

Title: **State's leaders continue to fail us on manyfronts**
 Author:
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State's leaders continue to fail us on many fronts

With all the hubbub surrounding the transition from one national administration to another, it's easy to lose sight of the ongoing lack of leadership in the South Carolina governor's office and the General Assembly in at least three areas of major concern.

The sad state of educational funding in South Carolina is the first of these. The General Assembly has significantly underfunded per-pupil contributions required by the Education Finance Act for years, and even with more money coming from statewide sales tax collections, the system's continuing reliance upon property taxes results in an inherent imbalance in the funding available to poor, mostly rural school districts.

The consequence is twofold: Teachers make less, and poorer school districts have huge problems attracting qualified teachers.

The state already has difficulty attracting enough teachers: It is training 500 teachers a year through its program of alternative certification for educators because our teacher-education programs fall that much short of supplying teachers for each year's vacancies.

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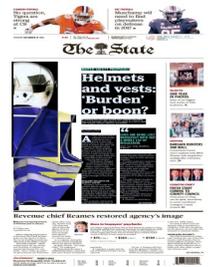
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The problems are clear. The status quo has remained "quo" for too long; leaders possessing a genuine vision for the state's future must emerge.

- Edwin C. Epps
Spartanburg



Title: **Helmets and vests: 'Burden' or boon?**
 Author: BY AVERY G. WILKS awilks@thestate.com
 Size: 195.92 column inches
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MOPED SAFETY PROPOSALS

Helmets and vests: 'Burden' or boon?

■ **'Nothing has changed except more people have died,' says one lawmaker who plans to try again on a bill to deal with moped-related collisions and deaths.**

BY AVERY G. WILKS
awilks@thestate.com

As S.C. moped-related collisions and deaths continue to rise, a group of state lawmakers plans to take another swing at moped laws they call slack and loophole-ridden.

State Sen. Greg Hembree, R-Horry, and state Rep. Bill Crosby, R-Charleston, have revived a wide-sweeping, two-dozen-page moped safety proposal that nearly became state law last summer.

“Nothing has changed except more people have died,” Hembree said. S.C. moped-related deaths reached a five-year high last year, and early data indicate 2016 will see no substantial drop-off. “I’m trying to get it pushed through as fast as we can.”

REQUIRE HELMETS OR

SAFETY VESTS?

Hembree and Crosby have prefiled bills in each State House chamber that would require moped drivers to register with the Department of Motor Vehicles, follow the same traffic rules as all other vehicles and wear reflective vests at night.

The proposal, criticized by some lawmakers last year as convoluted and onerous, also would mandate moped drivers younger than 21 years old wear a helmet.

It would give mopeds a single definition under state law. That is needed, legislators say, because conflicting definitions make laws involving mopeds unenforceable.

Hembree’s bill also raises the minimum legal age to drive a moped to 15. Crosby’s leaves it at 14.

Two other House members, Reps. Mike Ryhal and Alan Clemmons of Horry, are proposing to require moped drivers and passengers wear reflective vests and equip their vehicles with a constantly flashing tail-light for visibility.

Lawmakers and advocates point to a number of factors, among them:

- Mopeds are growing in

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LIVES ARE BEING LOST NEEDLESSLY WITH NOT A WHOLE LOT OF REGULATION.

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FROM PAGE 1A

MOPEDS

popularity because of their low cost and high fuel efficiency

- They are harder to see than other vehicles, especially at night
- They move slowly on roads with high speed limits, especially in rural areas
- Mopeds are held to lower legal standards than other vehicles

For example, moped drivers cannot be charged with driving under the influence because the so-called “liquor cycles” are not considered “motor vehicles” under South Carolina law.

No training is required to operate them, and users as young as 14 can apply for a moped-specific license.

Mopeds also need only generic tags issued by the dealer, making it tougher for law enforcement to track down their owners.

DEATH TOLL RISING

The bills are the latest in a push over the past few years to shore up so-called soft spots in S.C. moped laws some blame for the rising death toll on S.C. roadways.

That toll reached at least a five-year high last year. Forty-five people died in moped collisions in 2015, up from 21 in 2010 and 12 in 2001, according to DMV data.

The number of moped-related collisions in the Palmetto State also reached a new high, up to 819 in 2015 from 618 in 2010 and 167 in 2001, data show.

