



Title: **Rutherford: Haley using threats to push her road plan to GOP**
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Rutherford: Haley using threats to push her road plan to GOP

Dems' spokesman says her proposal 'on life support'

BY CYNTHIA ROLDAN
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COLUMBIA — Gov. Nikki Haley has threatened to retaliate against House Republicans if they don't support her plan to fix the state's roads and bridges, the top House Democrat charged Thursday.

House Minority Leader Todd Rutherford made the claim during a Statehouse news conference at which House and Senate

Democrats said they had begun an Internet campaign through social media and a website to let the public know "really what her plan does."

Rutherford, of Columbia, said Democrats

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Rutherford: Haley using threats to push plan

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in the Legislature were "disturbed" to learn Haley had threatened Republican House members during their caucus meeting that if they passed anything other than her plan, she would "not only veto it, she would come after them in their own elections."

"I wasn't in the meeting, so I didn't hear it," Rutherford said. "But I've heard it from other members who told me that that's exactly what happened. We will be proud in the future to stand with our Republican colleagues when we can develop a plan, one that does not enact a tax cut for the rich and a tax increase on the poor."

Several Republican House members said Haley did not attend their caucus meeting on Tuesday, but said Thursday they had heard through other members that Haley had threatened a veto and to retaliate against any Republican who didn't vote for her

plan.

None would say when the threat was made or to whom.

In response to Rutherford's claim, Haley's spokeswoman Chaney Adams issued a written statement saying, "Liberals in the General Assembly want a massive tax hike," and Haley "will veto that — guaranteed."

"Her plan is a tax cut every year, for every South Carolinian who pays income taxes, while at the same time providing major new funds for roads," Adams said. "If others have plans that accomplish both of those things, she's happy to hear about them."

Tyler Jones, spokesman for House Democrats, said it's unusual for Haley make such a threat. It is a strategy that former Gov. Mark Sanford used to employ but "didn't work," Jones said.

"It's pretty much that's the only card she has left to play," Jones said. "She knows her plan is on life support. This is not go-

ing to end well for her."

Haley's plan would raise the tax on gasoline by 10 cents per gallon over three years while reducing the state income tax from 7 percent to 5 percent over 10 years.

It also calls for the restructuring the Department of Transportation. Haley has vowed to veto any increase in the gas tax without the other two parts of her plan.

Last week, Haley's website was rebranded as part of a new social media and digital campaign pushing her proposal. The site's Truth and Facts section says Haley's plan would cut taxes by \$1.4 billion.

But information compiled by the Department of Revenue estimates it can be as much as \$1.8 billion by the 10th year,

once it's fully implemented. Because the cuts in revenue would come from the general fund, the plan has been met with mixed reaction, while economists said the income tax cut could get consumers

spending more.

The average taxpayer will save \$689, according to the state's estimates. But 46 percent — or 1.1 million — of South Carolina's residents will receive no benefit from the plan. Those whose income exceeds \$2 million will receive a \$145,784 tax cut.

"Gov. Haley's plan is nothing but a tax increase," said Rep. James Smith, D-Columbia. "The plan essentially just gives \$150,000 tax cut to a few millionaires and billionaires, but more than 1 million hard-working, middle-class South Carolinians will only see a tax increase."

Reach **Cynthia Roldan** at 708-5891.



Poll

What do you think is the best option for the state to address fixing its crumbling roads? Go to postandcourier.com/polls to vote.

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FILE/AP

House Minority Leader Todd Rutherford, D-Columbia, said he heard from colleagues that Gov. Nikki Haley threatened to retaliate against House Republicans if they didn't support her road plan.

Title: **Berkeley sheriff's vacancy stirs buzz**Author: BY BRENDA RINDGE and DAVE MUNDAY brindge@postandcourier.com dmunday@postandcourier.com

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Berkeley sheriff's vacancy stirs buzz

Candidates might
announce Saturday
in 'wide-open race'

BY BRENDA RINDGE
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With news of Berkeley County Sheriff Dwayne DeWitt's resignation settling in, rumors started swirling Thursday over who might become the county's next top cop.

