

Title: **USC study: S.C. economy strong, stable amid political uncertainty**
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USC study: S.C. economy strong, stable amid political uncertainty

From release

Steady economic gains are expected for South Carolina in 2017 despite the political uncertainty that comes with a new governor and U.S. president, according to University of South Carolina economists at the Darla Moore School of Business.

The gains build on positive growth across most of the Palmetto State's industries and regions, the economists said.

Doug Woodward, director of research, and Joseph Von Nessen, a research economist, presented their 2017 forecast last Thursday to more than 150 of the state's business and community leaders at the 36th Annual Economic Outlook Conference. They reported that the state is poised to build on its existing momentum and to continue generating new jobs and rising incomes for South Carolinians.

They expect job creation – the single best predictor of economic performance – to register 2.6 percent growth in 2017.

"South Carolina's economy is growing at a healthy pace," said Von Nessen. "And we expect the state to continue to build on this momentum in 2017."

He said the South Carolina's economy also is in the midst of a "paradigm shift," which will bring new challenges for the state in the coming year.

"For the last several years, our rate of economic growth has been accelerating, but in

2016 it leveled off and is now growing at a constant rate," Von Nessen said. "In addition, the labor market has strengthened considerably. Our unemployment rate has dropped to 4.7 percent. And although this is good news for workers, it also means that employers are now struggling to find qualified employees to fill new positions. Going forward, if we want to achieve a higher rate of economic growth, this skills gap will have to be addressed."

Tackling a skills gap will likely be an important part of the next governor's mission.

"Gov. Haley came into office with a priority to generate employment opportunities for South Carolinians during a period of high unemployment following the Great Recession," Von Nessen said. "Lt. Gov. McMaster, by contrast, will likely inherit a healthier economy in which unemployment is relatively low, and a

skills gap that prevents many workers from being hired."

McMaster will become governor if Haley, as expected, is confirmed as Donald Trump's ambassador to the United Nations.

The economists said two industry sectors led the broad-based growth in 2016.

The manufacturing sector and the professional and busi-

ness services sector were the fastest growing industries this year, having driven high-wage job creation throughout the state and supporting high rates of consumer spending.

"We are seeing strong job growth within the professional service sectors as well as within aerospace, automotive and tire manufacturing," he said. "Each of these industries is creating jobs that pay significantly above the state average. In turn, these workers are spending their wages in South Carolina and thus creating additional economic activity."

They also identified the construction sector as a bright spot.

Construction played a key role in South Carolina's economic growth in 2016, especially along the coastal regions of the state. In addition to the

overall strengthening of housing demand, which experienced lackluster growth from 2010 to 2015, the construction industry was propelled by rebuilding efforts going toward repairing damage from the historic 2015 flood.

In fact, Woodward and Von Nessen estimate that more than 20,000 temporary S.C. jobs will have been created in the construction and retail sectors by the time the rebuilding process is completed. They also expect a similar, though smaller, stimulus in the construction industry to



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occur in 2017 as a result of Hurricane Matthew. The economists anticipate the size of the labor force to continue to grow in 2017 as job opportunities continue to rise, which implies marginal decreases in the unemployment rate over the next year. The Moore School forecast outlines an unemployment rate over the next 12 months that will drop slightly from its current rate of 4.7 percent to approximately 4.5 percent. However, total personal income is expected to grow at 4.8 percent in 2017 – a rate comparable to its growth rate in 2016.

Title: **S.C. Supreme Court asked to settle Lt. Gov. vacancy dispute**
 Author:
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S.C. Supreme Court asked to settle Lt. Gov. vacancy dispute

COLUMBIA (AP) — A South Carolina senator wants the state Supreme Court to rule on whether Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster could pick his replacement if Gov. Nikki Haley becomes President-elect Donald Trump's U.N. ambassador.

Sen. Tom Davis, R-Beaufort, asked the state's high court Monday to settle a discrepancy on whether a constitutional amendment changing the lines of succession is in effect. If it is, Senate President Pro Tem Hugh Leatherman could easily keep his powerful leadership post, as the Senate's leader would not be called on to fill the largely ceremonial position.

Regardless, Leatherman has refused to become lieutenant governor. His office

had no immediate comment Monday.

Both a 2012 law that approved asking voters about the changes and the opening clause of the ballot question itself specified they were to begin "with the general election of 2018." But a law the Legislature passed in 2014 to ratify voters' approval created separate start dates for the various changes. While it changed the constitution to say candidates for governor and lieutenant

governor will run on the same ticket beginning in 2018, it allowed a vacancy in the lieutenant governor's office to immediately be filled by the governor.