Preliminary data indicate 2016 will see no substantial drop-off, if any at all.

“Lives are being lost needlessly with not a whole lot of regulation,” Hembree said.

Hembree said he has tried to

get a moped bill passed for four years. Crosby has worked on it for three, since local law enforcement agencies approached him asking for support.

“We’ve had so many of the law enforcement people coming to us wanting us to do it,” Crosby said. “And so many people riding mopeds are getting killed.”

The bill also has support from medical groups, such as the Trauma Association of South Carolina.

“We as trauma centers in South Carolina, because (mopeds) are not regulated, see innumerable patients that are not licensed or do not have a license to operate a motor vehicle, coming in with horrible

injuries because they’re not helmeted or they may be driving under the influence,” said Amy Hamrick, president-elect of that organization and Spartanburg Medical Center’s trauma program manager. “A lot of these accidents happen at night, and they’re not identified, so you can’t really see them, and they’re getting hit by cars.”

BUMPY ROAD

The proposal had critics last year.

Republican S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley vetoed the bill last session, decrying as “government overreach” the provisions that required helmets and reflective vests.

As lawmakers scrambled to override the veto, House Minority Leader Todd Rutherford, D-Richland, and state Sen. Gerald Malloy, D-Darlington, complained the proposed requirements would be cumbersome for moped riders.

Rutherford added the bill was

too complicated, that moped riders wouldn’t know they were breaking the law until being pulled over. Dangerous moped drivers “usually are only dangerous to themselves,” he said.

The House voted to override, but the bill met its demise in the Senate when Malloy delayed a vote by asking the Senate to go

to other matters while he held the floor. He later filibustered another proposal until the Senate adjourned, ending the session.

This week, Malloy objected to a characterization he blocked the legislation. He said he is not “against all aspects of a moped bill,” only certain requirements, including the reflective vests.

“Whenever you start requiring them to wear a certain jacket, a certain color or those kinds of things, that is unacceptable and tantamount to being un-American,” Malloy said. “When you are putting a burden on the people that are generally challenged, it’s an unnecessary burden.”

Hembree and others, though, are optimistic ahead of the start of the session in January. The bill already has been vetted by both chambers and already has made it as far as the governor’s desk, they say.

“Last year was awful darn close,” Hembree said.

“A lot of the lawmakers up there now have realized so many people are getting killed,” said Crosby. “There’s so many accidents. They’re getting pressured by their local law enforcement people.”

—
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Lawmakers and advocates point to a number of factors driving them to propose the moped safety bill, among them:

MOPEDS ARE GROWING IN POPULARITY BECAUSE OF THEIR LOW COST AND HIGH FUEL EFFICIENCY

THEY ARE HARDER TO SEE THAN OTHER VEHICLES, ESPECIALLY AT NIGHT

THEY MOVE SLOWLY ON ROADS WITH HIGH SPEED LIMITS, ESPECIALLY IN RURAL AREAS

MOPEDS ARE HELD TO LOWER LEGAL STANDARDS THAN OTHER VEHICLES

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THE STATE file photo

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Title: **McMaster waiting in the wings**
 Author: SEANNA ADCOX THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
 Size: 61.69 column inches
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McMaster waiting in the wings

SEANNA ADCOX
 THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

COLUMBIA - If South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley is confirmed as President-elect Donald Trump's pick for United Nations ambassador, her successor will be an entrenched veteran of the state's GOP who as attorney general decided not to prosecute then-Gov. Mark Sanford for his spending after his disappearance to rendezvous with his mistress.

Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster, a 69-year-old known for his ability to disagree affably, would get the job he's

long wanted in the governorship. His leadership offers a sharp contrast in style if not in substance from Haley, the daughter of Indian immigrants and the nation's youngest governor at 44, who hasn't hesitated to publicly bash legislators who differed with her.

McMaster also was the nation's first statewide officeholder to back Trump for president, in an endorsement before the state's first-in-the-South presidential primary. The

move stunned political observers, but McMaster's support never wavered, despite Democrats' calls to withdraw it.

He told The Associated Press last month he never regretted the endorsement.

