

From: Godfrey, Rob
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IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

VIDEO: [Gov. Nikki Haley visits Easley to sign higher ed reform bill](#)

Anderson Independent Mail: Governor signs first of several planned higher ed reforms

By Anna Mitchell

<http://www.independentmail.com/news/2011/aug/03/governor-signs-first-several-planned-higher-ed-ref/>

EASLEY — Saying that the state of South Carolina is looking at higher education in a new way, Gov. Nikki Haley signed a bill into law Wednesday afternoon that will reduce the time and expense public colleges face when building new facilities or making major purchases.

This same bill — South Carolina Higher Education Efficiency and Administrative Policies Act — requires the state's higher-education institutions to post all their transactions online. About half of the state's schools, including Tri-County Technical College and Clemson University, have been doing so since early 2011.

Before putting pen to paper at the Easley campus of Tri-County Tech, Haley told a crowd of about 50 people that the bill's passage marks an exciting day for transparency in higher education. In addition to spelling out every expenditure online — 800,000 transactions so far this year at Clemson University alone — the bill requires roll call votes in open meetings for any tuition increases.

Clemson and Tri-County Tech already take such votes in public meetings.

"All the schools stepped up," Haley said.

Haley said she sees transparency in higher-education governance as working hand-in-hand with granting them more flexibility.

She said she also wants to move discussions about higher education from the expense and selectivity of some schools to the quality of the education and job prospects of graduates.

By January, she said, she plans to introduce a new funding formula for higher education that rewards schools with high graduation and graduate employment rates. Yet more flexibility in operations will be tied to this initiative, she said.

"The question is how can we go to a funding formula not based on football ticket sales or who graduated from where?" Haley said, adding later: "If you tie funding to performance, the students always win."

Clemson University President Jim Barker joined the assembly of state legislators, school trustees, educators and fans of the governor who watched the bill's signing. Also on hand was state Comptroller Richard Eckstrom, who praised Barker for taking a lead on funding transparency.

"In this new normal funding environment, we now have new tools," Barker said. "So we can be more successful, more entrepreneurial. Without this legislation, we wouldn't have had the same opportunity to save money."

Abbeville resident Elizabeth Pickens brought her four young daughters, whom she home schools, to meet Haley and have their pictures taken with her. Her husband, David, said he took the afternoon off to drive up to Easley.

"We support Nikki Haley, and I wanted my four daughters to meet her," said Pickens of the girls ages 1, 4, 6

and 8.

Dan Snipes, who lives in Anderson County's Five Forks community, said he admired the governor's work to make all arms of government work more efficiently. He is retired from the state's probation and parole agency.

"There was so much to obey, we moved at a snails pace," he said. "I used to compare it to running in two feet of molasses."

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Rob Godfrey
Press Secretary | Office of Governor Nikki Haley
O: 803.734.5074 | C: 803.429.5086