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To:
Date: 12/21/2014 7:25:16 AM
Subject: Clips – Sunday, December 21, 2014

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Governor Nikki Haley News:

Florence Morning News: Ethics reform big issue for next SC legislative session

http://www.snow.com/news/local/article_4bbc9582-8885-11e4-83cf-7f573e64b637.html

Gavin Jackson

During the past two weeks, legislators have pre-filed more than 400 bills dealing with subjects varying from mopeds to wireless Internet on school buses and revenge porn, with several focused on issues related to criminal domestic violence, ethics reform and infrastructure funding. All are shaping up to be major themes of the new General Assembly session that convenes on Jan 13.

Note: On Wednesday, Republican Gov. Nikki Haley said "enough is enough" after listing several former elected officials who were indicted in ethics scandals. She listed income disclosure, independent investigation and legislators who sue the state to report the agency and payout amount as three essential items to reform.

Note: "In my administration time, we have watched a lieutenant governor get indicted, we've watched a speaker get indicted, we've watched a senator get indicted and I have removed eight sheriffs," Haley said. "I think now is the time for ethics reform."

Charlotte Observer: Emails show NC faced long odds vying with SC for big companies

<http://www.charlotteobserver.com/2014/12/20/5397856/emails-show-nc-faced-long-odds.html?sp=/99/123/#.VJaryl4BM#storylink=cpy>

Rick Rothacker, Ely Portillo

North Carolina officials want to close the gap with South Carolina and other states that offer larger incentive packages and lower tax rates to lure companies – sometimes causing Charlotte to miss out on hundreds of jobs. But emails and documents obtained by the Observer under a public records request show the state has hurdles to overcome if it wants to keep up with South Carolina and other rivals:

Note: By February, North Carolina officials knew South Carolina and Georgia were finalists for the project. In June, South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley joined Giti officials in announcing the company would invest \$560 million in Chester County, creating 1,700 jobs at a factory off Interstate 77, about 40 miles south of Charlotte.

Post and Courier: Early bills preview of lawmakers' top priorities

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20141220/PC1603/141229981>

Jeremy Borden

Some state lawmakers say South Carolina needs to fix its roads, improve its education, better police public officials and get tough on domestic violence. And others think the state would be better off with broader gun rights, stricter abortion laws and the ability to deny government services to any "non-citizen."

Note: Lawmakers also believe they can't keep putting off dealing with the state's crumbling roads and bridges. Gov. Nikki Haley promised during her successful campaign for a second term last fall to present her plan for funding transportation improvements by the time the Legislature convenes Jan. 13.

Note: H.3186, Rep. Kirkman Finlay, R-Columbia. Mandates that lawmakers disclose their private sources of income but not the amount. Haley wants the Legislature to pass reform that shows how much lawyer-lawmakers make from suing government agencies.

The State: The Buzz: A Sandy Hook school day, NRA edition?

<http://www.thestate.com/2014/12/20/3885678/the-buzz-a-sandy-hook-school-day.html?sp=/99/132/>

Jamie Self

The day after the anniversary of the Sandy Hook school massacre in Newtown, Conn., Palmetto State public-school students of all ages would learn about their right to bear arms in lessons designed by the pro-gun National Rifle Association.

Haley grows bench on S.C. Chamber: Gov. Nikki Haley has a new ally at the S.C. Chamber of Commerce with the hiring of her former chief of staff, Ted Pitts, as the chamber's next chief executive and president. Haley has strong ties to a number of chamber leaders – a change from 2010 when the business association endorsed Democratic state Sen. Vincent Sheheen over the then-unknown state Rep. Haley in the race for governor.

A statutory slight? The largest nonprofit administering the state's first private-school choice program has a new face – and not necessarily by choice. Jeff Davis is the founder and mastermind behind Palmetto Kids First, one of five nonprofits OK'd by the state to collect donations and give private-school tuition grants to students with disabilities.

Post and Courier: Palmetto Politics

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20141220/PC1603/141229891>

Schuyler Kropf

When former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush spoke at the University of South Carolina's winter graduation last week it closed the loop of Bush political family appearances at the state's flagship school.

Lindsey Graham makes the sixth tier: U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham recently repeated his earlier comment that he might run for president in two years and is now the only possible South Carolina candidate listed on a widely-watched barometer of the 2016 presidential campaign.

Limehouse out of delegation post: State Rep. Chip Limehouse was replaced as one of the rotating chairmen of the joint Charleston County legislative delegation last week in a move that could shake up who sits on the Charleston County Aviation Authority.

The week that was: It wasn't enough for Gov. Nikki Haley to soundly defeat her Democratic rival, lawyer Vincent Sheheen, she's now setting her sights on him and other lawyer-legislators like him.