"No ma'am, the more it went on, the more confident I was he was the man for the job," he said in his characteristic, genteel drawl. He's re-

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McMaster

Continued from Page 1A

vealed little about what he would do as governor, and his office said he wasn't available for an interview.

But as a savvy political insider, McMaster has forged strong relationships statewide.

He's "a commonsense conservative — very reasonable, never abrasive," said House Judiciary Chairman Greg Delleney, R-Chester. "He's a realist, and he's a gentleman, and I think he's going to work with the General Assembly to get things done."

Legislators hope McMaster's entry could finally lead to passage of a comprehensive road-funding bill. Haley's threats to veto anything with a gas tax increase stymied efforts for years.

Questioned by reporters after a meeting earlier this month, McMaster said, "We will make progress, great progress," but gave no specifics.

In the 2010 GOP primary, Haley trounced McMaster and two other better-known men partly by running against the "good ol' boy" network. Yet days after taking a 32-percentage-point beating, McMaster endorsed Haley with an exuberant "I'm all in!" and has been a close ally since. Beyond campaigning with her statewide, he arranged a series of private meetings

between Haley and skeptical business leaders a week after she publicly chided the state Chamber of Commerce as a fan of bailouts and corporate welfare.

Bakari Sellers, a Democrat who lost to McMaster in the 2014 lieutenant governor's race, contends McMaster "exemplifies the good ol' boy network in South Carolina."

"Henry's been around a very long time. He's the status quo," said Sellers, a former state House member. "Courageous and visionary are not adjectives you use to describe Henry McMaster."

Other longtime political adversaries applaud McMaster's impending move.

"Henry is somebody who wants to do the right thing and move the state forward," said former state Democratic Party Chairman Dick Harpootlian, who's not one to pull punches. "If a good ol' boy means somebody who remembers his friends and has a genial approach to governing, then I would take that as a compliment. He's not going to rant and rave and pick fights. He's not going to denigrate people publicly."

McMaster began his political career in 1973 as an aide to then-U.S. Sen. Strom Thurmond. He led the state Re-

publican Party for 10 years, while the GOP took control of the Legislature.

He frequently boasts of being President Ronald Reagan's first appointment for U.S. attorney in 1981 and launched "Operation Jackpot," an investigation into international drug smuggling that resulted in more than 100 convictions.

As state attorney general, he created a task force of officers posing as children to catch online sex predators and built an attorney network to prosecute criminal domestic violence. In 2010, he helped lead a multi-state challenge of President Barack Obama's health care overhaul that allowed states to opt out of its intended Medicaid expansion — as South Carolina has steadfastly done.

In 2009, McMaster asked the state Ethics Commission to investigate Sanford after his disappearance to rendezvous with his mistress in Argentina brought scrutiny to his travels.

After Sanford paid \$74,000 to resolve 37 civil charges, McMaster opted not to pursue criminal charges, saying Sanford's use of first-class tickets, travel on state aircraft and questionable campaign reimbursements didn't rise to a criminal level — and it was time for the state to move

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A month after that announcement, McMaster lost to Haley.

Legislators say his decades-long relationship with many of them is an asset. GOP Senate Education Chairman John Courson, who met McMaster while at the University of South Carolina in the 1960s, said it helps that

McMaster “understands the personalities in the Senate.”

“Across the board, among Democrats and Republicans, everybody is excited about him coming in — with the belief that he will have a desire to get things done and the ability to do so,” said House Minority Leader Todd Rutherford, D-Columbia.

Rep. James Smith, D-Columbia, said as a college student in the 1980s, he put out yard signs for McMaster.

“I think people who say he’s a good ol’ boy are missing what Henry’s all about,” he said. “Really, he’s about building strong relationships and treating people with respect and working for the future of our state.”



J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE/AP

Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster is set to succeed Gov. Nikki Haley, if she is confirmed as the next American ambassador to the U.N.

Title: **A Trump backer is succeeding Haley**
 Author: BY SEANNA ADCOX Associated Press
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BY SEANNA ADCOX

Associated Press
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SEE MCMASTER, 4A

FROM PAGE 3A

MCMASTER

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 Author: BY MAX HRENDA mhrenda@southstrandnews.com
 Size: 62.31 column inches
 Georgetown, SC Circulation: 8446



City gets high marks in audit

BY MAX HRENDA
 mhrenda@southstrandnews.com

An independent auditor praised the City of Georgetown's Finance Department and bookkeeping during an annual report at the regular City Council meeting.

