



PRESS CLIPPING

Haley agenda: Fix roads, schools

Excerpts of Gov. Nikki Haley's sixth State of the State Address, delivered Jan. 20 before a joint legislative session:

With good reason, we talk a lot about the things South Carolina does well, the records we are breaking, the rankings that show us rising to the top.

Number one in foreign investment. The number one exporter of tires. One of the fastest growing economies on the East Coast.... All of South Carolina should take pride in those facts. There are others, however, we talk about less. And that we should never be proud of.

There is no excuse for South Carolina to rank as the state in America with the highest percentage of women killed by men. Domestic violence is an issue that has plagued us for far too long. Tonight, I say it will plague us to that extent no more....

My Executive Budget includes additional prosecutors to fix this problem. No survivor deserves to show up in court and see a legally untrained police officer arguing his or her side, while a highly-paid defense lawyer argues on behalf of the abuser. If you join me, in South Carolina, no survivor ever will again....

You've heard me say it before – growing up in Bamberg, we didn't know what we didn't have.

For me, that's not the case anymore – I know exactly what we didn't have. And after visiting hundreds of schools across our state, I know exactly what many of today's kids don't have.

I have seen the disparities, and I won't stand by and allow them to continue.

We want to raise our chil-

dren to know they are worthy of a good education. We want to raise our children with the confidence and the resources so they believe the sky is the limit....

We have high turnover of teachers in rural and challenged school districts.... This will be the first year we aggressively start recruiting teachers to rural districts and, just as aggressively, incentivizing them to stay there.

If a student agrees to teach in a challenged district for eight years, we will cover the full cost of their education at a state university. For recent graduates who agree to the same commitment, we will repay their student loans....

We cannot continue to ignore that in much of our state, we have a facilities problem.

Children can't learn as well when the walls of their classrooms are crumbling around them. Teachers can't teach as well when the hallways they walk are littered with puddles. Our students and our teachers deserve no less than to go to school each day in a place that is safe and clean....

Here is what I propose: Let's pass legislation permanently dedicating up to one percent of our state's bond capacity to K-12 education facilities.

Now, I do not propose that all school districts in South Carolina are eligible for state support. Nor do I propose that the school districts themselves determine whether or not they qualify. This must be a thorough, priority-based process by which those districts that truly need our help get it, and those that don't, don't....

Transportation has been a topic of great interest and even greater discussion of late.... I think no differently of our roads situation than when

I stood before you one year ago.

I will not sign any piece of legislation that raises taxes – not in year one, not in year five, not in year 10. I will not sign any piece of legislation that does not include real reform to the Department of Transportation – the days of horse-trading South Carolina roads have to end. And I will not buy into the idea that we somehow cannot afford to cut income taxes for our people.

In December, a University of South Carolina economist said, "In 28 years of forecasting our state's economy, rarely have I seen [it] in such good shape and on such steady footing." We had \$1 billion in new revenue last year. We have \$1.3 billion in new revenue this year.

My Executive Budget includes every dollar needed to pay for this year's tax cut. Next year's will too.

This is not our money. It belongs to the taxpayers. We can and we should return it to them.

Pass legislation that cuts our taxes, reforms our flawed transportation system, and invests in our roads, and I will sign it.

Pass legislation that does not do all three of those things, and I will veto it. The choice is clear, and it's all yours....

I will continue to work toward a brighter future. I will continue to believe in a stronger South Carolina. And I will continue to pray that God gives me – and you – the strength to do every day what we have to do.

Thank you, God bless you, and may he continue to bless the great state of South Carolina.





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Randy Newman applauds Haley's recommendation

*Solicitor says request would
lessen case loads, backlogs*

BY TRAVIS JENKINS
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Since he was sworn in a little over a year ago, Sixth Circuit Solicitor Randy Newman has spoken about the need for more money and resources for his office. If Gov. Nikki Haley's recommendations are enacted, some help may be on the way.

Newman recently attended a ceremony in which Haley recommended appropriating \$19 million annually toward the hiring of 144 new prosecutors statewide, along with three more circuit court judges and 88 new public defenders. The move, if ultimately approved by the state legislature, is

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projected by Haley to lower the average case load in solicitor and public defender offices from 376 to 280.

"The backlog is significant," Newman said. "Right now, those case loads are so high you can't get to everything. It would allow us to try more cases."

Haley also signed some executive orders, one of which would require state agencies to adopt a human resources policy by April 11 to help employees understand how they can help coworkers who may be affected by domestic violence issues. Haley also noted that South Carolina is one of only a few states nationally where police officers prosecute domestic violence

crimes in the courtroom, which she said left her "mortified."