Note: "Any legislator that sues the state of South Carolina must disclose to the taxpayers which agency they sued and how much they got paid for it," she said. One issue of concern is lawmakers calling up state agencies to seek information while in a dual role.

Times and Democrat: Two new troopers coming to area

http://thetandd.com/news/two-new-troopers-coming-to-area/article_2a07876c-88d5-11e4-8aad-f3e3d6471acd.html

More than 900 applied, only 40 made it. The South Carolina Highway Patrol announced 40 troopers graduated from Highway Patrol Basic Class 95. Gov. Nikki Haley told graduates that when they wear the uniform, they represent "everything we hold dear."

Opinion / Editorial Roundup:

Rock Hill Herald: This could be year for ethics reforms

http://www.heraldonline.com/2014/12/20/6643118_this-could-be-year-for-ethics.html?sp=/100/105/&rh=1
Editorial

On Wednesday, Gov. Nikki Haley urged lawmakers to make ethics reform a priority in the upcoming legislative session. The governor listed three specific tenets she would like to see in any reform bill: income disclosure requirements; independent investigations of legislators; and the elimination of conflicts of interest in the Legislature.

Spartanburg Herald Journal: Senators should look seriously at investing in mentor stipends

<http://www.goupstate.com/article/20141221/OPINION/412211008/1128/opinion?Title=Senators-should-look-seriously-at-investing-in-mentor-stipends>

Editorial

Few factors in a child's education make as big a difference as the ability of the child's teacher. A good teacher can inspire a child to learn. A good teacher can provide continuous challenge to a high-achieving student and give a struggling student the confidence he needs to succeed. Good teachers can't always overcome a child's poor home life or a lack of academic priorities when a student leaves school, but of all the factors schools can control, the ability of the teachers is most critical.

Times and Democrat: Graham's most valuable role is in Senate

http://thetandd.com/news/opinion/graham-s-most-valuable-role-is-in-senate/article_47d3faec-88cf-11e4-a73a-f778b8df37e0.html

Editorial

THE ISSUE: South Carolina senator running for president: OUR OPINION: Logic in considering a candidacy

but certainty in need for his approach in Congress. South Carolina Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham is at high tide politically. After being classified as threatened by conservatives and the tea party in his 2014 re-election bid, Graham dispatched a half-dozen opponents in the GOP political primary without a runoff.

Aiken Standard: Police body cameras idea worth exploring

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/article/20141221/AIK0201/141229992/1018/AIK02>

Editorial

Wiring police officers in South Carolina with body cameras sounds advantageous, but it won't come without challenges. Mandating police agencies provide their officers with equipment— an idea being pursued by some members of the General Assembly – wouldn't be void of cost concerns and questions over civil liberties.

The State: Even Lexington County's once most powerful public official not above the law

[http://www.thestate.com/2014/12/21/3883808/editorial-even-lexington-countys.html?](http://www.thestate.com/2014/12/21/3883808/editorial-even-lexington-countys.html?sp=/99/132/154/#storylink=cpy)

[sp=/99/132/154/#storylink=cpy](http://www.thestate.com/2014/12/21/3883808/editorial-even-lexington-countys.html?sp=/99/132/154/#storylink=cpy)

Editorial

But no one is above the law. And when elected officials lose sight of their duty to serve the people and begin serving themselves — whether by committing corrupt acts, engaging in self-dealing or breaking the law — it's in the public's interest that they step aside or be removed.

Index-Journal: A military approach to public education?

<http://www.indexjournal.com/opinion/editorial/A-military-approach-to-public-education->

Editorial

What's best for public education? We're beginning to think public schools should be run a bit like the military. It is hardly a new concept that Sen. Wes Hayes, R-Rock Hill, offered earlier this week when he said the state could recruit and build a cadre of good teachers by forgiving student loans, giving teacher mentors stipends and hiking some teachers' salaries.

Post and Courier: Tax bill shows need for reform

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20141221/PC1002/141229910>

Editorial

Just before Congress banged the door shut on 2014, it approved a bill that extends existing federal tax credits. In doing so it underscored the need for real tax reform in 2015. If the tax bill were a movie, it could have been titled "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly."

The State: Columbia, SC's, proactive policing plan should be applauded

<http://www.thestate.com/2014/12/20/3883806/bolton-columbia-scs-proactive.html?sp=/99/132/154/>

Warren Bolton

SOME MIGHT question Columbia's plan to address growing concerns about how police respond to citizens — particularly black men and boys — but the city's proactive approach should be applauded. No, Columbia hasn't had the tragic deaths we've seen in Florida, Missouri and New York, where unarmed black men were killed by white officers.

Post and Courier: Ravenel Bridge ice solution must be effective, practical

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20141221/PC1002/141229911>

Editorial

Dual ice storms paralyzed the Southeast last January and February. Sleet and freezing rain glazed roads, snapped power lines and felled trees, bringing cities to a grinding halt and endangering millions of residents.

