

Title: **Gov. Haley opposes borrowing bill**

Author:

Size: 4.65 square inch

 Greenwood, SC Circulation: 16494
 

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## Gov. Haley opposes borrowing bill

COLUMBIA — Gov. Nikki Haley is accusing the leader of a powerful House committee of running up South Carolina's credit card with a proposal that borrows \$500 million for building projects across the state.

Haley repeatedly singled out Ways and Means Chairman Brian White while opposing a measure his committee advanced last week. She called Wednesday for the House to stop the state's first bonding bill in 15 years.

Title: **State Senate includes gun ban with domestic violence penalties**  
 Author: Associated Press  
 Size: 32.24 square inch  
 Greenwood, SC Circulation: 16494



## State Senate includes gun ban with domestic violence penalties

Associated Press

COLUMBIA — In a state where gun rights tend to be fiercely guarded, the South Carolina Senate on Wednesday agreed to take firearms away from many people convicted of criminal domestic violence.

The gun ban would still require a judge's approval for the least serious offenses. A provision adding that requirement cleared the way for passage of the bill to strengthen domestic violence penalties across the board. The measure passed 38-3 after nearly two weeks of debate.

It still must pass the House, which is considering a domestic violence bill with a less stringent gun ban. But lawmakers in both chambers appear ready to take some kind of action to curb domestic violence, as South Carolina frequently ranks among the worst in the nation in the number of people killed that way.

"Solving this problem is as much about changing hearts and minds as legislation. But this is a very important first step," said Sen. Greg Hembree, who helped put together the bill.

The Senate bill would create three different degrees of criminal domestic violence, depending on the amount of violence involved and whether there are previous convictions. Currently, prosecutors only have two options, which vary widely depending on the severity of the offense.

Much of the debate in this heavily conservative state centered on the gun ban. Opponents were worried that allowing the ban to be automatic for all convictions might take away weapons from people who didn't deserve to lose their gun rights.

The bill would still automatically ban offenders from owning guns for 10

years if convicted of the two most serious degrees. Under an amendment that cleared the way for passage, a third-degree domestic violence conviction would lead to a five-year gun ban, but only if a judge approved.

Sen. Chip Campsen, R-Isle of Palms, backed the amendment, saying lawmakers couldn't foresee every circumstance and should allow judges some discretion. The amendment passed by two votes.

"It's a smidge disappointing on the amendment, but that's just a minor policy difference," said Senate Judiciary Chairman Larry Martin, R-Pickens, who helped make the bill a priority this session.

The federal government has a similar gun ban, but supporters said this assures the law will be enforced here.

The bill should get a final procedural vote next week, and lawmakers in both chambers have voiced support for it. State Attorney General Alan Wilson and local prosecutors want the new penalties. Gov. Nikki Haley has created a task force to study domestic violence that includes members from law enforcement, courts, churches, health care, social services and cosmetology.

Hembree, who served 25 years as a prosecutor, said he thinks South Carolina is quickly getting less tolerant of abusers.

"When I started, I remember judges and law enforcement thinking if it happened in the four walls of your house, there was no need to get involved," said Hembree, R-Little River.

More than 36,000 people annually report a domestic violence incident to law enforcement agencies around South Carolina, according to the state attorney general's office.



Title: **CHIEF FIRED**  
 Author: By COLIN RIDDLE criddle@indexjournal.com  
 Size: 127.1 square inch  
 Greenwood, SC Circulation: 16494

# CHIEF FIRED

## Calhoun Falls Police Department dwindling

By COLIN RIDDLE

criddle@indexjournal.com

What a difference a day makes, as the saying goes.

After a three-hour-plus closed-door meeting during Calhoun Falls' Town Council meeting Tuesday night to discuss a personnel issue, council returned to the chambers in front of the 100 or so people left to fight for Police Chief J.T. Galloway's job and took no action. That changed dramatically Wednesday.

Mayor Johnnie Waller, who people attending the Tuesday meeting speculated was going to call for the chief's resignation that night, met with Galloway and the department's Lt. Ed Pereira on Wednesday morning. That meeting ended with the two being fired.

