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Subject: Morning Clips – Friday, April 4, 2014

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Governor Nikki Haley News:

Coastal Observer: Education: Haley pitches charters while school pitches Montessori
<http://www.coastalobserver.com/articles/2014/040314/5.html>

Charles Swenson

When Gov. Nikki Haley entered their class along with school and district staff, photographers and reporters, the students barely looked up. Some worked at desks. Some at tables. Others had work spread on the floor.

Note: “As I was talking to them, I was so impressed just to watch those first-, second- and third-graders learning together and playing on the floor together,” Haley said to an assembly that included families and Georgetown County School District officials. “The way they cooperated with each other you couldn’t tell who were first-graders and who were third-graders, but you could tell they were learning.”

The State: Democratic race for state superintendent of education suddenly crowded

<http://www.thestate.com/2014/04/03/3366541/democratic-race-for-state-superintendent.html#storylink=cpy>

Cassie Cope

In a crowded race for state superintendent of education, four Democrats are competing for their party’s nomination in June and the right to challenge one of the nine Republican candidates in November.

Note: The candidates generally support Gov. Nikki Haley’s education plan, unveiled earlier this year, to spend more on technology, reading and rural schools.

Rock Hill Herald: Piedmont CEO learns from Fort Mill hospital decision

<http://www.heraldonline.com/2014/04/03/5837341/fort-mill-hospital-decision-part.html#storylink=cpy>

Don Worthington

When Bill Masterton took over as the chief executive officer for Piedmont Medical Center in June 2012, he knew he faced a divisive issue – who should build a new Fort Mill hospital.

Note: Last year, Gov. Nikki Haley vetoed funding for the certificate of need program, advising health care facilities to move forward with projects without a certificate. The state Supreme Court has heard arguments on her decision, but has not issued its opinion yet.

Times and Democrat: Inspector General: SCSU mismanaged 1890 funds

http://thetandd.com/news/inspector-general-scsu-mismanaged-funds/article_8df7a36e-bbae-11e3-bc77-0019bb2963f4.html

Dale Linder-Altman

The South Carolina Inspector General’s office says that S.C. State University has been mismanaging money for federal public service activities for eight years, according to President Thomas Elzey. A memo from the IG’s office says the mismanagement has led to a, “\$6.7 million issue having to be dealt with in the fiscal year ‘13-14,” he said.

Opinion / Editorial Roundup:

Greenville News: Create free market for solar energy

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/opinion/editorials/2014/04/04/create-free-market-solar-energy/7268941/>

Editorial

A bill that would generate competition for electric utilities by opening South Carolina to solar leasing companies should be written as broadly as possible to give more people the opportunity to access solar energy. The bill drew early praise from legislators, utilities and pro-solar groups, but then took some heat from solar companies who said it gave a distinct advantage to major utilities such as Duke Energy.

Florence Morning News: Balancing the fund balance

http://www.scnw.com/opinion/article_89076978-bb7e-11e3-82e2-0017a43b2370.html

Editorial

Taken from the 30,000-foot view, the success of the Darlington County School District is a bit of a head-scratcher. The district can't be faulted for operating under the guidelines set forth by the state's tortuous educational funding system, which has led to a profound crevice between public schools. Gov. Nikki Haley is proposing this year to use roughly \$100 million to help bring South Carolina's poorer schools up to snuff.

Post and Courier: No shotgun merger

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20140404/PC1002/140409723/1021/no-shotgun-merger>

Editorial

Weddings can be joyful affairs that herald happy marriages, but not when performed at the point of a shotgun. The proposed merger of the College of Charleston and the Medical University of South Carolina had been looking more and more like a forced affair for both parties since the plan was unveiled in February. Wisely, its advocates decided to take another tack.

Rock Hill Herald: Another milestone in hospital battle

<http://www.heraldonline.com/2014/04/03/5836982/another-milestone-in-hospital.html?sp=/100/105/121/>

Editorial

Tuesday's decision that Piedmont Medical Center should be allowed to build a new Fort Mill hospital is no guarantee that the matter is settled. We hope, though, that this is one significant step toward resolving a conflict that has lasted nearly a decade.

