

Title: **SC's legal challenge of gay marriage futile**
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OTHER VIEWPOINTS

SC's legal challenge of gay marriage futile

It didn't take a legal expert to know the political grandstanding would cost the taxpayers.

The decision by Gov. Nikki Haley and S.C. Attorney General Alan Wilson to launch a futile challenge to a federal appeals court ruling on gay marriage turned out to be costly for state taxpayers. And that came as no surprise to the many legal experts who had advised against the challenge.

A little over a year ago, the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the ban on gay marriage in Virginia was unconstitutional. Both South Carolina and North Carolina, as well as West Virginia and Maryland, also are in the 4th District, so that ruling applied to those states, too.

Soon after the ruling, four of those states announced they would stop defending challenges to the state's gay-marriage ban. But Haley and Wilson took the opposite tack, pledging to fight on for South

Carolina's ban.

A variety of legal experts said at the time that continuing the fight would be a waste of the state's time and money. They said the effort was doomed to fail, and they were right.

In October the U.S. Supreme Court allowed the 4th Circuit ruling to stand. Then, in late June, the Supreme Court issued

its 5-4 ruling that made same-sex marriage legal nationwide.

And this month the bill came due for South Carolina. A federal judge ordered Wilson to pay \$130,600 in legal fees for a couple who challenged the state's gay-marriage ban. Judge Richard Gergel also awarded them the full \$4,700 they sought in other court costs and fees.

The bill covers 390 hours of work by seven attorneys on behalf of the couple. The seven attorneys' hourly rates ranged from \$175 to \$400.

This, of course, does not ac-

count for the time and money Wilson and his office spent on the challenge — resources that could have been used for something worthwhile.

Some might say that \$131,700 is a drop in the bucket in a \$25 billion state budget. But it could have paid the yearly salary of a state employee or two.

What is more irksome is that the state's case was hopeless from the start. Wilson was under no obligation to carry the challenge forward. He could have dropped it, as his North Carolina counterpart, Attorney General Roy Cooper, did.

By all appearances, the appeal was little more than an effort to appease opponents of gay marriage in the state. It was a political decision, not a practical one, and taxpayers had to pay for the charade.

The (Rock Hill) Herald

Title: Haley order calls for armed security**Author:****Size: 5.89 square inch****Aiken, SC Circulation: 19635**



STATE NEWS IN BRIEF

Haley order calls for armed security

COLUMBIA (AP) — Gov. Nikki Haley has signed an executive order to put armed members of the South Carolina National Guard on guard at the branch's recruiting centers.

Haley's order on Monday calls for enhanced security at the Guard's storefront recruiting centers and other facilities and training for armed members to stand guard.

The executive order identifies the killings of service members last month in Chattanooga, Tenn., as a motivation for the order.

Other states have taken similar steps since the shootings.

Title: **Why S.C. legislators can't do other things as fast as they brought down flag**
 Author: BY CINDIROSSSCOPPE
 Size: 58.43 square inch
 Myrtle Beach, SC Circulation: 61238



GOVERNMENT

Why S.C. legislators can't do other things as fast as they brought down flag

BY CINDI ROSS SCOPPE

Eighteen days after Gov. Nikki Haley called on legislators to remove the Confederate flag from the State House grounds, it was folded and furlled and carted off to the Confederate Relic Room. But the calendar doesn't capture the speed of this action: Because of a quirk of timing, the Legislature was in session just five of those days. And under our state constitution, five days is the absolute minimum required to take a bill from introduction to enactment.

The Legislature's dizzying dispatch has raised a fair question from both supporters and opponents of the change: Why can't the Legislature get other things done that quickly? Why did lawmakers have a whole year and still come away without a roads plan? Or ethics reform? Or ... pick your topic.

Clearly, there was an unprecedented sense of urgency about the flag, nearly unanimous support for action and only one clear path forward. Unlike roads and ethics and repairing a school system that deprives poor kids of a decent education, this was not a complicated problem that had dozens of possible solutions – although die-

hard flag supporters tried desperately to turn it into one.