"It was just very brief this morning. I met with the chief and the lieutenant," Waller said. "I relieved the chief and the lieutenant from their duty."

Galloway said there was no discussion and no reason given to him by the mayor for his dismissal during the meeting, and that the mayor read him his termination letter.

Waller confirmed he had read the letter to the chief and told him he was



**JOHNNIE WALLER**

would not confirm whether the issue pertained to the police chief.

Galloway told the Index-Journal on Tuesday night he thought the mayor had personal issues with him because of his unwillingness to follow the mayor's rules. The chief said he ought to have control of his department.

"I asked him, 'Why?' And, he informed me he didn't have to answer that," Galloway said Wednesday.

The mayor, in turn, said from day one it was the chief's department to run. Waller said he did not want to comment at this time as to why he fired Galloway and Pereira.



**CHARLIE TILLMAN**

Former Town Councilman Charlie Tillman questioned if Waller had the authority to terminate town employees without the con-

sent of the council.

Ordinance 31.06 in the Calhoun Falls code gives the mayor the power to "appoint and, when he or she deems it necessary for the good of the town, suspend or remove all municipal employees and appointive administrative officers provided for by law."

The ordinance was adopted in January 2006 during Waller's previous term as mayor. Waller said the town has operated under that same ordinance since.

Town Council called an emergency meeting Wednesday evening to discuss the reinstatement of the chief, however, it was unable to take any action despite having the consensus to do so. Waller was not present.

Mayor Pro Tem Mindy Rogers told the more than 150 residents present at the meeting council would have to rescind the previous ordinance and work with the town's attorney to draft a new ordinance that designates functions for council, the mayor and the town administrators.

When asked if council had decided to reinstate the chief on the basis of 200 concerned residents, or if the evidence provided by the mayor did not warrant dismissal, Rogers said, "I thought the chief was doing a great job in the town. I've had no complaints."

See **FIRE**, page 4A

Title: **CHIEF FIRED**  
 Author: By COLIN RIDDLE criddle@indexjournal.com  
 Size: 127.1 square inch  
 Greenwood, SC Circulation: 16494

## FIRED

*Continued from 1A*

Rogers said this is the first time the mayor had used the elevated powers awarded him without council's participation.

"We're just going to take a step back and look at every avenue. We have a lot of people fighting (for) and supporting me," Galloway said.

The department, which has had many hiccups in the past, is essentially empty with the remaining active officer resigning Wednesday morning. Waller said the officer was still somewhat in training and was not comfortable working alone. Another officer is currently on medical leave not set to return until March 3 and a new hire is currently at the police academy with graduation expected in May.

Waller said he would not be able to name an interim police

chief because of the lack of officers available.

In 2012, former Police Chief Mike Alewine resigned in a well-publicized dispute between the former chief and Town Council. Alewine said in previous reports he resigned because of excessive overreach from Town Council, as well as the termination of police officer Neil Stone.

The department had previously reached out to the Abbeville County Sheriff's Office for support while understaffed and started this past week working the weekend shifts. Waller said the sheriff's office will now cover the town 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

"I feel confident I made the right decision and in the best interest of Calhoun Falls," Waller said, adding the town will begin advertising soon for a new chief.

Tillman, who spoke at Tuesday's meeting demanding answers from council regarding the chief's status, said residents in support of Galloway are determining how to impeach the mayor and reinstate the chief.

"That's fine with me. There's no law in the book that would allow them to do that," Waller said. "No law in the book that I know about that allows for impeachment unless I committed some crime or something."

According to the Municipal Association of South Carolina, there is no provision in state law for a referendum to recall an elected official. An ordinance outlining procedural elements to recall an elected official would have to be passed by council, which would still be subject to litigation, according to Greenwood city attorney Tripp Padgett.

Tillman, who ran against Waller for mayor in 2012, was removed from council in 2014 by an executive order signed by Gov. Nikki Haley following a 2012 arrest for driving under the influence, failure to stop for a blue light, speeding, open liquor and threatening the life of a police officer and 2014 Alford pleas to charges of driving under the influence and threatening the life of a public official.

An Alford plea is not an admission of guilt, but an acknowledgement that if a trial were to go forward, a conviction could occur.