S.C. General Assembly News:

Florence Morning News: Domestic violence, gas taxes focus of SC bills

http://www.scnow.com/news/local/article_c8e3e1e0-8895-11e4-b735-3b68c57d1a35.html

Gavin Jackson

Besides ethics reform, a number of other issues will get attention in the new session of the General Assembly, including domestic violence. One bill in the House and another in the Senate are seeking to criminalize dating violence, another by Rep. Mia McLeod, D-Richland, would require the state to develop a dating violence prevention policy that schools could adapt as well as requiring teachers to receive continuing education on the matter.

Times and Democrat: Tolls on I-95, guns, S.C. State are issues local lawmakers want addressed in 2015
http://thetandd.com/news/tolls-on-i--guns-s-c-state-are-issues/article_799b17a0-88d3-11e4-8cf3-37fac4bf15ed.html

Martha Rose Brown

State Sen. Brad Hutto is once again asking his fellow lawmakers to make Interstate 95 a toll road to pay for its upkeep, in one of several bills submitted by local lawmakers in advance of the legislative session. "I don't think anybody likes the idea of tolls or taxes, but we've got to repair the roads and bridges somehow," said Hutto, an Orangeburg Democrat.

Times and Democrat: Bill would make one county, one school district the law
http://thetandd.com/news/bill-would-make-one-county-one-school-district-the-law/article_b2a67cc0-88d2-11e4-a53b-9f9ccbb3cc81.html

Martha Rose Brown

School district consolidation, already a hot topic in Orangeburg County, could become a statewide issue next year. A bill prefiled in the Senate would require no more than one school district per county, if it becomes law. Sen. John Matthews, D-Bowman, said that the upcoming session of the General Assembly will likely include several efforts to consolidate school districts.

Post and Courier: Bobby Harrell unrepentant - and unbowed - as he contemplates life after politics
<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20141220/PC1603/141219364>

Schuyler Kropf

Despite having pleaded guilty to six misdemeanors and being sentenced to three years' probation, former House Speaker Bobby Harrell remains unrepentant, saying he did nothing bad enough to warrant his conviction for violating state ethics laws.

The State: Whatever happened in the case against former SC House Speaker Bobby Harrell?
http://www.thestate.com/2014/12/20/3885641_what-happened-since-the-case-against.html?rh=1

The story: In October, former S.C. House Speaker Bobby Harrell, R-Charleston, pleaded guilty to six counts of using campaign money for personal expenses. As part of that deal, Harrell resigned from the House seat he had held for 21 years. He also abandoned his re-election bid and agreed not to seek political office for three years.

The update: Former Speaker Pro Tempore Jay Lucas, R-Darlington, was elected the new House speaker at an organizational session held earlier this month. As acting speaker, Lucas already had created a study committee to look at toughening the state's ethics laws.

South Carolina News:

Aiken Standard: DOE signs off to continue SRS tank closures
<http://www.aikenstandard.com/article/20141221/AIK0101/141229967/1004/doe-signs-off-to-continue-srs-tank-closures>

Derrek Asberry

Liquid waste work at the Savannah River Site takes a step forward with the recent signing of a document that allows SRS to complete cleanup and closure of the underground liquid waste tanks in the H Tank Farm. The Energy Department announced the signing of a determination in a Friday press release.

Sumter Item: Sumter earns 'work ready' status
<http://www.theitem.com/stories/sumter-earns-work-ready-status,238285>

Jim Hilley

Sumter County has joined the list of counties in South Carolina certified as "work ready," Lt. Gov. Yancey McGill and Lt. Gov.-Elect Henry McMaster announced. Sumter and 17 other counties were recognized for achieving certification through the South Carolina Work Ready Communities initiative, a South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce news release said.

Sun News: Myrtle Beach golf course purchases by Chinese investors is just the beginning
http://www.myrtlebeachonline.com/2014/12/20/4681281_myrtle-beach-golf-course-purchases.html?sp=/99/209/&rh=1#storylink=cpy

Steve Jones

Grand Strand golfers agape over the tens of millions of dollars Chinese investors have paid for area golf courses

in the last few years likely don't appreciate that it may be just the beginning of a pipeline that some area leaders and organizations are working to create with one of the world's oldest cultures.

Greenville News: Clemson president says university will work on diversity policies

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/education/2014/12/19/clemson-university-president-calls-full-review-existing-diversity-plans-policies/20659785/>

Robbie Ward

Clemson University President James "Jim" Clements told faculty this week the Administration intends to do more to create new initiatives after a recent semester marked by racial tension from social media blowups and a white student party viewed as racially insensitive.