On Thursday, Dec. 15, the council received the 2015-2016 Fiscal Year audit report from Emily Sobczak, an auditor with the Mauldin, South Carolina-based accounting firm Greene, Finney and Horton, who praised the Finance Department and Finance Director Debra Bivens for making her job easier.

"Debra and her team worked very diligently throughout the year to keep your financial records in good condition," Sobczak said.

In addition to complimenting the city's record-keeping, Sobczak also commended the city's unassigned

fund balance, which was tallied at about \$2 million.

"That's about 24 percent of expenditures," she said. "That's slightly higher than the benchmark that we like to use, which is provided by the Government Finance Officers Association. They recommend a minimum unassigned fund balance of two months, or, roughly, 17 percent."

Sobczak also noted the city's revenues remained consistent with the previous fiscal year, despite an influx of property tax dollars from increased millage and an additional \$500,000 in non-budgeted monies from business licenses and permits. Additionally, Sobczak said, the city also saw a \$5-million reduction in expenditures, primarily because of

the delay of the construction of Fire Station No. 2.

When asked about any shortcomings in the city's financials, Sobczak recommended the city re-examine its funding sources for future costs related to retirement and health care.

"It's very important to do longer-term financial projections and the factor in the expected increases in those rates," Sobczak said. "(Don't) just base the projections on history and don't just look at one year, but look three to five years out and see what you can expect your funds and benefits to look like five years from now to help determine what

Please see **AUDIT**, Page A2

Audit

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 funding sources you'll use to cover those future costs."

Also during Thursday's meeting, Mayor Jack Scoville issued a proclamation honoring Georgetown resident, historian and storyteller Nell Morris Cribb. Scoville had announced his intention to name "Miss Nell's" birthday, Jan. 12, in honor of her when she was awarded the Order of the Silver Crescent — the highest civilian award for significant contributions, leadership, volunteerism and lifelong influence — by Gov. Nikki Haley on June 14. As he read from the proclamation during Thursday's meeting, Scoville listed Miss Nell's

contributions and accomplishments in promoting Georgetown and its history.

"Miss Nell will always be remembered for her Southern hospitality and love for her hometown and sharing our rich history," Scoville said. "... On behalf of City Council, I hereby proclaim Jan. 12, 2017, as Miss Nell Cribb Day in Georgetown, and encourage citizens to join in wishing her a very happy birthday."

After receiving a round of applause from council members and members of the gallery alike, Cribb thanked them for the recognition, but also credited her parents with fostering

her love of local history.

"My parents instilled in me a love of history, particularly Georgetown's history," Cribb said. "I just wish they could see today. They would absolutely be amazed. ...

"I do want you to know how grateful I am for this honor and the recognition. I thank you all, and mayor, I thank you, sir, very much."

Also during the meeting, City Administrator Paul Gardner updated council members on the city's progress in working toward a recommendation from an Urban Land Institute advisory panel with regard to the Georgetown steel mill

property. During a public presentation on Sept. 23, the panel recommended removing the mill — which is still owned by Belgian steel giant Arcelor-Mittal — and replacing it with residential and commercial properties, while also creating easier and greater access to the waterfront. Though the panel advised it may take as many as 20 years before their recommendation would be realized, Gardner said he and representatives from the county and the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments were continuing their efforts to work toward that goal.

To that end, Gardner, along

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with representatives from the county and WRCOG met with the S.C. Ports Authority to discuss the city's plans for the waterfront. In those conversations, they also discussed the proposed dredging of the Port of Georgetown, which, Gardner said, will "most likely not happen."

"They're not going to say at the current time it's not going to happen, but it's highly unlikely," Gardner said.

In addition to an increase in projected costs — which jumped from \$33 million to \$60 million — Gardner said the dredging would have a limited effect on which shipping vessels would gain access.

"Where we're at right now is at 20 feet," he said. "To take it to 27 feet would still only make you viable for about 30 percent of the shipping craft that are out there."

Despite that, Gardner said he was told the Ports Authority would act as a partner as the city and county work toward realizing the ULI recommendation. In addition to those discussions, Gardner said the city was also in the process of preparing citizen interviews to discuss the project with area residents.