Tillman and residents in support of Galloway plan to meet soon at Brown OH A.M.E. Church in Calhoun Falls to discuss how to impeach Waller from office and other options available to them.

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Author: By COLIN RIDDLE criddle@indexjournal.com  
Size: 127.1 square inch  
Greenwood, SC Circulation: 16494



MADDY JONES | INDEX-JOURNAL

Calhoun Falls residents pack inside town hall Wednesday evening and listen intently to Town Council explain Mayor Johnnie Waller's authority to fire Police Chief J.T. Galloway and Lt. Ed Pereira.

Title: **Winter won't 'let it go'**  
 Author: By DANIEL PERRY dperry@indexjournal.com  
 Size: 64.17 square inch  
 Greenwood, SC Circulation: 16494



# Winter won't 'let it go'

## Snow, mixed with rain, blankets Lakelands

By DANIEL PERRY

dperry@indexjournal.com

A rain-sleet-snow mix began falling late Wednesday afternoon just as people were leaving work in Greenwood. But, the prediction of what would fall out of the sky — and how much — of what people would see as they woke up this morning was anyone's guess.

A storm system from the Gulf of Mexico moved Wednesday over South Caro-

lina interacting with cold weather to bring a variety of weather and options. See **WINTER**, page 4A

linas interacting with cold weather to bring a variety of weather and options.

See **WINTER**, page 4A

### Early publication

■ Because of the uncertainty of what the

## WINTER

*Continued from 1A*

The National Weather Service's Greer office, which includes Abbeville and Greenwood counties, predicted 3 to 6 inches of snow with ice not being a major factor.

The National Weather Service's West Columbia office, which services McCormick and Saluda counties, predicted 1 to 2 inches of snow.

The four-county region is expected to have high temperatures in the low 40s today, with lows in the high 20s to low 30s.

Other predictions from area television stations were:

■ WHNS-TV 21 in Greenville, known as FOX Carolina on-air, predicted a 1- to 2

-inch mix of rain and snow in the Lakelands.

■ WYFF-TV 4 in Greenville predicted 1 to 4 inches of snow for the region.

■ WSPA-TV 7 in Spartanburg called for rain with a light dusting of snow in the area.

■ WOLO-TV 25, known as ABC Columbia on-air, predicted Saluda County would receive 1 to 3 inches of snow.

Across the Carolinas, people braced for the storm.

In South Carolina, the National Weather Service predicted up to 8 inches of snow in the Upstate. In North Carolina, up to 8 inches of snow was expected in the mountains and up to 6 inches

of snow across much of the rest of the state.

South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley issued a state of emergency for 31 counties in South Carolina. The declaration directed state agencies to begin coordinating to respond to any emergencies and to help local governments. It also placed some South Carolina National Guard members on duty to help.

Haley said she wanted everyone in the Upstate to leave work or school by 5 p.m. Wednesday, go home and stay there.

North Carolina Gov. Pat McCrory declared a state of emergency. Many parts of North Carolina received 1 to

3 inches of snow on Tuesday, though much of that melted Wednesday during a period of sunshine and above-freezing temperatures.

Sgt. Michael Baker, spokesman for the North Carolina Department of Public Safety, said they're also urging people to stay off the roads.

"If we get what's anticipated tonight and tomorrow morning, it's going to be very hazardous as far as travel is concerned," he said.

Highway transportation crews in both states were treating roads and bridges with sand, salt and brine.

*The Associated Press contributed to this report.*

Title: **Winter won't 'let it go'**  
Author: By DANIEL PERRY dperry@indexjournal.com  
Size: 64.17 square inch  
Greenwood, SC Circulation: 16494



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rain and sleet droplets frame a yellow D.O.T. truck entering Interstate 85 on Wednesday to spread sand in Atlanta. Weather forecasters predicted as much as 4 inches of snow in metro Atlanta. South Carolina could get a fair amount of snow, as well. Gov. Nikki Haley issued a state of emergency for parts of the state in preparation for the storm.