But urgency, simplicity and even near unanimity do not always guarantee action – much less rapid action. At least as important was another quirk related to that quirk of timing: an extremely limited agenda.

By law, the Legislature adjourns every year on the first Thursday of June. By a two-thirds vote, lawmakers can – and nearly always do – pass a “sine die resolution” allowing them to come back to wrap up loose ends. The resolution delineates what can be discussed – mainly conference committee reports, vetoes and congratulatory resolutions.

Sine die is Latin for without day. It means without any date being designated for resumption, even though the Legislature often designates its next meeting date in the sine die resolution. In South Carolina it is pronounced (incorrectly) sigh knee die.

That resolution can be amended by a two-thirds vote, and the day after Gov. Haley called for the flag's removal, the Legislature – back in town to adopt the budget conference report – added the Confederate flag to the list. Lawmakers also

finished work on all the conference reports, so when they returned after the July 4 holiday, the only items they could debate were budget vetoes and the flag.

That limited agenda is the essential difference between the flag and anything else, because the most powerful tool a legislator has to block a bill isn't filibustering that bill. It's not even the single-senator veto – which allows a single senator to block debate on a bill unless two-thirds of his colleagues vote to override his objection. Both of those techniques are easy enough to overcome on their own that flag supporters didn't even bother trying to use them.

The most powerful tool an opponent has – the reason a single senator can practically shut down the Senate, for days, weeks or even months – is a crowded agenda, or calendar. With up to a dozen controversial bills ahead of the one he wants to kill, he can start at the top and use every one of those bills as a stalking horse – dragging out debate on the first bill for as long as possible, then the next bill and on and on. Even if he's the only one who opposes his target bill, other senators object to other

bills, so they in turn help with his stall.

In fairness, these stalls were not what killed the ethics bill. The ethics bill died because half the Senate adamantly opposed allowing quasi-independent investigations of legislators' compliance with the law, and the other half adamantly opposed passing a bill that did not include that.

I can't even say for sure that the stalls killed the roads bill; again, there was no clear majority for any one plan. But it's easy to imagine that something could have been worked out if the Senate had been able to get to that bill sooner – and stalls on other bills were designed precisely to prevent this from happening.

The Senate is the place where bills go to die. The House limits how long a bill can be debated, and it routinely works all the way through its calendar, passing or killing even the most controversial bills. But the short calendar even played a role in the House's quick action, because it allowed the majority to work around a rule that normally requires bills to be sent to committee if a single representative insists on it.

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But even allowing an extra week or two for committee vetting, there's a lot to be said for actually debating, amending and passing (or killing) a bill within a week or two after it's reported out of committee – as the House does regularly, and the Senate does on routine, noncontroversial bills.

There's no magic bullet to solve the Senate problem; various techniques have been tried over the years, and they all have failed. They have failed because not enough senators have the will to stop the delays. And that's because most senators are more interested in preserving for themselves the power to kill bills that the majority supports than they are in stopping other senators from doing that.

Contact Cindi Ross Scoppe, who writes editorials and columns for The (Columbia) State, at cscoppe@thestate.com.

Title: **DPS officers worked \$80K in overtime in month after Charleston massacre**

Author:

Size: 9.92 square inch

Columbia, SC Circulation: 128564



DPS officers worked \$80K in overtime in month after Charleston massacre

S.C. Department of Public Safety officers worked roughly \$80,000 in overtime in the month following the massacre at Emanuel AME Church in Charleston as they provided security at the victims' funerals and kept the peace during demonstrations at the State House over the Confederate flag.

The agency provided estimates to The Associated Press for the period between June 21 and July 18 – from the day before Gov. Nikki Haley called for the Confederate flag to

be removed from capitol's grounds through the day opposing groups rallied at the State House.

Some legislators and law enforcement officers, chief among them state Sen. John Courson, R-Richland, and Richland County Sheriff Leon Lott, say state officials didn't use common sense when they allowed a North Carolina-based Ku Klux Klan group and a Florida-based group affiliated with the New Black Panther Party to hold overlapping rallies.