"I believe the race will be wide open," said Berkeley County Republican Party Chairman Josh Whitley. "There will be a lot of interest in people running."

DeWitt resigned Wednesday, more than a month after he was arrested

on a DUI charge in Goose Creek after allegedly leaving the scene of an accident. His county pickup was seen speeding from a police car at 108 mph after he fled

from a crash site, according to authorities. He had been sheriff for 20 years.

The county Senate delegation recommended Calvitt "Chab" Clarke, 59, a retired SLED agent who lives in the Summerville area, to Gov. Nikki Haley as a possible temporary replacement. Her appointment would serve until a special election is scheduled and could not run for office.

Clarke retired from SLED in 2010 but was reactivated to serve on former Lt. Gov. Glenn McConnell's security detail until McConnell became president of the College of Charleston last year.

"I am quite honored that the del-

egation would put forth my name for consideration," Clarke said Thursday. "If the governor does appoint me, I plan on just trying to regain integrity and character in that office and assure Berkeley County citizens that somebody is providing leadership."

Sen. Larry Grooms, R-Charleston, said Thursday local senators wanted to find someone who would be a "caretaker" for the position, and "Chab would do a good job and would only do it for a short time."

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Sheriff's vacancy stirs buzz

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The dates for the special election have not yet been set, officials said, but according to state law, filing could be opened Feb. 20 to March 2, with a primary May 5 and the election June 9. The Berkeley County Voter Registration & Elections office has not been officially notified of the vacancy.

Whitley said he has fielded four phone calls recently from possible candidates for the post but declined to identify the callers.

"As chairman I cannot endorse or get involved in the campaign, but the party will

make sure that all candidates who are running will be treated fairly," Whitley said.

He said candidates could announce at the group's monthly breakfast on Saturday. The party will also likely hold a candidate forum before the election.

Names being discussed in the community are Berkeley

County Chief Deputy Rick Ollic, retired Highway Patrol officer Marty Housand, North Charleston police officer Brian Adams and Moncks Corner Police Chief Chad Caldwell, according to political insiders.

Housand confirmed that he plans to run.

"I feel like it's a time that I need to step up for Berkeley

County," he said. "I want to bring trust back to the county and the Sheriff's Office. I want people to be able to trust law enforcement in our county and to build that professionalism back up."

Ollic, who assumed the role of interim sheriff when DeWitt stepped down, said he has not made a decision.

"I'm truly just trying to fo-

cus on the agency and the position that I'm in right now," he said. "I haven't had a chance to ponder (running) until I speak with my family. At this point, I'm not ready to make a decision."

Adams, who ran against DeWitt in the

Republican primary last year, did not return phone calls Thursday, but several people have volunteered via his Facebook page to help him campaign.

Caldwell, a former SLED investigator and North Charleston Police chief, was not available Thursday.

Melissa Watson, chairman of the Berkeley County Democratic Party, said she has not had calls from prospective candidates, "but we are actively seeking someone."

Jeremy Borden contributed to this story. Reach **Brenda Rindge** at 937-5713 or @brindge on Twitter. Reach **Dave Munday** at 937-5553.



Wayne DeWitt had served as Berkeley County sheriff for 20 years.



Housand



Caldwell



Ollic

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COLUMN

The moral test of government in S.C.



PHIL NOBLE

SC New Democrats president

This week Gov. Nikki Haley was sworn in for her second four-year term and a new legislature convened in the Statehouse. This seems like an appropriate time to look back on their record over the last four years.

Haley delivered a short Inaugural Address in which she laid out her ideas for the next four years. This caused me to begin to think about the standards and measures we use to evaluate what government does and what it ought to do.

In short: What is the test by which we should judge what government should do?

In thinking about what would be a good standard, I began by Googling a number of terms, such as "economic test of government," "accountability test of government," "effectiveness test of government," and "moral test of government."

Most of these searches turned up lots of items, none of which were particularly useful. The last search turned up a quote from Hubert Humphrey that I had heard long ago but forgotten.

"The moral test of government," Humphrey said, "is how that government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of

life, the elderly; and those who are in the shadows of life, the sick, the needy and the handicapped."

What a wonderful idea – and a wonderful standard to measure what government is doing. So let's apply this standard and the standard of her own words in her Inaugural Address to Haley's past four years in office.

Test one: "... those who are in the dawn of life, the children."

In her Inaugural Address, Haley said, "In the South Carolina I dream of, a daughter of Dillon starts each day with the same hope and possibilities as a son of Greenville."

Last month, Haley filed a motion with the SC Supreme Court asking them to overturn their recent decision in the Abbeville education case. After 21 years of litigation, the S.C. Supreme Court ruled that students in the plaintiff districts were not even receiving the "minimally adequate" education to which they are entitled under previous Supreme Court rulings, and ordered the governor and the legislature to act expeditiously to begin to fix the problem.



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One of the plaintiff counties where the schools were ruled so inadequate was ... Dillon.

After the above line in Haley's address, she said, "In that South Carolina, a single mother of two feeling stuck in her job knows that if she wants it, a better opportunity is waiting just around the corner."

But for that "single mother of two feeling stuck in her job," the court-ordered child support from her children's father is vital. And the Haley administration has failed to ensure she gets it.

South Carolina is the only state in the union that does not have an adequate computer system to track the earnings of "deadbeat dads" across county lines to ensure that they pay their child support. In fairness to Haley, the system has been broken since before she came to office but in her four years she has not given it sufficient priority to get it fixed. Every other state in the union has figured it out, but not South Carolina and we have paid more than \$100 million in Federal fines for this failure.

Yes, you read that right – more than \$100 million in fines ... and the problem continues today under Haley.

Test Two: "... those who are in the shadows of life, the sick ..."

Haley didn't say anything about health care in her Inaugural Address, nothing at all. This is really not too surprising given what she has done, or more importantly has not done, on health care in the last four years

What she has done is turn down \$11 billion in federal funding to expand Medicaid in South Carolina. Yes, that's a "b" as in billion. This is not the place for a long discussion of federal health care policy, but the simple fact is that this \$11 billion would have provided health care for 500,000 of our friends and neighbors who need health care and can't afford it.

And this \$11 billion would have created tens of thousands of jobs for health care and construction

workers and a whole lot more. Her actions did not raise or lower our taxes by one penny, but it did ensure that the tax money we paid into the system to fund the expansion went to other states – she gave our health care dollars to other states.

Test Three: "... those that are needy..." Haley didn't say anything about the needy in her Inaugural Address. But she will have to say something soon – in a court of law.

Last week, she and the state of South Carolina were sued over widespread deficiencies in the child foster-care system. The suit says that the system has endangered thousands of children, many of whom were dehumanized, belittled and abused. The suit received national media attention; National Public Radio cited "years of high-profile problems including the death of five children."

Test Four: "... those that are

handicapped". Once again, Haley didn't say anything in her Inaugural Address about these folks, nor did she say anything about the recent suit where Judge Michael Baxley ruled against the state prison system for its treatment of the mentally handicapped.

The Judge's ruling detailed the treatment of the handicapped in S.C. prisons: "... inmates have died in the S.C. Department of Corrections for lack of basic mental health care and hundreds more remain substantially at risk for serious physical injury, mental decompensation, and profound permanent mental illness." That is the proper, antiseptic legal language of a judge; this is the language of one journalist describing one case: "... mentally ill inmates are routinely caged (naked) for days in their own feces and urine, having to literally eat where they expletive)."

And what has Haley done or said to deal with these problems since the Judge's ruling? Nothing that we have been able to find.

So, I'll leave it to you, the people of South Carolina, to make your own evaluation of Haley's score on the moral test of government.

One thing she did say: "It's a great day in South Carolina."

The question is, for whom?

Phil Noble is a businessman in Charleston and President of the C New Democrat.