Title: **Haley opposes \$500M borrowing bill**  
 Author: By Seanna Adcox Associated Press  
 Size: 30.07 square inch  
 Rock Hill, SC Circulation: 34688



# Haley opposes \$500M borrowing bill

## Sponsors say proposal takes care of S.C. needs

By SEANNA ADCOX  
Associated Press

**COLUMBIA** Gov. Nikki Haley accused the leader of a powerful House committee Wednesday of running up South Carolina's credit card with a proposal that borrows \$500 million for building projects across the state.

Haley repeatedly singled out Ways and Means Chairman Brian White while opposing a measure his committee advanced last week. She called on the full House to stop the state's first such bonding bill in 15 years.

But White counters the proposal takes care of state infrastructure needs now — at current construction prices — while the cost of borrowing remains near historic lows. The credit card analogy doesn't work, he said, as financing on the 15-year

bonds is akin to a mortgage.

He said he's disappointed the relationship between the Republican governor and the Legislature's GOP leaders has again become contentious.

"I don't want to fight, but I do want to take care of South Carolina, which is what I was elected to do," said White, R-Anderson.

Rep. Chip Limehouse called the bond bill a smart budgeting tool to meet needs without raising taxes.

"You'd be foolish not to," said Limehouse, R-Mount Pleasant, one of the measure's eight GOP co-sponsors. "It's not deficit spending. It's bonding. How many people pay cash for a house?"

Fellow Republican Rep. Kenny Bingham notes the proposal won't increase what the state spends on interest because old debt is rotating off. Without a bond bill, projects on the list simply won't get done, he said.

He pointed to \$50 million going toward the Medical University of South Carolina's new Children's Hospital as a project he thinks is particularly worthy.

"It's no different from allowing Boeing to borrow money," said Bingham, R-Cayce. "Borrowing is part of everyday business."

Haley said the cheap-money excuse for borrowing is a "dangerous road to go down."

In 2013, Haley eagerly signed a bill that borrowed \$120 million for Boeing's expansion plans in North Charleston. The financial oversight board she chairs later unanimously approved the incentive package's details.

Borrowing is also a major component of the road-funding bill Haley touted on the campaign trail as a major accomplishment of her first term. At stop after stop, she said the 2013 law provided the largest funding for roads in two decades without rais-

ing a penny in taxes. But the billion-dollar figure she cites comes over 10 years, by leveraging state money with federal aid and borrowing.

The biggest single chunk on the measure's list, \$60 million, goes to the state's economic development agency for water and sewer projects.

"We've got plenty of raw dirt that's just not suitable to put industry on right now," White said.

Most of the money goes to education, including more than \$110 million for construction at South Carolina's technical schools.

Haley has said a focus of her second term will be training workers to ensure new jobs coming to the state can be filled by South Carolinians. But she said Wednesday job training centers shouldn't be funded through borrowing. She was particularly critical of \$20 million going to maintenance on state-owned buildings.

Title: **Gun ban included with abuse penalties**  
 Author: By Jeffrey Collins Associated Press  
 Size: 34.25 square inch  
 Rock Hill, SC Circulation: 34688



# Gun ban included with abuse penalties

**S.C. Senate passes bill taking firearms away from those convicted of domestic violence**

By JEFFREY COLLINS  
 Associated Press

**COLUMBIA** In a state where gun rights tend to be fiercely guarded, the South Carolina Senate on Wednesday agreed to take firearms away from many people convicted of criminal domestic violence.

The gun ban would still require a judge's approval for the least serious offenses. A provision adding that requirement cleared the way for passage of the bill to strengthen domestic violence penalties across the board.

The measure passed 38-3 after nearly two weeks of debate.

It still must pass the House, which is considering a domestic violence bill with a less stringent gun ban. But lawmakers in both chambers appear ready to take some kind of action to curb domestic violence, as South Carolina frequently ranks among the worst in the nation in the number of people killed that way.

"Solving this problem is as much about changing hearts and minds as legislation.

But this is a very important first step," said Sen. Greg Hembree, who helped put together the bill.

The Senate bill would create three different degrees of criminal domestic violence, depending on the amount of violence involved and whether there are previous convictions. Currently, prosecutors only have two options, which vary widely depending on the

SEE **PENALTIES**, PAGE 6B

## PENALTIES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1B

severity of the offense.