Davis argues that disregards both the 2012 law and voters' intentions.

"This goes to the very

heart of constitutional governance," Davis writes in asking the justices to directly take the case. "The people clearly intended" for the changes to take effect after the November 2018 election.

He wants the high court to rule quickly.

The lieutenant governor's job will become open if the U.S. Senate confirms Trump's selection of Haley for U.N. ambassador, since McMaster would ascend to the governor's office. If McMaster can appoint his successor, Leatherman won't have to do anything to remain South Carolina's most powerful politician.

MORE ONLINE

Read the full story at theitem.com.

Title: **mcland farms celebrates centennial**
 Author: BY ARTIE ARVIDSON aarvidson@h?;"svillemessen@erxom
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McLeod Farms celebrates centennial

BY ARTIE ARVIDSON

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McLeod Farms celebrated its 100th anniversary on Thursday night at the McLeod Farms Roadside Market between Hartsville and McBee. Hundreds of friends, fellow farmers and other well-wishers gathered to help them celebrate.

McLeod Farms is the birthplace of Mac's Pride peaches. The McLeod family produces peaches, strawberries and other fruits and vegetables in Chesterfield County, near McBee.

As part of the celebration, Kemp McLeod, owner, received the Order of the Palmetto, the highest honor bestowed upon a civilian in South Carolina for his contributions to the state and farming from Gov. Nikki Haley. The family was also presented a resolution from the South Carolina Senate and House of Representatives. The awards were presented by state Sen. Vincent Sheheen and Rep. Richard "Richie" Yow. McLeod Farms received the official designation of a Century Farm.

Speakers during the evening described the family as hardworking, dedicated and passionate about farming.

Harry Ott, representing S.C. Farm Bureau, said the McLeods have prospered and lasted 100 years by putting "faith, family and farm" first.

Also sharing testimony about the McLeod family were S.C. Department of Agriculture Committee Member Martin Eubanks, and Tom Dobbins, director of Clemson University's Cooperative Extension Service.

Eubanks said he has worked with Kemp McLeod for 31 years, and the word that best describes him is passion.

"You have made South Carolina very proud," Dobbins said. He said the family has established Mac's Pride peaches and made them known all over the world.

Speaking about the impact the family has had on South Carolina agriculture was Phil Perry, Clemson Connections.

"Farming is what they do; farming is what they love," he said.

A McLeod family representative gave a brief history of McLeod Farms, beginning with Hector R. McLeod in the 1800s to present day operations. Hector moved to McBee in 1910. In 1912 he purchased 115 acres of land. With the help of his brother, he planted peaches, beginning McLeod Farms. Five generations of McLeods have farmed the land and a sixth generation is already being groomed in the family business.

McLeod Farms has not only been a place for grow-

ing, harvesting and distributing fruits and vegetables but a place for young people in the community to work and learn about agriculture. More than 5,000 young children a year are introduced to agriculture through school trips to the farm.

Speaking on behalf of the McLeod children, Spencer McLeod said that there is not one of them who have not given up a summer to work on the farm. He said they have all had a role at some point.

"What we thought was sacrifice was a life-long lesson," he said.

"One word that describes my dad is passionate," he said "Daddy has a passion for agriculture."

He said his mother has always been behind the scenes, making everything work.

"If daddy is passionate, then mama is patient," he said.

Kemp McLeod said Thursday night that he was representing his family who has been in the

farming business for 100 years. He said this is about the trials and tribulations that his family has faced to survive these 100 years.

"We think we are in control, but it is God who is always in control," he said. He said McLeod Farms has withstood many challenges. That it has taught his family to work hard.

"Our work is not finished," he said.

In receiving the Order of the Palmetto, McLeod said, "I am humbled by your generosity," I didn't expect this award tonight."

The McLeod Farms Centennial Host Committee presented a check for \$10,000 to Clemson University for the Tony Melton Scholarship from McLeod Farms. McLeod Farms has pledged \$50,000 to Clemson over the next five years. The committee presented the check as the beginning of a match to the McLeod contribution.

Nashville singer/songwriter Doug McCormick, a son-in-law, entertained during the evening.

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ARDIE ARVIDSON/HARTSVILLE MESSENGER

Alexander C. 'Kemp' McLeod Jr. was presented the Order of the Palmetto, the highest honor bestowed upon a civilian in South Carolina, on Thursday night during a 100th anniversary celebration of McLeod Farms in McBee.

Title: **What is justice?**
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What is justice?

In pictures and words in Western society, we understand justice to be blind, meted without favor to rich or poor, powerful or powerless, famous or average Joe.