— ASSOCIATED PRESS

Title: **Scramble begins for Thurmond's state Senate seat**
 Author:
 Size: 50.06 square inch
 Charleston, SC Circulation: 110289



Scramble begins for Thurmond's state Senate seat

State Sen. **Paul Thurmond's** announcement last week that he won't seek re-election next year has set off the jockeying to replace him among Republicans and Democrats.

On the GOP side, those looking at it include Charleston County Councilman **Joe Qualey**, attorney **Mark Pepper**, state Rep. **Peter McCoy**, Charleston County Assistant Solicitor **Culver Kidd**, attorney **Walter Hundley** and businessman **Hally Burbage**, Republicans say.

Also considering a run is **Anne Peterson-Hutto**, who previously represented James Island in the state House as a Democrat. If she does run, she would file as a Republican, she said.

Hutto, now a lobbyist representing the **Coastal Conservation League**, among others, said she's gone through a "shift in philosophy" in the last eight years and said she thought the district would be better served by a Republican.

On the Democratic side, those considering it include state Rep. **Mary Tinkler**, Charleston County Councilwoman **Colleen Condon** and James Island Public Service District Commissioner **Carter McMillan**, said county party Chairman **Brady Quirk-Garvan**.

Thurmond, R-Charleston, who lives on James Island, said he won't run again, pointing to the expected arrival of a fifth child in December. But he's left the door open for a future return to politics.

The District 41 seat runs from James Island into West Ashley and Dorchester County. Filing won't open until March.

Confederate flag backer endorses Paul

Democrats last week were quick to point out that the lawmaker most identified with the fight to keep the **Confederate flag** flying at the Statehouse has endorsed Republican presidential candidate **Rand Paul**.

State Rep. **Mike Pitts**, R-Laurens, backed dozens of proposals aimed at slowing or preventing the flag from being removed during the June special debate. Pitts endorsed Paul during a campaign stop this month.

The support came as Paul, a U.S. senator from Kentucky, was one of the early critics in the GOP field against keeping the flag on display. He called it a "symbol of human bondage and slavery" and praised Gov. **Nikki Haley** for advocating its removal following the **Emanuel AME Church** shootings.

Democrats last week pounced on Pitts' backing, saying it was contrary to Paul's statements of trying to attract minorities to the GOP.

"He has been the one candidate who has rhetorically made claims of broadening the Republican Party's appeal to minority communities," said **Michael Tyler**, director of African American Media with the Democratic National Committee. Tyler added, "to

turn around and have Mike Pitts endorse you flies in the face of those so-called outreach efforts."

Pitts said he backed Paul because of his repeated support for the Bill of Rights and against government intrusion.

Debate set for Pinckney's former seat

The **S.C. Democratic Party** is hosting a debate Wednesday for the candidates who filed in the special election for the state Senate District 45 seat previously held by **Clementa Pinckney**.

Pinckney was one of nine people slain at Emanuel AME Church in Charleston by a gunman on June 17. He was the church pastor.

The debate will be held 7 to 8 p.m. at the **International Longshoreman Association** hall, Local 1422, on Morrison Drive in Charleston.

Thirteen candidates — 11 Democrats and two Republicans — have filed for the seat in a special election. The primaries will be on Sept. 1, with runoffs, if necessary, on Sept. 15. The special election would be Oct. 20. District 45 covers a portion of Charleston County and the lower part of the state.

S.C. Presidential visits this week:

MONDAY: Former Florida Gov. **Jeb Bush** will take part in a town hall in Columbia sponsored by the **Concerned Veterans for America's Vet-**

erans and Military. The event will run from 6 to 7 p.m. at Seawell's at the Fairgrounds.

Ohio Gov. **John Kasich** will take part in an Americans for Peace, Prosperity and Security forum at 5 p.m. at the Myrtle Beach campus of the Horry Georgetown Technical College, Thomas Maeser Auditorium, 950 Crabtree Lane, Myrtle Beach. At 1 p.m. in Columbia he'll file to appear on the S.C. presidential primary ballot at GOP headquarters, 1913 Marion St.