Legislative Session News:**The State:** Emma's Law bill could be finalized by next week

<http://www.thestate.com/2014/04/03/3366538/emmas-law-bill-could-be-finalized.html#storylink=cpy>

John Monk

Emma's Law could be passed by the S.C. Senate and be on its way to the governor for her signature as early as next week, supporters said Thursday. That's because the S.C. House unanimously gave third and final reading to the bill on Thursday, and bill floor leader Rep. Rick Quinn, R-Lexington, personally delivered the paperwork to the S.C. Senate minutes later.

WIS: Emma's Law passes third reading, heads to Senate

<http://www.wistv.com/story/25156931/emmas-law-passes-third-reading-heads-to-senate>

Jeremy Turnage

After a third and final reading in the House of Representatives, Emma's Law is now headed for the Senate after a unanimous vote Thursday morning. The bill's passing in the House is great news for bill supporters who have been pushing for its passage.

Aiken Standard: Young's bill would change law on reporting suspicious child deaths

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/article/20140404/AIK0105/140409749/1004/young-s-bill-would-change-law-on-reporting-suspicious-child-deaths>

Teddy Kulmala

An amendment to a bill introduced last week would strengthen the requirements for coroners across the state to report the suspicious deaths of children to state law enforcement. S.C. Sen. Tom Young, R-Aiken, filed S1163 last week, which would allow the state Department of Social Services to release details about suspected child abuse and neglect cases the agency did not investigate, and to report publicly when abuse results in a child dying or nearly dying.

The State: SC legislators propose CofC research university instead of merger with MUSC

<http://www.thestate.com/2014/04/03/3365466/sc-legislators-propose-cofc-research.html?sp=/99/205/&ihp=1#storylink=cpy>

Cassie Cope

A South Carolina House panel decided Wednesday to designate an existing part of the College of Charleston as a research university instead of forcibly merging the college with the Medical University of South Carolina. Both Charleston schools would remain separate under the proposal, approved by a special ad hoc committee.

Post and Courier: Bill could end standoff between birth centers and DHEC

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20140403/PC1603/140409738/1031/bill-could-end-standoff-between-birth-centers-and-dhec>

Dave Munday

A bill introduced into the S.C. Legislature last week could end a battle between the state's birthing centers and the agency that oversees them - if there's enough time left this year to pass it. House Bill H. 5002 would clarify that birthing centers aren't required to have a doctor on site if the center is near a hospital.

Index-Journal: TB bill advances from committee

<http://www.indexjournal.com/Content/News/News/Article/TB-bill-advances-from-committee/4/40/24705>

Matt Bruce

A legislative bill crafted by District 10 state Sen. Floyd Nicholson continued to make progress at the statehouse Thursday. The state assembly's Medical Affairs Committee unanimously approved Senate Bill 1084 on Thursday, advancing the proposed measure to the Senate floor, according to a press release from Nicholson's office.

Associated Press: Bill says teacher layoffs can't be seniority-based

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=wFEpQIUd

Seanna Adcox

Teacher seniority would be downplayed in layoff decisions due to budget cuts under a bill advanced Thursday in the South Carolina Senate. The bill, sent to the full Education Committee on a 3-2 vote, requires districts' "reduction-in-force" policies to consider a teacher's classroom effectiveness as the most important factor in deciding whom to let go.

Associated Press: SC senators want to change teacher appeals process

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=FxZ3JQI9

Seanna Adcox

Senators say South Carolina's process for removing an underperforming teacher can drag out at the expense of school districts and children's education, and it needs to change. A bill debated Thursday by a Senate panel would give principals the final say in whether to extend a teacher's contract.

Post and Courier: Teachers could lose right to appeal firings through bill under discussion

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20140403/PC1610/140409768/1389/teachers-could-lose-right-to-appeal-firings-through-bill-under-discussion>

Cynthia Roldan

Teachers who do not receive a continuing contract could lose their right to appeal, if a bill being discussed in the Senate becomes law. The Senate bill introduced by Sen. Paul Thurmond, R-Charleston, seeks to streamline the firing of ineffective teachers by eliminating their right to appeal. Though the bill was not voted on, Thurmond said he hopes discussion continues to achieve some sort of reform.

