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Nikki Haley
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Columbia, South Carolina 29201



**Gov. Nikki Haley lives in a
historical Fantasyland**



BY LEONARD PITTS

Nikki Haley's 44th birthday is this week. You would think her a little old for fairy tales.

But a bizarre, little-reported remark the South Carolina governor made last week suggests that, age notwithstanding, Haley lives in Fantasyland, at least insofar as American history is concerned. The comment in question came the day after her Tuesday night speech in response to President Barack Obama's State of the Union address, in which she cuffed Donald Trump for his strident anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant bigotry.

Haley told reporters, "When you've got immigrants who are coming here legally, we've never in the history of this country passed any laws or done anything based on race or religion."

Some observers found that an astonishing thing for her to say as chief executive of the first state to secede from the Union in defense of slavery, a state that embraced segregation until forced to change by the federal government. Others observed that any fair reading of Haley's quote makes it pretty clear she was speaking only in the context of legal immigration.



CHUCK BURTON AP

South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley, right, attends the Fox Business Network Republican presidential debate Thursday in North Charleston, S.C. Haley gave the Republican response to President Barack Obama's State of the Union address Tuesday.

Or the Immigration Act of 1917, which banned immigrants from East Asia and the Pacific?

Or *Ozawa v. U.S.*, the 1922 Supreme Court decision which declared that Japanese immigrants could not be naturalized?

Or *U.S. v. Bhagat Singh Thind*, the 1923 high court ruling which said people from India — such as Haley's parents — could not become naturalized citizens?

So yes, however you slice it, Haley is wrong and Haley is ignorant.

What about:

The Naturalization Act of 1790, which extended citizenship to "any alien, being a free white person ..."?

Or the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, whose title and intent are self-explanatory?