Post and Courier: Boeing executives talk unions, Dreamliner goals, workforce quality and giving back to community

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20141220/PC05/141229918>

David Wren

While Boeing Co.'s production of Dreamliner commercial planes has dominated the Charleston area's manufacturing landscape in recent years, the company's philanthropic efforts have, comparatively, flown under the radar. That's not to say they haven't had an impact.

Associated Press: Doctors hope Christmas break slows flu in SC

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=0BEs4v6Y

School systems across South Carolina say they are happy for the Christmas break for a different reason this year - it provides a good chance to stop a flu outbreak. Several school districts warned parents of a high number of absences before the break started because of the flu.

Local News:

Anderson Independent: Professor: As former students petition for diplomas, no economic effect expected

http://www.independentmail.com/news/professor-as-former-students-petition-for-diplomas-no-economic-effect-expected_92831159

Sarah Freishtat

More than 150 former high school students in the region have petitioned to receive diplomas now that the high school exit exam is no longer a requirement in South Carolina. Local school officials said the ability to receive a diploma will help former students, but an increase in the number of adults with high school diplomas is not expected to have a significant effect on the local economy.

Greenville News: \$2.4 million production facility brings printing back to Greenville

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/local/2014/12/20/million-production-facility-brings-printing-back-greenville/20705773/>

Dave Neill

We are committed to Greenville, and here to stay. We are on a very fast track in bringing a new newspaper production facility back to our community. We're investing \$2.4 million to build a state-of-the-art production facility to print The Greenville News right here at home.

The State: Columbia's billion-dollar building boom

<http://www.thestate.com/2014/12/20/3885518/special-report-columbias-billion.html?sp=/99/205/&ihp=1>

Jeff Wilkinson

Downtown Columbia is in the middle of a billion-dollar building boom that shows no signs of slowing. A renaissance that began in the early 2000s was stymied when the Great Recession ground development to a halt in 2008. Pent-up demand in an economy that finally has found its footing has led Columbia to its highest-dollar build-out in history.

Aiken Standard: State and local officials keep an eye on Langley Dam during holidays

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/article/20141220/AIK0101/141229968/1004>

Maayan Schechter

The Langley Dam is still considered stable, nearly a month after a leak found in the dam had Aiken County officials and the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control on alert. County engineers and SCDHEC have been on site every day, checking the dam to make sure there would be no cause for an emergency, and so far there is none.

Greenville News: Some homeless in Tent City encampment create new community

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/local/2014/12/20/homeless-tent-city-encampment-create-new-community/20706337/>

Lyn Riddle

There is a new tent city in town, but it's no city at all. A settlement perhaps, where about a dozen people live in the domed tents they hauled across the street from the original Tent City that Greenville County government closed in September.

Post and Courier: 'Our community is dying' a common cry among frustrated families, activists

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20141220/PC16/141229984>

Andrew Knapp

When Tamika Myers on Tuesday night visited the mothers of two young men who were fatally shot a day earlier near Summerville, she knew exactly what they were going through. Her daughter, 23-year-old Sierra Truesdale, had been gunned down last year in a St. George-area nightclub, and since then, Myers has taken it upon herself to help other mothers of young, mostly black homicide victims cope with their losses.

Post and Courier: Unsolved homicides in Berkeley County, North Charleston put detectives, families on edge

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20141220/PC16/141229983>

Andrew Knapp

Hours after someone beckoned 15-year-old Alonza Williams to a dark street corner near Ladson and shot him, residents circulated two names of possible suspects in his killing. The names reached family members stricken with grief when Williams didn't return home from playing video games that night.

National News:

New York Times: Obama Defends Actions on Cuba and Promises Some Compromise With Congress

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/20/us/politics/obama-cuba-north-korea-news-conference.html>

Julie Hirschfeld Davis

President Obama on Friday rejected criticism that he should not have reopened American relations with Cuba because of the nation's human rights record, saying the historic thaw would give the United States more sway over the Cuban government.

Politico: Obama's Republican ally on Cuba

How a conservative Mormon became the biggest Republican Cuba advocate.

<http://www.politico.com/story/2014/12/jeff-flake-obama-cuba-113717.html#ixzz3MX9I3beg>

Lauren French

Flake, a devout Mormon, doesn't drink or smoke, so instead of puffing a cigar or sipping some rum, he paid a man a peso in Coppelia Park to indulge in a bit of gelato on one of the first of nine trips he's taken to the communist country since he first became fascinated with the place 25 years ago.

New York Times: U.S. Asks China to Help Rein In Korean Hackers

http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/21/world/asia/us-asks-china-to-help-rein-in-korean-hackers.html?partner=rss&emc=rss&_r=0

David E. Sanger, Nicole Perlroth

The Obama administration has sought China's help in recent days in blocking North Korea's ability to launch cyberattacks, the first steps toward the "proportional response" President Obama vowed to make the North pay for the assault on Sony Pictures — and as part of a campaign to issue a broader warning against future hacking, according to senior administration officials.

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