FRIDAY THROUGH SATURDAY: Democrat **Bernie Sanders'** South Carolina tour will include rallies in four cities, including a 7 p.m. forum on Saturday at Burke High School in Charleston, 244 President St.

Doors open at 6 p.m. The event is free and open to the public. Admission is first come, first served. Tickets are not required, but an RSVP is strongly encouraged by going to BernieSanders.com, the campaign said.

Compiled by reporter **Schuyler Kropf**.

Palmetto Politics

To stay up-to-date on South Carolina politics, go to palmettopolitics.com or download the Palmetto Politics app for iOS or Android.

Title: **Why S.C. legislators can't do other things as fast as the flag**
 Author: BY CINDIROSSSCOPPE cscoppe@thestate.com
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Why S.C. legislators can't do other things as fast as the flag

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cscoppe@thestate.com

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Cindi Ross Scoppe is an associate editor of The State newspaper in Columbia. Reach her at cscoppe@thestate.com or 803-771-8571.



Title: **Lawsuit sparks change in prison system**
 Author: TIM SMITH STAFF WRITER TCSMITH@GREENVILLENEWS.COM
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Lawsuit sparks change in prison system

More mental health workers to be hired

TIM SMITH

STAFF WRITER

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COLUMBIA — Seven years after a mentally ill inmate being held naked and cold for 11 days died in a South Carolina prison cell, the director of the state's prison system says he hopes changes for the handling of mentally ill prisoners will prevent such a tragedy from occurring again.

But a year and a half after a judge

ordered the changes, the state remains in mediation with advocates for mentally ill prisoners, and the prison system has yet to hire 40 additional mental health and medical workers funded by lawmakers this year.

The confidential mediation talks are complicated and have gone past the goal of reaching a final settlement by

July 31, said Gloria Prevost, executive director for the advocacy group that sued the state over the treatment of inmates with severe mental illness.

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Prisons

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"There are a lot of complicated issues and there are a lot of things that need to be done," she told *The Greenville News*.

Some of the changes will take time to implement, said Bryan Stirling, director of the state Department of Corrections.

The agency is in the process of hiring more mental health workers, but the process takes time, he said, adding that he feels good about the progress the prison system has made since advocates for mentally ill inmates filed a lawsuit against the state in 2005.

"I think it has changed dramatically," he said.

One hundred officers have been trained in crisis intervention, inmates can no longer be sent to solitary confinement for more than 60 days as punishment, and a pilot program has allowed some of those long held in solitary to transition back into the main prison population, Stirling said.

New inmates are screened more thor-

oughly for mental health issues, mental health workers are getting proper certifications, and the agency has contracted with a group to follow released prisoners to help them receive mental health treatment in the community, Sterling said.

"After implementing changes to the disciplinary policy, crisis intervention team training and the overall change in agency culture, I would hope that incidents like that will not happen again," Sterling said of the 2008 death of Jerome Laudman.

Laudman's death was cited by former Circuit Judge Michael Baxley last year in his landmark, 45-page order finding the state had violated the rights of mentally ill prisoners. The state subsequently paid Laudman's estate \$1.2 million to settle a lawsuit.

Stirling, hired by Gov. Nikki Haley in 2013 to lead the prisons agency, told *The News* that a federal investigation of the death is ongoing and that earlier this year he requested an investigation by the State Law Enforcement Division.

That report has been turned over to a solicitor, he said.

In North Carolina, similar complaints by advocacy groups about the treatment of mentally ill inmates there have been forwarded to the U.S. Justice Department. A federal investigation is ongoing into the death last year of a mentally ill inmate placed in solitary who died of dehydration.

President Barack Obama this summer signaled prison authorities nationwide that he wants to see a change in the way prisons "overuse" solitary confinement.

"The social science shows that an environment like that is often more likely to make inmates more alienated, more hostile, potentially more violent," he said during a speech last month. "Do we really think it makes sense to lock so many people alone in tiny cells for 23 hours a day, sometimes for months or even years at a time?"

"That is not going to make us safer. That's not going to make us stronger.

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And if those individuals are ultimately released, how are they ever going to adapt? It's not smart."