"Justice for all," we recite in the Pledge of Allegiance. The concept of equal justice is a foundation of American jurisprudence. Everyone is supposed to be treated the same in the eyes of the law if they run afoul of it.

So what do we make of the concept of justice when we read of the mistrial last week of Michael Slager, the former North Charleston police officer who shot to death an unarmed man fleeing from a traffic stop?

In our legal system, justice on earth is done when a jury of peers establishes whether someone accused of a crime is guilty or innocent after hearing the facts of a case. Depending on the verdict, the accused is punished or set free.

More than anything, justice in our court system is a process. And yes, it should be a blind process that ensures everyone is treated the same.

But that's theory. Data show black or poor Americans often face far different outcomes, such as higher arrest and incarceration rates, than white or rich Americans for a multitude of reasons — deeper pockets, better lawyers, cultural assumptions, cozy relationships and more.

Celebrated African-American poet Langston Hughes described in four lines what many black Americans have felt for years — that justice in their world is best described as police looking at "just us" to find perpetrators of crimes. Hughes wrote in 1932:

That Justice is a blind goddess
 Is a thing to which we black are wise:
 Her bandage hides two festering sores
 That once perhaps were eyes.

The mistrial declared in the case of Michael Slager leaves justice undone in the shooting death of Walter Scott. Neither guilt nor innocence has been decided by a jury. The process is not yet completed.

So what are we to make of this statement by Gov. Nikki Haley following the declaration of a mistrial in the Scott case? She said: "It is my understanding that there will be, as quickly as possible, a new trial where the Scott family and all of South Carolina will hopefully receive the closure that a verdict brings.

"Justice is not always immediate, but we must all have faith that it will be served - I certainly do. I urge South Carolinians — in Charleston and across our state - to continue along the path we have walked these last two years: a path of grace, faith, love and understanding. That is who we are, and who I know we will continue to be."

On one hand, the governor seems to suggest that people should have patience — that the judicial process will bring a verdict in the case in due time.

But can't it be interpreted another, subtler way? That Haley

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is sending a message to the Scott family and black community at large that she thinks justice “will be served” in the next trial through a guilty verdict?

Under this interpretation, Haley's statement poses a challenge for our courts. Assuming a guilty verdict before the process is complete could contribute to an erosion of the public's trust in the judiciary. Since 2009, the public's trust in the federal judiciary has dropped from 76 percent to 53 percent, according to a 2015 Gallup Poll.

Such an assumption also poses a challenge for law enforcement officers, who could interpret Haley's statement as inconsiderate of facts brought out in the trial that might mitigate or explain Slager's behavior.

In our country if any jury is to “do justice,” it is to treat someone accused fairly and consider all facts and evidence before rendering a verdict. If guilty, they are to be punished, which is why a blindfolded Lady Liberty also holds a sword.

“Justice” is delivered through a process. And that's why we need to be patient as we wait for the outcome of a new trial for Michael Slager.

Not everyone will be happy with what happens eventually in Slager's case. And if the jury gets it wrong in your view, at least he'll face justice again — at the Pearly Gates.

Andy Brack is editor and publisher of Statehouse Report. Have a comment?
 Send to: feedback@statehousereport.com.



Andy
Brack

Title: **Trump lags predecessors on diversity as he picks Cabinet**
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Trump lags predecessors on diversity as he picks Cabinet

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — As Donald Trump fills out his Cabinet, it's looking less like America's population and more like the world Trump has always orbited: wealthy, white, male-dominated and business-minded.

Trump, who railed against what he called "politically correct crap" during his no-holds-barred presidential campaign, is on track to create the least diverse Cabinet in a quarter-century.

The uniformity is particularly striking in the president-elect's picks for the highest-profile Cabinet and White House jobs. While he has selected a handful of women and minorities for lower-profile posts, his choices for the big four Cabinet slots — Treasury, State, Defense and Justice — and his top White House jobs — chief of staff, national security adviser and senior adviser — are all white men.

So, too, will white men run the departments of Commerce, Energy, Homeland Security and Health and Human Services as well as the Environmental Protection Agency.

Should Trump be unable to complete his term as president, the top eight people in the line of succession are white men from the Cabinet and Congress. That number could grow to 12 if he picks a white man for Agriculture secretary. North Dakota Sen. Heidi Heitkamp, a Democrat, is the only woman believed to be in the mix.

Unlike recent predecessors in both parties, Trump so far has no Hispanics in the most prominent positions. Based on the current top contenders for remaining jobs, it appears unlikely he'll have a Hispanic in his Cabinet or

in any top White House job.

Trump spokesman Jason Miller has pledged that the president-elect's team will be "very broad and diverse, both with the Cabinet and the administration."