Also during the meeting, Gardner provided an update

on the city's search for a new economic development director. The city's former director, Tee Miller, resigned from his post on Oct. 14. When asked by Councilman Sheldon Butts, Gardner said he was reviewing applications and determining which candidates he would interview.



MAX HREND A/SOUTH STRAND NEWS

Mayor Jack Scoville reads from a proclamation honoring Nell Morris Cribb, right, for her contributions to Georgetown.

Title: **School offers sign language as world language**
 Author: BY LINDSAY STREET lstreet@berkeleyind.com
 Size: 63.08 column inches
 Moncks Corner, SC Circulation: 5906



School offers sign language as world language

BY LINDSAY STREET
lstreet@berkeleyind.com

In most Berkeley high schools, students have two options for world language: Spanish or French. But at Cane Bay High School, students have a third option.

It doesn't require being good at rolling your R's or nasal vowels, but it does

require deft fingers. For the second year, Cane Bay offers students American Sign Language and the program, which is one of only a few in the state, is expanding.

Last week, Cane Bay invited the district's deaf and hard-of-hearing students to participate in a signed production of the Christmas classic "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer." The ASL

students helped during the program.

The following day, the school hosted ASL viral celebrity Jason Hurdich, who gained statewide fame during Hurricane Matthew when he enthusiastically signed for Gov. Nikki Haley's press conferences. Hurdich is deaf, but has made a living as a sign interpreter for 15 years. He has worked for Charleston County and will now lend

his expertise to the Vocational Rehabilitation office in Berkeley County.

He spoke during the district's Deaf Awareness Night, the first of its kind in the district.

The two events are geared toward spreading awareness and interest in ASL district-wide, according to district staff.

Cane Bay began offering ASL classes

last year when teacher Judy Miarka came on board, according to Assistant Principal Kelli Farless. Miarka has worked as an interpreter prior to coming on board at the school. The first year, she split her time between social studies and ASL classes, but now, she's a full-time ASL teacher, Farless said.

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School

from A1

"We had such a great interest in the students and the parents," Farless said.

This year, ASL 1 is full and has 30 students in it.

District Special Services Executive Director Kelly Wulf said offering ASL in high school helps students grow into a ca-

reer as an interpreter, or use it in future careers or in personal interactions. "From a special services standpoint, it was a win-win," Wulf said. "Across the state, it is really difficult to find folks who are certified to be able to interpret."

Cane Bay students participating in ASL classes can work as a sign interpreter, or go on to a four-year degree to become a sign interpreter.

"We're one of the only schools in the state to offer ASL, so we

definitely have plans to spread ASL out to other high schools across the district," Wulf said, but she said plans to spread the program are not under way yet.

She said the Deaf Awareness Night featuring Hurdich was key to developing a district-wide program.

Title: **School offers sign language as world language**
Author: BY LINDSAY STREET lstreet@berkeleyind.com
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Sign interpreter Jason Hurdich, who became well-known when he translated for Gov. Nikki Haley during Hurricane Matthew, spoke to students and parents during Deaf Awareness Night at Cane Bay.

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Title: **It's McMaster's time**
 Author: By SEANNA ADCOX Associated Press
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It's McMaster's time

As Haley joins Trump, a Trump supporter succeeds her

By SEANNA ADCOX

Associated Press

COLUMBIA — If South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley is confirmed as President-elect Donald Trump's pick for United Nations ambassador, her successor will be an entrenched veteran of the state's GOP who as attorney general decided not to prosecute then-Gov. Mark Sanford for his spending after his disappearance to rendezvous

with his mistress.

Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster, a 69-year-old known for his ability to disagree affably, would get the job he's long wanted in the governorship. His leadership offers a sharp contrast in style if not in substance from Haley, the daughter of Indian immigrants and the nation's youngest gov-

ernor at 44, who hasn't hesitated to publicly bash legislators who differed with her.

McMaster also was the nation's first statewide officeholder to back Trump for president, in an endorsement before the state's first-in-the-South presidential primary. The move stunned political observers, but McMaster's support never wavered, despite Democrats'

calls to withdraw it.

He told The Associated Press last month he never regretted the endorsement.