Newman said the potential additional resources would make for a smoother, better-operating legal system in the state.

"It would add at least one more prosecutor in each county in the state," Newman said. "Take a county like Chester, just for example, that can't afford to properly fund the solicitor's office. It would make a real difference."

Newman mentioned funding for his office early last year when Chester County Council's gang task force was having informational meetings. He said then that Chester County provides his office funding at a per capita level of \$2.20. Only five counties in the entire state pay less than

Chester he said. Newman said poverty level is certainly an issue, but said other counties with poverty rates similar to or worse than Chester's fund their respective solicitor's offices at a higher rate. Bamberg (whose poverty rate exceeds Chester's) pays out \$4.71 per capita. Barnwell pays \$4.79, Colleton \$7.41 and Union \$8.44. York pays \$13.58 per capita and the state average is \$8.03. Lancaster and Fairfield, the other two counties in the Sixth Circuit, pay more than Chester, but well below the state average. Chester's per capita payout was increased slightly in the new fiscal year budget.

Newman hopes the \$19 million goes from request to reality soon.

"It would make a real difference," Newman said.



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148 Haley kicks off statewide domestic violence reform

Gov. Nikki Haley, members of the South Carolina Domestic Violence Task Force and solicitors from around the state held a State House press conference Monday announcing the implementation of the first set of significant, statewide reforms to address domestic violence in South Carolina.

Less than a year after the task force presented her with recommendations, Gov. Haley announced that 10 of those recommendations have been addressed through a combination of executive orders, the governor's executive budget, and agreements with state boards and non-government associations.

Actions taken by Gov. Haley and the S.C. Task Force:

- Gov. Haley announced that her executive budget for 2016-2017 will fund new prosecutors, new judges, and new public defenders to end the practice of law enforcement officers prosecuting domestic violence crimes in the courtroom, which will also reduce case-loads, decrease backlogs, and ensure that a dedicated prosecutor is assigned to every county in South Carolina.

- Executive Order 2016-02 – extends the task force to ensure all 50 task force recommendations will be completed and meaningful results are rendered for South Carolina's people

- Executive Order 2016-03 – orders

that all cabinet agencies adopt a comprehensive HR policy for domestic violence that includes procedures for confidentiality, safety and security, performance and leave, and educating employees regarding available resources.

- Executive Order 2016-04 – orders certain Cabinet agencies that offer direct client services to adopt a risk assessment screening policy for domestic violence.

- The task force has received commitments from nine professional boards to include domestic violence training in their continuing education: doctors, nurses, dentists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, pharmacists, social workers, cosmetologists, and counselors and therapists.

- The task force has created a one-page regional brochure to be printed from LLR's website for those professional boards to distribute and make available in offices in all parts of the state.

- The task force has created a standardized reporting form for local governments to use when sending their annual report to the Treasurer's Office of how criminal fines and fees are spent on victim services.

Additional information about the S.C. Domestic Violence Task Force can be found on Gov. Haley's website.



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¹⁴⁸Sprouse: District faces 4 key local issues in '16

Almost two weeks into a new year, Ware Shoals School District 51 hopes to address four key issues at the local level in 2016, according to Dr. Fay Sprouse, superintendent.

Topping her list is strategic planning. This is the year District 51 sets goals and strategies for meeting those goals for the next five years.

The superintendent said the district will hold a planning session next month, present a plan to the board in March and then submit it to the South Carolina Department of Education in April.

Technology implementation is another issue of importance in 2016. "We will continue to provide teacher training in utilizing technology effectively," Dr. Sprouse said. "In 2017, all state testing must be done online. This year we will determine our capacity for meeting that expectation, and we will begin

preparing students for that format."

District 51's facilities will also need attention in the next year. The superintendent said roof replacement will be a top priority, as the library and gymnasium at Ware Shoals Middle/Elementary School need new roofs, as does the high school gym. The projects will be prioritized and completed as the school budget allows.

She lists budgeting as her fourth and final matter to be addressed.

"Always an important issue, budgeting requires us to take a look at all programs and course offerings to determine how best to meet our students' needs," Dr. Sprouse said. "We have regained a little flexibility as the state budget has improved and our funding has increased slightly."

She said Gov. Haley and the South Carolina Superintendent of Education are committed to in-



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creased funding in 2016-17. Her hope is the legislature will follow suit.

"This would make it possible for us to consider restoring some of the programs and positions we lost during the recession," she added.

Turning to statewide issues in the coming year, the superintendent said accountability and an equity lawsuit are issues facing each of the state's school districts.