Much of the debate in this heavily conservative state centered on the gun ban. Opponents were worried that allowing the ban to be automatic for all convictions might take away weapons from people who didn't deserve to lose their gun rights.

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way for passage, a third-degree domestic violence conviction would lead to a five-year gun ban, but only if a judge approved.

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bill a priority this session.

The federal government has a similar gun ban, but supporters said this assures the law will be enforced here.

The bill should get a final procedural vote next week, and lawmakers in both chambers have voiced support for it. State Attorney General Alan Wilson and local prosecutors want the new penalties. Gov. Nikki Haley has created a task force to study domestic violence that includes members from law enforcement, courts, churches, health

care, social services and cosmetology.

More than 36,000 people annually report a domestic violence incident to law enforcement agencies around South Carolina, according to the state attorney general's office.

Lawmakers are considering other ways of combating domestic violence, like removing a requirement that married couples wait a year to get divorced and requiring education in schools about domestic violence and abuse.

Title: **Davis elected to serve on panel**  
 Author: By ST. CLAIRE DONAGHY sdonaghy@indexjournal.com  
 Size: 46.5 square inch  
 Greenwood, SC Circulation: 16494



## ■ SCDOT

# Davis elected to serve on panel

By ST. CLAIRE DONAGHY  
 sdonaghy@indexjournal.com

Ben H. Davis Jr. of Greenwood, retired president and CEO of Connie Maxwell

Children's Home, was elected by the legislative delegation of the 3rd Congressional District to

serve on the South Carolina Department of Transportation Commission.

"This is something I take seriously," Davis said. "The commission is extremely important and it's an honor to

serve and have the legislative delegation's support. One of the major things people are concerned about are roads in our state. Everybody who drives on roads and bridges of

See **DAVIS**, page 4A

## DAVIS

*Continued from 1A*

this state is affected by them and how tax money is spent on them."

Davis was elected commissioner during a legislative delegation meeting Feb. 12, called to order by state Sen. Billy O'Dell, R-Abbeville.

O'Dell said he "was delighted to be able to support" Davis and "that my colleagues found him qualified."

"The fact that he was a mayor for several years and had to deal with transportation issues gives him a good idea of what is involved and what the DOT is doing," O'Dell said.

Davis is one of seven commissioners from each of South Carolina's Congressional Districts serving on the commission and there also is one at-large gubernatorial appointee.

Davis is serving the final year of a four-year term former

commissioner R. Eddie Adams of Seneca. Davis is eligible to be elected to another four-year term after completing this year.

"Each of the seven Congressional Districts in the state elects somebody to represent the districts on the (SCDOT) Highway Commission," Davis said. "To my knowledge, a commissioner has not been elected from Greenwood for some time."

The 3rd Congressional District includes all or part of Abbeville, Anderson, Edgefield, Greenville, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Newberry, Oconee, Pickens, and Saluda counties, according to information from the commission's website.

Davis said he submitted a letter of application and all candidates were reviewed by the Joint Transportation Review Committee. Then,

nominees were voted on by legislative delegations from the 3rd Congressional District.

The commission is the general policy-making authority of SCDOT. Its duties and powers are outlined in Section 57-1-10(1) and Sections 57-1-310, et seq. of the Code of Laws of South Carolina, as amended.

"I was made aware there was an opening on the commission and I was encouraged to submit my name," Davis said. "Having just retired from Connie Maxwell in September of last year, after 21 years there, and, years ago, after serving as mayor of Fountain Inn for 12 years, I wasn't real sure I wanted to jump back into the frying pan. But, I also know this is a critical time for roads, bridges and infrastructure in our state."

Davis said he attended his first commission meeting last week.

"SCDOT's staff ranks the roads and highways in the state system that need to be addressed and they outline what the projects are going to be," Davis said. "The staff is involved with day-to-day operations of SCDOT, whereas the commission is involved with policy-making. The commission and the department depend on the legislative delegation for the funding that comes to the commission. It's the commission's job to determine the priority by which that money is spent on state roads. With as many miles of roads as we have in this state, there is never enough money to fix them all."