Anderson Independent: Suit challenges constitutionality of elections boards in S.C. counties

<http://www.independentmail.com/news/2014/apr/03/suit-challenges-constitutionality-of-elections/?partner=RSS>

Kirk Brown

A Greenville-based government watchdog group is challenging the constitutionality of South Carolina's 46 county elections boards. The South Carolina Public Interest Foundation and its founder, retired Greenville paving contractor Ned Sloan Jr., filed a lawsuit in Richland County this week that seeks to overturn a 2008 state law governing the makeup of county election boards.

Greenville News: Fair, Bright vote against all USC trustees to make point

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/politics/2014/04/03/fair-bright-vote-usc-trustees-make-point/7248645/>

Tim Smith

Two Upstate senators say they voted against each incumbent University of South Carolina trustee because of "questionable activities" allowed to occur on two of USC's campuses. Sen. Mike Fair, a Greenville Republican and a former USC trustee, said he was "disappointed and personally offended by several of their decisions in recent months."

Florence Morning News: Florence, Pee Dee delegation meet with DC representatives

http://www.scnw.com/news/politics/article_2eca0b4a-bb89-11e3-bb87-0017a43b2370.html

Gavin Jackson

Florence City Councilman Robby Hill helped orchestrate the trip again this year through the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce to talk with local Congressmen Tom Rice, R-S.C. 7, Jim Clyburn, D-S.C. 6, and Republican Senators Lindsey Graham and Tim Scott about infrastructure, education, economic development and transportation issues.

South Carolina News:

Sun News: S.C. Department of Education tells districts it is leaving Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

<http://www.myrtlebeachonline.com/2014/04/03/4141769/sc-department-of-education-tells.html?sp=/99/209/&ihp=1#storylink=cpy>

Vicki Grooms

The S.C. Department of Education announced Thursday it is taking steps to withdraw from the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium and will be considering other assessments to use for the 2014-15 school year, according to a memo sent from Deputy Superintendent Nancy Busbee to the state's school districts Thursday afternoon.

Associated Press: SC closing minimum security prison

<http://www.thestate.com/2014/04/03/3365420/apnewsbreak-sc-closing-minimum.html?sp=/99/205/&ihp=1>

Meg Kinnard

South Carolina is closing one of its prisons, officials said Thursday, citing a decrease in the number of inmates returning to the corrections system. Corrections Department Director Bryan Stirling told The Associated Press that the Campbell Pre-Release Center is beginning the process of closing.

Associated Press: Duke Energy asked to correct SC ash pit problems

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=NHEI5tMm

Jeffrey Collins, Mitch Weiss

Duke Energy last week assured South Carolina Public Service Commission members that the utility's coal ash pits in the state were safe and designed differently from the one that failed at its Eden, N.C. plant, coating a 70-mile stretch of the Dan River in toxic sludge.

The State: SC DHEC chief urges extra care with Duke's coal ash

<http://www.thestate.com/2014/04/03/3365794/sc-dhec-chief-urges-extra-care.html#storylink=cpy>

Sammy Fretwell

The state can't force Duke to remove contaminated ash from waste ponds at the Lee power plant near Anderson, but the company should "go above and beyond" in shutting down the lagoons along the Saluda River, said Catherine Templeton, director at the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control.

Local News:

The State: Lexington County panel starts to wade through requests for proposed penny sales tax aid

<http://www.thestate.com/2014/04/03/3365759/lexington-county-panel-starts.html#storylink=cpy>

Tim Flach

An advisory panel is starting to develop a package of improvements across Lexington County that would be paid for by a proposed penny-on-the-dollar sales tax after receiving lower financial estimates for the proposal.

National News:

Washington Post: House votes to change health-care law's definition of full-time work

http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/house-votes-to-change-health-care-laws-definition-of-full-time-work/2014/04/03/dc0b7066-bb69-11e3-9a05-c739f29ccb08_story.html

Ed O'Keefe

Eighteen House Democrats voted with Republicans Thursday to change the definition of full-time work as it relates to the Affordable Care Act, signaling that for some members of President Obama's party the law remains a difficult political issue.

National Journal: Will Premium Spikes Cause Another Round of Obamacare Bashing

<http://www.nationaljournal.com/magazine/will-premium-spikes-cause-another-round-of-obamacare-bashing-20140403>

Sam Baker

Now that Obamacare's first enrollment window has closed, we know approximately how many people (at least 7.1 million) picked an insurance plan through the law's new exchanges. But one thing we still don't know is whether big premium hikes are looming in 2015.