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To:
Date: 1/12/2016 8:10:01 AM
Subject: Morning Clips – Tuesday, January 12, 2016

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Governor Nikki Haley News:

The Atlantic: The Appeal of Nikki Haley

The South Carolina governor may be the perfect messenger for the Republican party.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/01/nikki-haley-republican-response/423645/>

Clare Foran

Late Tuesday evening, South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley will spell out the Republican Party's vision for the future of America. It's not difficult to see why House Speaker Paul Ryan and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell picked Haley to deliver the GOP response to President Obama's final State of the Union address.

Note: The following year, Haley called for the flag to be removed from the state capitol grounds after a gunman killed nine people at a black church in Charleston. She framed her decision in personal terms, saying "I could not look my kids in the face and justify that flag anymore."

Yahoo Politics: Nikki Haley is the opposite of Donald Trump. That's why she's delivering this year's SOTU response.

<https://www.yahoo.com/politics/nikki-haley-is-the-opposite-1341329225973814.html>

Andrew Romano

Every year, the president of the United States comes to the House of Representatives, stands behind the speaker's rostrum, and delivers his State of the Union address — and every year, the opposing party selects one of its rising stars to appear on live TV immediately afterward and respond.

Post and Courier: Outside South Carolina, Republicans get ready for Gov. Nikki Haley

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160111/PC1603/160119839>

Emma Dumain

South Carolinians know Gov. Nikki Haley's political record, and establishment Republicans are familiar with the qualities that make her a potential vice presidential nominee. But when Haley delivers the primetime rebuttal to President Barack Obama's State of the Union address Tuesday, she'll be speaking to millions of Americans who may only have heard her name, if that.

The State: SC Gov. Nikki Haley will be in State of Union spotlight

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/politics-government/white-house/article54203560.html>

Andrew Shain

S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley, a rising political star who gained respect for her handling of one of 2015's worst tragedies, will talk about solutions to the state's and nation's challenges in a nationally televised address Tuesday. The Lexington Republican will deliver the GOP response to Democratic President Barack Obama's last State of the Union.

Greenville News: Group asks that Haley veto any bill with gas tax hike

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/2016/01/11/group-asks-haley-veto-any-bill-gas-tax-hike/78622634/>

Tim Smith

A limited government group that last year campaigned against any increase in South Carolina's gas tax is asking Gov. Nikki Haley to veto any bill that includes a gas tax hike. Americans For Prosperity South Carolina made their request Monday, the day before lawmakers return to work and begin debating legislation to fund road and bridge repairs.

Wall Street Journal (Video): State of the Union GOP Response: Who is Nikki Haley?

<http://www.wsj.com/video/state-of-the-union-gop-response-who-is-nikki-haley/26FF6C29-857C-4879-8E4E->

Associated Press: Feds recommend SC do away with medical building regulations

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=PupHL4Re

Meg Kinnard

The federal government on Monday recommended South Carolina repeal requirements that health facilities get state permission for many kinds of construction and expansion, backing up something Gov. Nikki Haley has sought for years.

Note: In a letter and attached statement to Haley, who sought officials' opinion in November, the Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission wrote that laws requiring something known as a certificate of need impede competition and make such projects more expensive.

S.C. General Assembly News:

The State: MORNING BUZZ: 2016 S.C. legislative session kicks off Tuesday

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/politics-columns-blogs/the-buzz/article54229395.html>

Cassie Cope

S.C. lawmakers return to Columbia Tuesday to tackle top issues. In the S.C. Senate, passing a plan to repair roads will be a top priority. However, gas-tax advocates face a \$1.2 billion hurdle in additional money that lawmakers are tasked with deciding how to spend. Senators will also be mourning the loss of state Sen. Billy O'Dell, R-Abbeville, who died last week.

Note: Meanwhile, Republican Gov. Nikki Haley will be preparing Tuesday to deliver the GOP response to President Barack Obama's last State of the Union. The address will be live streamed at www.gop.gov/SOTU.

Associated Press: South Carolina lawmaker would prohibit traffic ticket quotas

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=LKBzu5Ts

Seanna Adcox

A South Carolina lawmaker who doubles as an attorney for the family of a police shooting victim is offering solutions to what advocates call "predatory policing" policies, which pressure officers to generate revenue by ticketing citizens for minor offenses. Rep. Justin Bamberg wants to prohibit law enforcement agencies in the state from setting traffic ticket quotas, or evaluating officers by the number of citations they write.

Post and Courier: DHEC chief recommends law changes to avoid future issues with abortion clinics

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160111/PC1603/160119837>

Cynthia Roldan

South Carolina lawmakers should amend state law to clarify that selling and accepting donations for fetal tissue is illegal, the head of the state's health and environmental agency said Monday. It was one of several recommendations Department of Health and Environmental Control Director Catherine Heigel made to the House Legislative Oversight Committee, a panel that has been looking into the dealings of state agencies with Planned Parenthood.

Index-Journal: 'He did it standing tall' -- Hundreds celebrate life of state Sen. Billy O'Dell

<http://indexjournal.com/news/Hundreds-celebrate-late-state-senator-s-life-during-memorial-service>

Colin Riddle

A tight-knit group of state senators again marched in unison to lay to rest a friend and colleague, state Sen. Billy O'Dell, on Monday at First Presbyterian Church in Greenwood. A Ware Shoals native and Greenwood resident, O'Dell died last week at his home from heart complications. He was 77.