"Now that No Child Left Behind has been 'left behind,' accountability will be a responsibility of the state," Dr. Sprouse noted. "What changes will be made remain to be seen. Students will experience another new test this year, and we have no details yet about what to expect."

The federal changes also mean a change in teacher evaluation, according to the superintendent.

No longer will teachers have to be judged on student performance.

She pointed out she is serving on the Superintendents' Accountability Committee, which will make recommendations concerning South Carolina's new accountability system.

As for the equity lawsuit, the South Carolina Supreme Court awaits recommendations from the legislature about how to correct inequities that exist in education across the state. Dr. Sprouse said some lawmakers have already pre-filed bills with their ideas on the issue.

She pointed out a bill (H4530) calling for county-wide consolidation has been pre-filed.

"I don't know if it will get any traction, but we do need to stay informed and actively oppose any attempt to mandate consolidation,"

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¹⁴⁸ Senate to take another crack at road funding this week

The Associated Press

COLUMBIA — A pair of senators — a Republican and Democrat who are not seeking re-election — plan to spend this week trying to shape a bill to get more money to improve South Carolina roads and get the rest of the Senate to finally go along.

Both senators warn the process is going to take a few weeks if not longer. But they are confident they can pull together a bill that business leaders and pothole-hitting drivers have been clamoring for.

"I think you'll see all of us try to take baby steps toward consensus," said Sen. Joel Lourie, D-Columbia.

Consensus has been hard to come by. Lawmakers seem to agree any bill that raises more money for roads and highways will also need to cut taxes elsewhere and reform how the Department of Transportation is run.

But the 46 senators seem to have 46 different ideas. Conservative Republicans are leery about raising the gas tax without a significant cut in other taxes. Democrats want to make sure any tax cuts get to the largest number of people

and don't threaten services. Some senators are quietly hinting the board that runs DOT doesn't need to be changed at all. The board is made up of members picked by lawmakers and an at-large appointment from the governor.

"The road funding piece, that's pretty black and white. Either you want to raise more money or you don't," said Sen. Ray Cleary, R-Murrells Inlet, who plans to work on his fellow Republicans. "But there is plenty of room for disagreement elsewhere."

Lourie and Cleary have announced they aren't running for re-election next year, leaving them more room to take a stand that might lead to a challenger in a party primary.

The House passed a bill in 2015 that would raise around \$400 million a year for roads through an increase in the gas tax, and reduce income taxes by about \$50 million. Rep. Gary Simrill shepherded the bill through the House and has said members are waiting to see what the Senate sends back. But the Rock Hill Republican thinks the House could alter its earlier proposal and still come up with an agree-

ment again this year.

Gov. Nikki Haley wants lawmakers to change the DOT structure and balancing any gas tax increase with a tax cut or she will veto the bill.

The DOT announced this month it needs about \$1.2 billion extra a year for repaving, bridge work and widening to get the state's roads and bridges to good condition.

The Senate adjourned last week with Cleary controlling the floor to assure a roads bill is debated. The Senate Transportation committee will take up a bill on the DOT board

Tuesday morning, and the Senate Finance Committee is set to meet Tuesday afternoon.

The roads bill strayed from its lane last year when Sen. Tom Davis filibustered it in the final weeks of the session because he didn't think there was a need to raise taxes on gas. The Beaufort Republican was bothered by Senate President Hugh Leatherman putting together a group of four Democrats and four Republicans to discuss the roads behind closed doors, saying his and other conservatives' worries weren't heard.



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**Senate to take up
roads next week**

COLUMBIA — The Senate plans to start talking about how to find additional money for roads next week.

The Senate adjourned Thursday with Sen. Ray Cleary holding the floor. The Republican from Murrells Inlet told senators he wants to debate increasing money for roads first thing Tuesday.

Cleary has been trying to craft a bill the Senate can pass for years without success.

Senate President Hugh Leatherman included Cleary on a bipartisan group of senators trying to write a roads bill. Cleary says that group has not come up with a proposal.

Cleary says he wants the Senate bill to reach the goals of the House and Gov. Nikki Haley to raise the gas tax only if there is a corresponding decrease in income taxes and restructure the Department of Transportation.

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Haley dangles a carrot for prospective teachers

BY HAL MILLARD

halmillard@gmail.com

An offer they can't refuse?

Gov. Nikki Haley has a proposal for prospective teachers in South Carolina as part of her bid to help struggling schools.

In a recent visit to Frances Mack Intermediate School in Gaston with Education Superintendent Molly Spearman, Haley proposed the state pay the full college tuition costs of future teachers. The caveat? Those teachers must commit to work for at least 8 years in struggling, high-turn-over school districts.