"No ma'am, the more it went on, the more confident I was he was the man for the job," he said in his characteristic, genteel drawl. He's revealed little about what he would do as governor,

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and his office said he wasn't available for an interview.

But as a savvy political insider, McMaster has forged strong relationships statewide.

He's "a commonsense conservative — very reasonable, never abrasive," said House Judiciary Chairman Greg Delaney, R-Chester. "He's a realist, and he's a gentleman, and I think he's going to work with the General Assembly to get things done."

Legislators hope McMaster's entry could finally lead to passage of a comprehensive road-funding bill. Haley's

threats to veto anything with a gas tax increase stymied efforts for years.

Questioned by reporters after a meeting earlier this month, McMaster said, "We will make progress, great progress," but gave no specifics.

In the 2010 GOP primary, Haley trounced McMaster and two other better-known men partly by running against the "good ol' boy" network. Yet days after taking a 32-percentage-point beating, McMaster endorsed Haley with an exuberant "I'm all in!" and has been a close ally since. Beyond campaigning

with her statewide, he arranged a series of private meetings between Haley and skeptical business leaders a week after she publicly chided the state Chamber of Commerce as a fan of bailouts and corporate welfare.

Bakari Sellers, a Democrat who lost to McMaster in the 2014 lieutenant governor's race, contends McMaster "exemplifies the good ol' boy network in South Carolina."

"Henry's been around a very long time. He's the status quo," said Sellers, a former state House member. "Courageous and visionary are not adjectives you use to describe Henry McMaster."

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Author: By SEANNA ADCOX Associated Press
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ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster of South Carolina nominates Donald Trump as the Republican candidate for president during the second day of the Republican National Convention in Cleveland.

Title: **Time to consider appointing education superintendent**
 Author:
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Time to consider appointing education superintendent

Molly Spearman, South Carolina's elected superintendent of education, has no illusions about her job being on the state ballot and, in fact, she supports making the position appointive and part of the governor's cabinet.

Spearman, a former legislator and before that a classroom music teacher and assistant principal, has joined Gov. Nikki Haley in urging legislators to support legislation setting up a statewide referendum. The S.C. Constitution makes the education superintendent elective, so voters' approval is necessary to change the position to appointive.

In 2014, South Carolina voters approved amending the constitution to take the adjutant general off the ballot. South Carolina continues to popularly elect more positions than other states. The commissioner of agriculture, for example, is still elected. Only 13 states elect a superintendent of education. For one example, Illinois made its "superintendent of public instruction" appointive with approval of an updated constitution following a 1970 constitutional convention.

The Haley-Spearman letter came prior to the governor being chosen ambassador to the United Nations by president-elect Donald Trump. This appointment is subject to U.S. Senate approval, which is expected. With that, Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster will become governor for the remaining two years of Haley's term.

The letter to lawmakers points out the current divided leadership structure: "Instead of moving the state forward with a common vision for education priorities, this divided leadership structure can result in incompatible positions, a lack of coordination and fragmented accountability for failures in our Pre K-12 education system." The superintendent oversees the 82 school districts in the state,

and a \$2.4 billion budget.

In the past, governors and education superintendents have been of different political parties. Gubernatorial candidates may address "education on the campaign trail, but they have very little power to make any of it happen," says Sen. Chip Campsen of Charleston. Campsen has legislation to place the question before voters. This year the House approved a joint resolution for a referendum, but it was blocked in the Senate.

"It is time," Spearman says. "Discussions have been going on for more than 50 years. We've debated it a long, long time."

Better cohesion between the governor and superintendent is one of the advantages of an appointed superintendent. Spearman and Haley have a good working relationship, but Spearman can see where that might not be the case. Running a statewide campaign is costly and it may be more difficult to find qualified candidates.

Currently, no qualifications are required for superintendent candidates, and qualifications would be added for an appointed superintendent, as well as Senate approval, which may be helpful in passing legislation in 2017. The General Assembly has long held the lion's share of power, and legislators typically don't want to give the governor more power.

It is indeed time for this modest piece of reform in governance and we urge area legislators to support placing the question on the ballot.

— *The Sun News, Myrtle Beach*

■ WHAT OTHERS SAY

The following is the opinion of the newspaper represented and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Index-Journal.