South Carolina prisons as of June held 1,363 prisoners in solitary confinement, 243 less than in December, officials said.

That is a reflection, Sterling said, of the new policy he enacted earlier this year that no longer allows the "stacking" of time in solitary for disciplinary infractions, which has kept some inmates in isolated cells for years.

Inmates now may not be placed in solitary more than 60 days for disciplinary reasons. They can be held indefinitely, however, if they are deemed a threat to the safety of staff or other inmates, Sterling said.

"The way we are saying it is we are locking up people who we are afraid of, not that we are mad at," he said.

The prison system does not track how many of the inmates are in solitary for security detention as opposed to disciplinary detention, said Stephanie Giv-

ens, a spokeswoman. So officials cannot say how many are being held indefinitely.

Laudman's final days and evidence of an attempted cover-up by correctional officers were detailed in documents reported by *The News* last year.

The 44-year-old inmate suffered from paranoid schizophrenia, mental retardation and bipolar disorder, according to documents in a federal lawsuit.

On Feb. 7, 2008, Laudman was moved to the Lee Supermax, cells at Lee Correctional Institution designed to "punish and provide intensive supervision to inmates exhibiting assaultive behavior," according to the suit. Why he was sent there and who authorized the move remains somewhat of a mystery.

The cell was bare, with a concrete pad for sleeping and no blanket, according to the lawsuit, which alleges that the entire area was cold and there were problems with the heating system.

Inmates told the prison investigator

after Laudman's death that they had tried to get officers to look at Laudman, believing something was wrong since he wasn't eating and not making his usual noises, according to the report. An officer told them that it was "out of his hands."

On the last day of Laudman's life, Feb. 18, 2008, one of the officers repeatedly told a supervisor that "Laudman needed help," and was lying in his own feces, according to the internal report. The nurses said that he was unresponsive, with a pulse of 50 and pupils that were fixed and dilated.

Laudman was taken to a hospital, which later reported he was suffering from hypothermia and had a core temperature of 80.6 degrees. He later was pronounced dead from cardiac arrhythmia.

Baxley wrote in his 2014 order that an investigative report found Laudman had

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Prisons

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been "physically abused" by a correctional officer during his cell transfer and that a prison investigator later "found evidence of an attempted cover-up by correctional officers" who cleaned the cell before investigators could photograph it.

Stirling said if something like the Laudman case happens again, "I will take that very seriously and there will be consequences for anybody who was involved in it."

He said in addition to changing the disciplinary policy, the prison system also had conducted a pilot program at the McCormick Correctional Institution to transition those who have been in solitary back into the prison population using a stepdown process.

"We didn't want to release people without kind of re-acclimating them back to the general population," he said.

In addition to addressing solitary, the state is hiring new mental health or medical workers over the next three years.

The Department of Corrections is in the process of hiring 40 workers at a cost of about \$4.9 million, having received the money for hiring them last month, but it takes time to go through the state hiring process, Stirling said.

"This is just the first year," he said. "I told the plaintiffs and they agreed that we could not hire all these people we need to hire in one year. It's going to take some time."

The agency, Stirling said, is looking for additional psychologists, psychiatrists, counselors, activity therapists, clinical supervisors and quality assurance monitors who can evaluate the treatment system.

Among those the agency is trying to hire, he said, is a mental health recruiter, someone who will help the agency find the dozens of mental health workers the agency needs; and mental health technicians, workers who have mental health and security training. The agency also is addressing pay inequities among mental health workers.

"It's a challenge, I'm not going to lie,"

he said. "But this is going to be something that hopefully they can say for the rest of their careers, 'I went to the Department of Corrections and I made a difference.'"

The agency also is eliminating use of pink jumpsuits, which had been required for years for inmates who he said were sexual exhibitionists. He said the jumpsuits when first used seemed to work well but have not been as effective in more recent times.

Bill Lindsey, executive director for the South Carolina chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, which has helped in training correctional officers, said he believes the direction of the agency under Stirling in the area of mental health "is just so much better than what we had before."