Haley's Rural Teacher Recruiting Initiative is part of a \$300 million education funding package the governor has requested in her executive budget, released earlier this month.

"If they will lock into eight years in a rural school district, we will pay their education and they will be debt-free," Haley said. "If we know that we can get them debt-free, and we know that we can allow them that opportunity, a lot of times

when they go to rural districts they stay there."

Haley offered a similar though more limited proposal last year. This year, Haley is seeking \$15 million for the program. It would target districts

in South Carolina that have reported an annual 12% or greater teaching staff turnover rate the past five years.



Haley

According to the plan, teachers would be able to get a subsidized year of college for every two years

they teach. Additionally, recent graduates who make the same commitment could get their loans repaid.

The state is under great pressure this year to begin addressing poorly performing schools typically languishing in largely minority, impoverished, and rural areas of the state.

The state Supreme Court in 2014 ordered the legislature and governor to work with such districts and come up with a plan. Last year, the justices set a deadline of summer 2016.

House and Senate leaders are try-

ing to craft their own plans, with a likely emphasis on staffing, technology, and replacing or updating aging and insufficient school buildings.

"Education reform is a long overdue, critical conversation that must take place to protect our state's economic and societal prosperity," House Speaker Jay Lucas said in a statement. "Governor Haley has embraced this issue and we are encouraged by her advocacy for reforms intended to give our children access to the education they deserve."

Among other proposals, Haley requested the state spend millions each year to maintain and build schools in the poorest districts. The governor also requested an additional \$40 million to improve technology in those districts.

For her part, Spearman is seeking better pay for teachers in poor districts by raising teachers' starting salaries above \$30,000. Doing so, she said, would make positions in those districts more competitive with more affluent districts that can afford to pay their teachers more.

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Legislative Report: Committee Work and State of the State

Rep. Chip Huggins-District 85
Serving Irmo and Chapin

There was lots of activity in the State House last week as we continued the early stages of the legislative cycle and heard from the governor in her annual State of the State address on Wednesday evening.



Rep. Chip Huggins

My Republican colleagues and I were happy to hear the governor's support for many of our priorities such as education reform, infrastructure improvements and ethics reform.

Echoing Governor Haley was the Republican leader of the House, Bruce Bannister (R-Greenville): "This week we heard from Governor Haley's heart. Our caucus appreciates her positive message and optimistic tone. Governor Haley mentioned education reform, fixing our roads and bridges, and ethics reform. House Republicans have led on all three issues in the House, while the Senate has

refused to act. With Governor Haley's help, perhaps we will see movement in the Senate chamber on these important issues facing our state."

Among other important issues, the governor also highlighted the tragedies our state encountered over the past year. The flood of 2015 was the worst natural disaster since hurricane Hugo. My colleagues and I have heard from flood victims across the state over the past months, particularly farmers who in some instances saw their entire crops disintegrate and fields ruined understanding flood waters. Agriculture represents one of the largest industries in South Carolina and if you know a farmer, you may know that one year with no yield can be the difference between having the resources to plant again next year and closing the doors. We continue to look for conservative solutions for these farmers and others affected by the flood, and I will update you as we move forward.

Finally, as is typical in January, much was done in our House committees. Once a bill is introduced, it must go through legislative committees before they come to the House floor for an up or down vote. We tried to spend as little time as possible on the floor last week so they could have time to get their work done.

Thank you for allowing me to serve you in the South Carolina House of Representatives and please feel free to contact me via email at chiphuggins@schouse.gov or my 24-hour phone line at 331-8468.

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COMMENTARY

New CCTC program a great opportunity

Free is good, especially when it comes to offering advanced college education on the local level.

Our top story of the week by a landslide on www.theitem.com was reporter Konstantin Vengerowsky's Thursday piece on Central Carolina Technical College.

Central Carolina President Tim Hardee announced an in-



Graham Osteen

novative new program of offering free tuition to qualifying college students from Sumter, Clarendon, Lee and Kershaw counties. It starts with this year's

2016 graduating class — <http://bit.ly/1WDZzre>.

This is a big deal, and Hardee puts it in perspective: "This is the first time in South Carolina that students will have access to tuition-free college education," he said. "In addition to benefiting students and their parents, this scholarship opportunity will also serve as an economic development tool, which will attract new industry as well as benefit our existing businesses and industry."

A partnership between the college, all public and private high schools in all of the counties, county and city councils, economic development boards and commissions and various corporate sponsors will provide \$250,000 a year for qualifying students, according to our reporting.

A representative from Gov. Nikki Haley's office said there are 66,000 open jobs in South Carolina and 100,000 people who are unemployed.