Davis said Republican Gov. Nikki Haley's proposal to fund road repair costs by cutting

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 Author: By ST. CLAIRE DONAGHY sdonaghy@indexjournal.com  
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state income taxes and increasing the gas tax is just one of many ideas being considered to fix roads.

“There are various bills in the House and the Senate, or at least plans being talked about, in order to file a bill, that may totally differ from the gover-

nor’s plan to come up with a revenue stream,” Davis said.

Road fixes are not inexpensive or fast, Davis said, but that doesn’t mean the process cannot be evaluated to see how it may be improved.

“Everybody would be surprised at the large amount

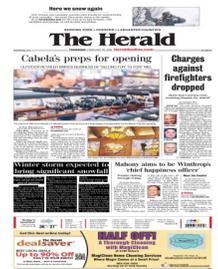
of money it takes to build or resurface a highway,” Davis said. “As we look at trying to bring our roads up to better shape, it’s going to be a long process. There are federal and environmental guidelines that have to be met, just to get to the point of beginning

construction, especially if it’s concerning interstate highways. You’ve got to satisfy all of the regulations and then go through the engineering process. Once all of that’s done, then you begin construction.”



**BEN H.  
DAVIS JR.**

Title: **Winter storm expected to bring significant snowfall**  
 Author: Staff and wire reports  
 Size: 31.62 square inch  
 Rock Hill, SC Circulation: 34688



# Winter storm expected to bring significant snowfall

Area sees mix of rain, snow on front end of system

Staff and wire reports

Snow mixed with periods of rain fell in the Rock Hill area Wednesday evening, the beginning of a storm that could cover the area under several inches of the white stuff.

The National Weather Service increased the projected snow totals for the Rock Hill area to 7 to 11 inches by Thursday morning, meaning any commuters brave enough to head out in the morning might have to dig out.

The region is bracing for its third winter storm in two

## WEATHER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

driving conditions that led to hundreds of accidents.

In Greenville County, Janet Robinson was trying to stay one step ahead of a storm that threatened to dump up to 8 inches of snow across the Carolinas.

So she made a trip late Wednesday morning to a Greenville grocery store and picked up the staples – milk, bread – then grabbed batteries for her flashlights and candles, just in case she loses power.

The store was packed and items were flying off the shelves, she said.

“I guess everyone was watching The Weather

weeks.

Gov. Nikki Haley declared a state of emergency for 31 counties in South Carolina, including York, Chester and Lancaster counties. The declaration directs state agencies to begin coordinating to respond to any emergencies and to help local governments. It also places some South Carolina National Guard members on duty to help.

Haley said she wanted everyone in the Upstate to leave work or school by 5 p.m. Wednesday, go home

and stay there.

All public schools in York, Chester and Lancaster counties will be closed Thursday.

Across the Carolinas, people braced for a new storm – just one day after a wintry blast of snow and ice caught much of the region by surprise. Tuesday’s storm closed schools and businesses and created treacherous

SEE WEATHER, PAGE 3A

## Inside

Snowy forecast means stores see run on milk, bread. **1B**

Channel,” said Robinson, the 35-year-old mother of two.

John Fletcher, a 19-year-old student at Greenville Tech, he was driving in a shopping center parking lot Tuesday morning, when his car slid and narrowly missed hitting a pole.

“It was close,” he said. If it gets bad, he hopes his classes will be canceled.

Stores in both states were filled with shoppers looking for items to help them get out of a snowy jam.

North Carolina Gov. Pat McCrory declared a state of emergency.

Many parts of North Car-

olina received 1 to 3 inches of snow on Tuesday, though much of that melted Wednesday during a period of sunshine and above-freezing temperatures.

Two people died in separate weather-related crashes Tuesday when their cars slid off roads and struck trees.

Sgt. Michael Baker, spokesman for the North Carolina Department of Public Safety, said they’re also urging people to stay off the roads.

“If we get what’s anticipated tonight and tomorrow morning, it’s going to be very hazardous as far as travel is concerned,” he said.

Title: **Don't lose sight of firearm's role in domestic violence legislation**  
 Author:  
 Size: 80.44 square inch  
 Aiken, SC Circulation: 19635



## EDITORIAL

# Don't lose sight of firearm's role in domestic violence legislation

The S.C. Senate made the right call on Wednesday moving forward with a measure that tightens punishments related to domestic violence and restricts the gun rights of those that commit such a heinous crime.

It's clear that domestic violence is a cultural concern and one that requires not only legislative attention, but also wider social attention.

This is an issue that's gained significant attention as of late, especially because of the extensive and superb "Till death do us part" series by *The Post and Courier* newspaper in Charleston, which chronicled the lives of those impacted by domestic violence.

The attention the issue has garnered is undoubtedly deserved, and let's be clear – even the lowest level of a criminal domestic violence charge shouldn't be taken softly.



**Massey**

However, this is an issue that's also rightfully and purposefully been tied to the right to possess a firearm. When it comes to guns, any such measure obviously should stay in compliance with federal law and the Second Amendment, but the severity of a crime also needs to be tied to the rights one has after committing it.

Federal restrictions already exist that essentially deny anyone convicted of domestic violence from possessing a firearm. However, that law obviously isn't enforced by local and state enforcement. It's enforced by federal law enforcement.

Consequently, the federal law doesn't get enforced "a whole lot," according to S.C. Sen. Shane Massey, R-Edgefield, except for times when, for instance, the U.S. attorney's office prosecutes someone for having a weapon when they aren't supposed to have a firearm under that law. Even then, he indicated, the situation has to likely be even more extreme for law enforcement to take the necessary steps to take away an individual's firearms.



**Haley**

The tightening of those restrictions on a state level are wisely accomplished through Martin's bill. Members of the House would be smart to follow the Senate's example.

There are already the murmurs that the House will not follow the Senate's lead merely because of the restrictions Martin's bill puts on gun ownership. Keeping such stipulations in place, however, are vital to ensuring these reforms are comprehensive enough to carry weight and have a social impact.

This is about working comprehensively to eradicate domestic violence and aid those who have been impacted from the community level up. The state should be embarrassed by the

ranking it has garnered when it comes to domestic violence. According to the Violence Policy Center, which studies issues related to domestic violence, South Carolina ranked second in 2014 among the U.S. as far as the number of women killed by men.

With 50 women slain in a year's time, South Carolina's murder rate for women killed by men is also nearly double the national average. Guns were also largely the weapon of choice. In South Carolina, 71 percent of the killings of women in 2012, for instance, were committed with guns.

Getting to the heart of the state's domestic violence issues obviously isn't just about restricting gun rights. It's also about creating the right level of punishments, as well as providing both educational and supportive social programs.

The legislature has been compelled to address these issues because some lawmakers wisely and insightfully see strengthening our state's domestic violence laws as a way to further protect residents. That's the right mentality to have.

Also, a glaring problem in the way state law reads now is that the punishments associated with domestic violence charges – whether it's first, second or third – are based essentially on the number of previous offenses.

Recidivism should certainly be a key factor in determining the severity of punishment. However, the heart of the matter is really the severity of the action. This is a multifaceted, intricate social issue that spans generations. Cases can range from sending threatening text messages, to having physical pushing matches and then all the way up to someone pulling out a knife or a gun. There are also many varying degrees in between. As it stands, prosecutors have a limited range of tools they can use to prosecute cases because the law is based so heavily only on recidivism. A tiered punishment system – one that Attorney General Alan Wilson has smartly pushed for – is what's vital for the state's future.

There are generational cycles of domestic violence that have to be erased and the best way to reduce that – at least legislatively and through the state's legal system – is to have the proper layers of punishment in place.

The state's laws clearly need to be strengthened through harsher penalties, and the bill sponsored by Martin sets the right mentality moving forward.

S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley also warrants recognition for the steps she has taken to create a statewide domestic violence task force that includes subcommittees related to criminal justice, community outreach and victim and defender services.