Associated Press: 2016 legislative session kicks off in Columbia

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=hrJTV2Sj

Legislators are back in Columbia for South Carolina's January-to-June legislative session. The House and Senate will gavel in the 2016 session at noon Tuesday. Legislators' top priorities this session will be funding improvements to the state's crumbling roads and bridges, providing flood relief following last fall's historic rainfall and addressing a court order to improve public schools.

The State: Lourie era draws to a close at the State House

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/politics-columns-blogs/the-buzz/article54178865.html>

Cassie Cope

State Sen. Joel Lourie, D-Richland, plans to start his 18th and final S.C. legislative session with a phone call from his mother, wishing him good luck. It's been a tradition of the past 17 years. Then, Lourie will head to the State House complex for a meeting with fellow senators to begin working on a compromise to raise money to repair the state's crumbling roads and bridges.

S.C. Political News:

Post and Courier: Seven candidates make GOP main stage for debate Thursday in North Charleston
<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160111/PC1603/160119830>

Schuyler Kropf

Based on polling in Iowa, New Hampshire and nationally, the top qualifying candidates in order are: businessman Donald Trump, Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, Florida Sen. Marco Rubio, retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson, New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, and Kasich.

The State: Sanders campaign launching HBCU tour at SC State

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/politics-columns-blogs/the-buzz/article54172350.html>

Jamie Self

Democratic presidential hopeful Bernie Sanders' campaign will visit Orangeburg on Thursday, kicking off a tour of historically black colleges and universities at S.C. State University. Professor, writer, and national civil rights activist Cornel West will appear on Sanders' behalf to discuss free tuition for public colleges and universities and criminal justice reform.

Opinion / Editorial Roundup:

Index-Journal: Legislature underway: No great expectations

<http://indexjournal.com/opinion/editorial/Legislature-underway--No-great-expectations>

Editorial

If attending this year's legislative workshop in Columbia was supposed to result in the media assuring South Carolinians' that the 2016 legislative session would somehow be vastly different and far better than 2015, then it failed. For some years now, media are invited to the nearly all-day workshop that precedes the kickoff of the new session.

Times and Democrat: Road repairs to test unity in Legislature

http://thetandd.com/news/road-repairs-to-test-unity-in-legislature/article_54914157-d278-586c-be2d-9e20c491afe9.html

Editorial

House Speaker Jay Lucas says the Legislature's unity in removal of the Confederate flag has not been stressed enough by media evaluating the unprecedented events that followed the massacre in Charleston which claimed the life of Sen. Clementa Pinckney and eight others at Emanuel AME Church.

Note: DOT reforms and the issue of matching an increase in the gas tax with a reduction in income taxes led Davis to delay legislation that most thought would pass in 2015. The income tax reduction is endorsed by Gov. Nikki Haley and others.

The State: A changed South Carolina has new needs and expectations for Legislature

<http://www.thestate.com/opinion/opn-columns-blogs/cindi-ross-scope/article54113080.html>

Cindi Ross Scope

THE 2016 GENERAL Assembly opens today in a South Carolina that is markedly different than a year ago — even than six months ago, when the 2015 regular session ended. We have had our hearts ripped out by an evil man-child of our own making — and our faith in humanity, and in God, restored by the amazing grace of his victims.

Post and Courier: Stop delaying Iran sanctions

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160112/PC1002/160119825>

Editorial

It is reassuring to see that influential federal lawmakers in both parties agree that Iran's missile program is still dangerous and should be the subject of economic sanctions. Where they don't agree, it seems, is on timing. In this case, the sooner the better.

South Carolina News:

Florence Morning News: Pee Dee disaster recovery continues for Shwedo, FEMA

http://www.scnw.com/news/local/article_d8ebb62c-b8bd-11e5-a5cf-830be40b890a.html

Jessica Imbimbo

Disaster Recovery Coordinator Kevin Shwedo's passion to help those in need flooded the room Monday when he spoke to the Rotary Club of Florence at Victors. Shwedo talked about the state's path to recovery and his method of distributing relief efforts, saying his job is to "accelerate recovery and do it apolitically." Shwedo focuses his relief efforts on populations that have been determined as the most vulnerable.

Greenville News: BMW volume surpasses 400,000

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/money/business/2016/01/11/bmw-volume-surpasses-400000/78632640/>

Rudolph Bell

With annual volume exceeding 400,000 vehicles, the BMW plant near Greer now makes more cars per year than any other factory in the German automaker's global network. And there's more to come. BMW said Monday that volume at the plant would grow to 450,000 vehicles by the end of 2016. BMW said the plant made 400,904 X models last year, a 15 percent increase over 2014.

Greenville News: S.C. drivers can still use licenses as airport ID for now

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/2016/01/11/sc-drivers-can-still-use-licenses-airport-id-now/78501942/>

South Carolinians will still be able to use driver's licenses as identification to fly out of airports in South Carolina and to gain entrance into federal buildings and military bases for now, but that could change if the state doesn't enhance its driver's license security enough to please the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Associated Press: USC begins King Day events with Sen. Kimpson breakfast

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=M9YlpU3K

South Carolina State Sen. Marlon Kimpson of Charleston is the featured speaker at the University of South Carolina's kickoff event commemorating Martin Luther King Day. The Charleston attorney speaks Tuesday at the annual breakfast held at Williams-Brice Stadium.

Local News:

Island Packet: New year, same result for county economic development plan

<http://www.islandpacket.com/news/business/article54209905.html#storylink=cpy>

Zach Murdock

The first attempt in the new year to jumpstart Beaufort County's economic development dreams fizzled and vanished Monday afternoon. County Councilman Stu Rodman had hoped to compel leaders to decide whether to partner with an existing economic development group next month, but the idea drew the scorn of several of his peers and local mayors, who argued such a move is premature.

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