The economic realities of

the present and future require people of all ages to learn new skills in order to progress in most industries, and that often requires ongoing education.

Area young people who finish high school and get right into the types of programs Central Carolina offers have a better chance of success because they learn this reality early. They're not afraid of school. Older workers who want or need to learn new skills have the same great opportunities in their own community through Central Carolina. Just to get an idea of what's available, here's the current list of offerings: — <http://bit.ly/1PukxTL>

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On a similar positive educational note, Adrienne Sarvis reported in that same Thursday edition about University

'Sumter is fortunate to have two such strong, affordable higher educational institutions...'

of South Carolina Sumter celebrating 50 years.

Her story was accompanied by Keith Gedamke's great front page photo of students taking a group selfie picture — <http://bit.ly/1UiExNi>

We were reminded that USC Sumter began in 1966 as a Clemson University campus, then switched to a USC campus seven years later.

Sumter is fortunate to have two such strong, affordable higher educational institutions, and their longevity and success have been the result of many outstanding leaders



and strong public support through the years. Students of all ages can advance through USC Sumter's wide range of programs, found here at www.uscsumter.edu.

...

Finally this week, we learned on Saturday that former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg is considering running for president as an independent. Given the current state of affairs, that's the best news I've heard in a long time. It will certainly elevate the discussion.

According to *The New York*

Times, "One adviser said that Mr. Bloomberg's preparations reflected the unsettled state of the race, and the perception that Mrs. Clinton was flagging against Mr. Sanders. Mr. Bloomberg, this adviser said, believes voters want "a non-ideological, bipartisan, results-oriented vision" that the early primary favorites have not presented."

Amen to that. Anyone but Trump, Cruz, Sanders or Clinton is OK with me.

According to various political sites, "No third-party candidate has ever won a U.S. presidential election. The

strongest showing for a third-party candidate came in 1912, when former President Teddy Roosevelt left the Republican Party. He ended up coming in second, with 27.4 percent of the popular vote and 88 electoral votes."

The odds are long, and it's still early, but this is a race unlike any we've ever seen.

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Sumter pastor will head Mother Emanuel church

Woman will lead in Charleston where 9 died

BY JIM HILLEY
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African Methodist Episcopal Church Bishop Richard Franklin Norris has appointed the Rev. Betty Deas Clark, formerly pastor of Mount Pisgah AME Church in Sumter, to be pastor at Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, the historic church where nine people, including pastor Clementa Pinckney, were killed June 17. Pinckney was also a state senator.

Dylann Roof, a 21-year-old avowed white supremacist from the Columbia area, has been charged with the killings. The shootings at Mother Emanuel attracted national attention, and President Obama spoke at a memorial service for the victims. The deaths also led to the removal

of the Confederate flag from the grounds of the Statehouse in Columbia after Gov. Nikki Haley announced her support for the flag to be taken down.

Keith Britton, president of the AME Northeast Conference Lay Association, said Clark's appointment was made Saturday at a meeting in Columbia.

"It is well deserved," he said.

Clark's first service at Mother Emanuel was Sunday, he said.

Clark becomes the first female minister at Mother Emanuel, but that is nothing new to Clark, as she has been the first female minister for a number of the churches she has led. She succeeds the Rev.

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Norvel Goff, who was temporarily assigned the congregation after the death of Pinckney.

Clark earned a bachelor of arts degree at Limestone College, as well as master of divinity and doctor of ministry degrees from the Charleston Extension Program of Erskine Seminary.

She was also pastor of churches in Lake City, Johns Island, James Island, Huger and Greeleyville.

The Rev. Laddie Howard has been appointed the new pastor at Mount Pisgah AME in Sumter. He was pastor of Wayman AME Chapel in Stateburg.

"I am ecstatic and honored," Howard said of his appointment. "I can't put it into words right now, but I am very blessed for this to come upon us."

He has been married to his wife, Katherine, for 45 years. They have two children and four grandchildren.

Howard said Clark is a great friend.

"She is a great pastor and one that serves the Lord with grace and honor," he said.

Howard has been a minister since 1982, according to the Wayman AME Chapel website. He graduated from Morris College with a bachelor's degree of history and social studies and received his master's degree of psychology of religion/pastoral care from Interdenominational Theological Center of Atlanta. Howard was previously pastor of Mount Pisgah AME Church in Greenwood and Friendship AME Church of Silver.



LEROY BURNELL / POST AND COURIER

Pastor Dr. Betty Deas Clark, formerly pastor at Mount Pisgah AME Church in Sumter, has been appointed pastor at Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston.