring the proposal to the floor for a vote.

Time is running out for all legislation introduced in this session, Delleney said. "Anything filed in the second year of a two-

year session that has controversy in it doesn't make it."

ABORTION AT 20 WEEKS IS NOT YET BANNED

More than a month has passed since Delleney said he was certain the S.C. House would vote to send a bill banning abortion at 20 weeks and later to Haley's desk.

The bill passed the House 71-22 in February. The Senate then passed the bill, making some changes to provide for exceptions.

Now, Delleney needs 83 of the House's 124 mem-

bers to OK a House-Senate compromise on the bill, already approved by the Senate.

So what's holding up the bill?

Attendance.

"We've had a lot of people out for sickness and business and other reasons," Delleney said.

Delleney has tried twice to get the compromise approved, failing by one vote the first time and by three votes the second time in a chamber made up of 78 Republicans and 46 Democrats.

Delleney said he will try again in the next couple of weeks. Meanwhile, he has

been counting votes, working to hold onto the support he has.

Efforts to persuade are going the other way, too.

Both sides are talking to everybody they can, said state Rep. James Smith, D-Richland, who opposes the abortion legislation. "If you look at the votes, many times there are Republicans who happen not to be there. It's not just a 'no' vote that is helpful. ... Simply not voting gets us there."

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Title: **Education important in preventing sexual assault, abuse**
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Education important in preventing sexual assault, abuse

BY SUSAN SELDEN

Guest columnist

Last month, Gov. Nikki Haley issued a proclamation recognizing April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month. She was quoted as saying, "Sexual assault is one of the most devastating crimes in our society today, with victims often suffering lifelong pain from physical injury and serious emotional trauma."

For the 828 people in Aiken County who reported being sexually assaulted last year, they could readily agree. The staff of the Cumbee Center to Assist Abused Persons provides compassionate, confidential services to victims like these each day, and could give testimony to the mental and emotional scars that last well beyond the physical anguish. Yet, there are still many more that never report their victimization to law enforcement or our center.

At the Aiken City Council meeting on March 14, Mayor

Rick Osbon and Council members presented the Cumbee Center with a proclamation stating that the City of Aiken will recognize April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Councilwoman Lessie Price read the following statements from the proclamation: "Sexual violence is widespread and impacts every person in this community. Statistics show that one in five women and one in 71 men will be raped at some point in their lives. Child sexual abuse prevention must be a priority to confront the reality that one in six boys and one in four girls will experience a sexual assault before age 18. Young people experience heightened rates of sexual violence, and youth ages 12 to 17 were two and a half times as likely to be victims of rape or sexual assault. On campus, one in five women and one in 18 men are sexually assaulted during their time in college."

These statistics are alarming, but prevention is possible when everyone is involved in community education and awareness. The teal ribbons hanging downtown on Laurens Street and Richland

Avenue represent the support we offer victims of sexual violence while advocating for a new culture that will not allow us to remain silent while harmful attitudes and behaviors remain in practice.

Our community educators are well-prepared to reach out to middle and high school students with the Youth Violence Prevention Program endorsed by the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control, and fulfilling all the requirements of Erin's Law, but we have struggled to make inroads in the public schools. It is difficult to understand the hesitancy to accept this curriculum that has been widely used in other counties while our students are still suffering the effects of dating violence, stalking and sexual harassment.

Sexual assault is not just a women's issue. It's time for men to become more aware of how they can become involved in making our communities safe for their wives, mothers, sisters, daughters, friends and coworkers.

The Cumbee Center will hold the Walk a Mile in Her Shoes event which allows men

to raise awareness about the serious causes, effects and remediations to men's violence against women. As the saying goes, "You can't really understand someone until you've walked a mile in their shoes."

The Walk a Mile event features men wearing red heels and walking downtown with Cumbee Center staff and other interested community members. Please join us to show your support on Thursday at 6:30 p.m. on Newberry Street. You can register at 6:15 p.m. at the Aiken County Courthouse or pre-register at <http://bit.ly/23JSA7m>.

The Cumbee Center offers free hospital accompaniment, legal advocacy, case management, counseling, emergency shelter, a 24-hour hotline and prevention education. Please call the Cumbee Center at 803 649-0480 or visit www.cumbeecenter.org if you would like to learn how you can partner with us in providing these services if you need information.

Susan Selden is executive director of the Cumbee Center to Assist Abused Persons.



Selden

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S.C. lawmakers place road bill in jeopardy

To say that the South Carolina roads bill has taken the scenic route is a gross understatement.

It was February 2015 when Rep. Gary Simrill, R-York, first introduced House Bill 3579, which sought to address South Carolina's crumbling road system.

H. 3579 wasn't a perfect bill, but it included several reforms that would've at least increased road funding while reforming how the state Department of Transportation and other road-related agencies function.

Since then, however, the bill has been filibustered, threatened with vetoes and substantially altered by a slew of amendments.

The bill's entire future remains in doubt now that it's stalled in a House conference committee for reasons we – and voters, we suspect – find petty.

The dispute largely revolves around how commissioners are chosen to serve on the S.C. Department of Transportation.

According to the Senate version that passed March 9, the governor would be allowed to appoint commissioners with Senate approval. House members added language that said commissioners would require House and Senate approval. Gov. Nikki Haley scolded House members in a rebuke posted to social media.

"Since the Senate passed a roads bill weeks ago, the House has known they either work with the Senate, pass real, good reform, or the bill dies," Haley said in a Facebook post. "Today we learned House leadership has chosen to pass an amendment they know has zero chance of becoming law.

"That's a terrible shame, and every South Carolinian should know that tomorrow, the Republican House of Representatives plans to kill

two years of work and that as a result, there will be no change in their road conditions anytime soon," Haley continued.

So much for progress.

The bill's future was already in doubt after Haley vowed to veto any gas tax increase unless it also was accompanied with an income-tax cut, which doesn't make much sense.

While revenues would probably increase due to out-of-state drivers paying higher gas taxes, the net gain would be nominal.

The General Assembly is proposing to increase SCDOT funding by \$400 million, but now the money is supposedly coming from the general fund. That's a terrible idea since the general fund is hardly a dedicated funding source and only a temporary solution. Road funds should come from a dedicated source.

It doesn't matter who's right or wrong in Columbia since there's plenty of blame to spread around. True, the House inserted last-minute amendments. But let's not forget Senate filibustering delayed progress for weeks.

As a result, reforms outlined in H. 3579 in its current form seem lost in the rear view mirror. That's a shame since the bill originally featured some promising elements.

For example, the bill reduced the State Infrastructure Bank minimum loan cap from \$100 million to \$25 million, making SIB loans more attainable for less wealthy counties.

H. 3579 also restructured not only the SCDOT, but also the SIB and county transportation committees, which are funded by proceeds from state gas taxes.

These reforms are important because there are legitimate questions about how road funding has been handled in the past. Better oversight is sorely needed. One only has to look

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east to better understand why.

Coastal counties already receiving billions of dollars through the SIB and other sources have sought billions more for such big-ticket projects as I-526 in Charleston County or I-73 in Horry County. That hardly seems equitable.

Last week, a House conference committee consisting of prominent lawmakers formed

in an effort to hash out differences in the bill.

Our only hope is that they reach a solution soon.

South Carolina voters are too smart to fall for legislative finger pointing. And with more than 100 state lawmakers facing election challenges this year, they'd be wise to settle this legislative food fight soon.