But Trump himself seems to have different priorities: "I want people that made a fortune! Because now they're negotiating for you, OK?" he said, at a rally in Des Moines, Iowa, last week.

Even if he appoints women or minorities to three remaining Cabinet-level posts — Veterans Affairs, Agriculture and the Office of Management and Budget — Trump will lag behind the past three administrations in creating a demographically diverse White House.

President Bill Clinton installed 10 women and minorities into Cabinet-level jobs during his first

term, part of an effort to create an inclusive image for his new administration. Other presidents have followed suit: George W. Bush had nine in his first term, and Barack Obama broke records with 13, according to an analysis of data compiled by University of California at Berkeley law school professor Anne Joseph O'Connell.

So far, Trump has selected five non-white men or women for the 16 posts he's filled: Neurosurgeon Ben Carson for secretary of Housing and Urban Development, South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley as U.N. ambassador, former Bush administration Labor Secretary Elaine Chao for Transportation, activist Betsy DeVos as Education secretary and World Wrestling executive Linda McMahon to head the Small Business Administration.

"The Cabinet choices are the

most visible. And, consequently, to the extent that he faces pressure on diversity, it plays out here," said O'Connell, who added that she expects even less diversity in lower-level government posts.

Republicans say it's important to consider the entirety of Trump's government, not just the roles at the top. For example, the president-elect has included

several women and minorities on his list of candidates for the Supreme Court.

"It matters that government as a whole is representative of America," said Republican strategist Sara Fagen, former White House political director for George W. Bush. "I don't think this says something about him and his values."

Raw numbers don't tell the whole story when it comes to diversity in government and who wields influence in an administration. While Obama put together the most diverse Cabinet ever, some women in his White House still felt marginalized. The concerns reached the president himself during his first year in office, leading him to hold a dinner with senior female advisers to discuss his administration's boys-club image.

Some of Trump's most powerful aides are women. Kellyanne Conway served as his third and final campaign manager and remains a senior adviser. Trump's daughter Ivanka consults on most major decisions and is expected to continue doing so once her father is in the White House.

Shortly after the election, Trump met with BET founder Robert Johnson, who suggested

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the White House create an office of minority and urban affairs. Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law and influential adviser, was in the meeting and told Johnson it was something the transition team was already considering.

"It ended with me telling him, 'I want to be helpful to you if I've got an open door to make my case that I think are in the best interests of African-Americans,'

Johnson said. "Everyone nodded they were willing to listen."

Earlier this year, an Associated Press review of the upper ranks of the Trump Organization revealed few, if any, black executives. Other minorities were also scarce at that level.

Trump had a rocky relationship with women and minorities during his presidential campaign. His victory over Democrat Hillary Clinton hinged almost

entirely on white voters. Only about 2 percent of Trump voters were black and about 7 percent were Hispanic, according to exit polls conducted by Edison Research for the AP and television networks. Nearly 9 in 10 were white.

Less than half of Trump voters — about 47 percent — were female, the exit polls show, compared with 59 percent of Clinton voters.

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Charleston Church Shooting

Roof convicted of all charges

The Associated Press

CHARLESTON — Dylann Roof was convicted Thursday in the chilling slaughter of nine black church members who had welcomed him to their Bible study, a devastating crime in a country that was already deeply embroiled in racial tension.

The same federal jury that found Roof guilty of all 33 counts will reconvene next month to hear more testimony and weigh whether to sentence him to death. As the verdict was read, Roof just stared ahead,

much as he did the entire trial. Family members of victims held hands and squeezed one another's arms. One woman nodded her head every time the clerk said "guilty."

Roof, 22, told FBI agents he wanted to bring back segregation or perhaps start a race war with the slayings. Instead, the single biggest change to emerge from the June 17, 2015, killings was the removal of the Confederate flag from the South Carolina Statehouse, where it had flown for 50 years over the Capitol or on the grounds. Roof

appeared with the flag in several photos in a racist manifesto.

The shooting happened just months after Walter Scott, an unarmed black man, was killed by white police officer Michael Slager when he fled a traffic stop in North Charleston. Police shootings around the county have heightened tensions between black communities and the law enforcement agencies that patrol them, sometimes resulting in protests and riots.

In Roof's confession to the FBI, the gunman said

he carried out the killings after researching "black on white crime" on the internet. He said he chose a church because that setting posed little danger to him.

Roof told the judge again Thursday that he wanted to act as his own attorney during the penalty phase. He will also face a death penalty trial in state court on nine murder charges.