Title: **Don't lose sight of firearm's role in domestic violence legislation**

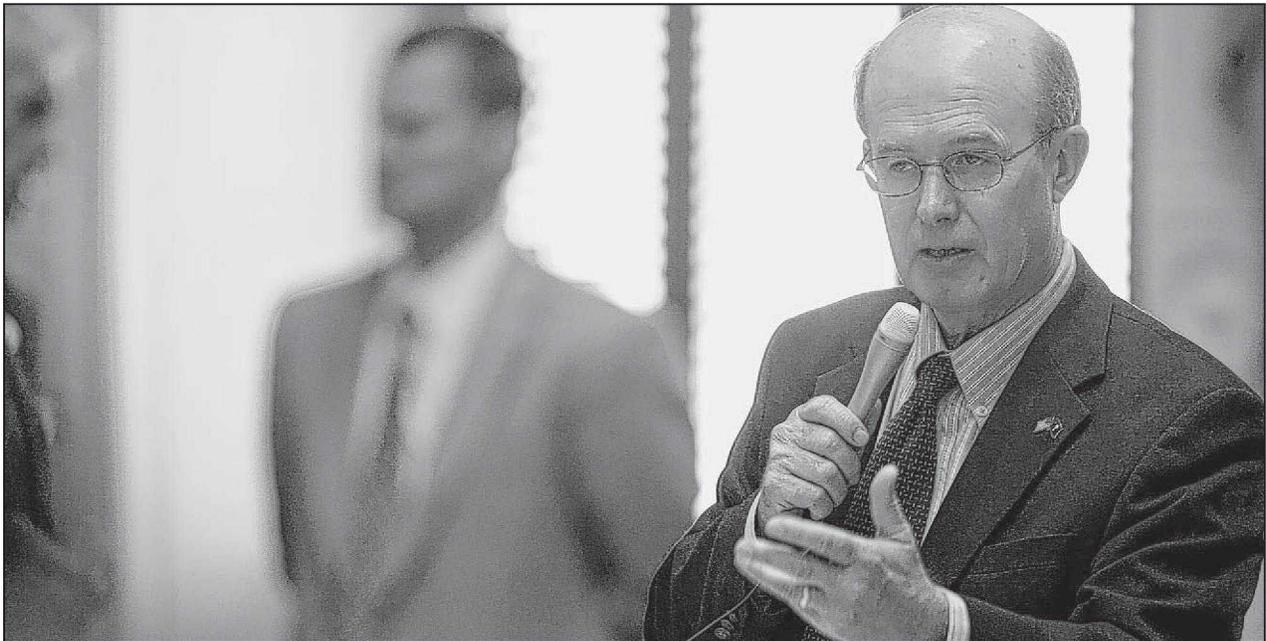
Author:

Size: 80.44 square inch

Aiken, SC Circulation: 19635

The state should do all it can to prevent such inexcusable behavior. This obviously can't be a quick fix, and can't be resolved only legislatively.

The Senate, however, has shown the leadership needed to move this measure forward. The House undoubtedly needs to, as well.



AP PHOTO/GRACE BEAHM

The S.C. Senate passed a measure sponsored by S.C. Sen. Larry Martin, R-Pickens, on Wednesday that's aimed at addressing domestic violence issues in the state.



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# Army listens to S.C. citizens on possible Fort Jackson cuts

**BY SUSANNE M. SCHAFER**  
*Associated Press*

COLUMBIA — South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley reminded an Army delegation Thursday that as a military spouse, she is part of a community that values Fort Jackson and wants

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 Rep. Wilson advocates for Fort Jackson, **3A**

to continue supporting its soldiers in the face of budget cuts that could slash its workforce in half.

“I am a spouse of a soldier that deployed,” Haley told the delegation, speaking of her husband, Michael, who deployed for a year to Afghanistan as a member of the South Carolina Army National Guard.

“We want you to understand that Fort Jackson is part of our family,” the governor said, ar-

guing that the Army’s largest training site is more to the state than a source of jobs and federal financial input.

“There’s never a soldier or veteran that we want to be in need,” Haley said, leading a series of speakers who touted the community’s military-friendly history and the strength of its ties to the 100-year-old installation and its 7,000 soldiers and civilians.

Fort Jackson is the Army’s largest training installation. It puts 45,000 soldiers through basic combat training every year, which is more than half of all new Army soldiers and more than 60 percent of its female soldiers.

Each year, another 30,000 attend advanced military training classes or attend military specialty schools on the installation, such as those for chaplains, drill sergeants and military financial or human resource officers.