In closing arguments, Assistant U.S. Attorney Nathan Williams mocked Roof for calling himself brave in

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Roof

From Page 1A

his hate-filled journal and during his confession, saying the real bravery came from the victims who tried to stop him as he fired 77 bullets at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church.

"Those people couldn't see the hatred in his heart any more than they could see the .45-caliber handgun and the eight magazines concealed around his waist," Williams said.

Defense lawyer David Bruck conceded Roof committed the slayings, but he asked jurors to look into his head and see what caused him to become so full of hatred, calling him a suicidal loner who never

grasped the gravity of what he did.

The defense put up no witnesses during the seven-day trial. They tried to present evidence about his mental state, but the judge ruled that it did not have anything to do with Roof's guilt or innocence.

Roof was just imitating what he saw on the internet and believed he had to give his life to "a fight to the death between white people and black people that only he" could see and act on, Bruck said.

The prosecutor's 50-minute closing argument filled the court with tension. At times, the prosecutor raised his voice,

saying Roof was a cold, calculated killer. Some family members of victims dabbed their eyes with tissues, and jurors appeared emotional when Williams, after apologizing to them, showed crime scene photos of each person killed alongside a small picture of them while alive.

Those pictures included the Rev. Clementa Pinckney, 41, Emanuel AME's pastor and a state senator; Myra Thompson, 59, who taught Bible study that night; Cynthia Hurd, 54, a librarian who stayed to support Thompson; and Depayne Middleton-Doctor, 49, who friends said sang like an angel.

Also slain were Daniel

"Dapper Dan" Simmons, 74, nicknamed for his shiny shoes and fine hats; Sharonda Coleman-Singleton, 45, a high school track coach; Ethel Lance, 70, the church sexton who

kept the bathrooms and building immaculately clean; Susie Jackson, 87, who sang in the choir; and Tywanza Sanders, 26, Jackson's nephew and an aspiring poet.

Three people survived the shooting. One survivor, Felicia Sanders, wouldn't say if she wanted Roof put to death, but said he was a coward because he refused to look at her as she testified.

She plans a simple ges-

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ture to honor her friends the rest of her life. "I wear a smile, because if you look at the pictures of all nine, they're smiling," Sanders said.

The prosecutor said the good of all those faithful churchgoers prevailed over Roof's hatred.

"This defendant chose to take their lives. He chose to break their bodies. But he does not get to choose who they were," Williams said.

In a lengthy recording

played earlier at trial, Roof told FBI agents he picked Mother Emanuel because of its historic significance in the black community. The church is the oldest in the South and one of its founders Denmark Vesey led a failed 1822 slave rebellion that drove the church underground.

Roof, who was convicted of federal hate crimes and obstruction of religion, said he had felt compelled to act because of the way blacks treated whites and said the

shootings were "minuscule" in comparison.

The prosecutor recounted other evidence, like how Roof sat in the church parking lot for 28 minutes in his car, likely loading the 88 bullets — a number embraced symbolically by white supremacists — into eight magazines. Roof was handed a Bible as he sat in the prayer service for nearly 45 minutes before opening fire when the worshippers closed their eyes for the fi-

nal prayer.

After the shootings, South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley threw her support behind removing the Confederate flag from the Statehouse. She had spent years in office calling it a settled issue.

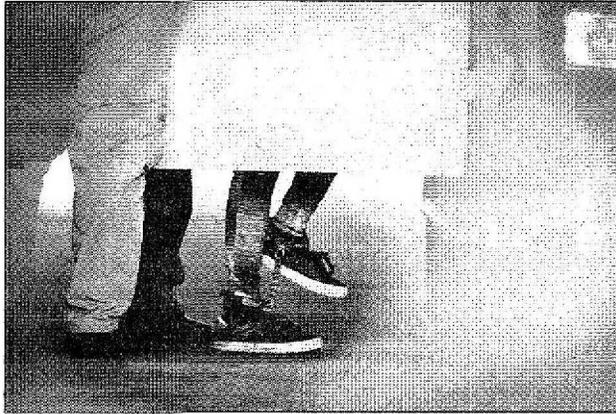
"It is my hope that the survivors, the families, and the people of South Carolina can find some peace in the fact that justice has been served," she said in a statement after Thursday's verdict.



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

John Pinckney, father of shooting victim the Rev. Clementa Pinckney, is greeted Thursday after leaving J. Waites Waring Federal Courthouse in Charleston.

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THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dylann Roof, wearing shackles, is escorted into a transport vehicle Thursday after he was found guilty of murdering nine parishoners at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church.

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Andy Brack is editor and publisher of Statehouse Report. Have a comment? Send to: feedback@statehousereport.com.



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