"We have a long way to go," he said. "But it looks like he is moving in the direction to get things done. He had a massive undertaking going into that situation. But it looks like he's really trying to put things together to make it a lot better situation."

Title: **FROM BOOM TO NEAR-BUST**
 Author: Kevin Johnson USA TODAY
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FROM BOOM TO NEAR-BUST

A GUNMAKER'S CAUTIONARY TALE

Kevin Johnson

USA TODAY

AYNOR, S.C.

There was perhaps no more attractive small brand in the lucrative U.S. gun industry than PTR Industries.

The semiautomatic rifle maker had just announced its intention to leave Connecticut more than two years ago, when it was besieged by recruitment proposals from at least 44 states.

All of them sought to lure the growing gunmaker shortly after the Connecticut Legislature — in a political coda to the Newtown school massacre — made it effectively illegal for PTR and some other rifle manufacturers to sell their products anywhere in the state. The new law was so restric-

tive that Josh Fiorini, PTR's chief executive officer, feared it exposed employees to criminal charges for transporting unfinished firearms to assembly contractors just a few miles beyond the company's Bristol headquarters.

"It was the last straw," Fiorini said recently. "We were going to have to move."

Yet what followed for PTR, almost as soon as it reopened last year in gun-friendly rural South Carolina, stands as a cautionary tale for the politically volatile industry in which some of the biggest names in the business — Mossberg, Remington and Beretta — have recently launched or are plotting moves and expan-

sions outside longtime bases throughout the Northeast. Larry Keane, general counsel for the National Shooting Sports Foundation (the industry's trade association), could not recall a similar period in the industry's recent history marked by so much displacement.

PTR's relocation plan was a surprisingly easy call in the midst of a market boom driven by unprecedented panic buying. Gun enthusiasts emptied the shelves of dealers across the country, fearing that even more restrictive federal gun laws would be next.

As quickly as potential back orders for PTR rifles surged to

► **STORY CONTINUES ON 2B**

Gunmaker hit turmoil after attack, new laws

► **CONTINUED FROM 1B**

nearly 100,000, the bubble burst, company officials said. Proposed federal legislation to renew the controversial assault weapons ban failed, as did a prospective expansion of background checks for all gun buyers.

The panic that had sustained record sales shifted from buyers to manufacturers, who were left with hundreds of thousands of rifles in their inventories. Within six months of what was to be a

move full of anticipation for increasing fortunes, Fiorini and company vice president John McNamara were issuing layoff notices.

Just when things couldn't get any worse for the fledgling company, they did.

Earlier this year, the first person PTR hired in South Carolina — a popular county councilman who helped organize the firm's move here — fatally shot himself near the company's new headquarters. Though the shooting

was apparently related to chronic health problems and did not involve a company firearm, Fiorini said Bob Grabowski's death represented the company's darkest moment since uprooting from Connecticut.

"It was a perfect storm," he said.

NEWTOWN CHANGES ALL

On the December day in 2012 when a young gunman stormed Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., PTR's chief

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executive was meeting with an architect to discuss a long-planned expansion of the growing company.

The riflemaker, with nearly 50 employees, had outgrown its quarters in Bristol, and Fiorini was eager to put down a larger footprint in a region that has been associated with gunmaking since the Revolutionary War.

The Sandy Hook shooting changed everything. The expansion plans were immediately suspended; they were scrapped for good when state lawmakers approved a package of legislation that, among other things, outlawed assault-style weapons that PTR and other local manufacturers produced, created a gun-offender registry and banned ammunition magazines containing more than 10 rounds.

Other states, including New York, Maryland and Colorado, enacted similarly strict measures.

While a raft of proposed federal firearms legislation largely foundered, including an effort to renew the assault weapons ban that had expired in 2004, the state actions generated a recruitment effort by gun-friendly governors that continues to alter the geography of guns.

The commitments followed:

► Connecticut-based Mossberg chose to expand in Texas.

► Sturm Ruger & Co., headquartered in Connecticut and with large operations in New Hampshire and Arizona, selected North Carolina for its first major expansion in 25 years.

► Remington Arms Co., founded in 1816 in Ilion, N.Y., picked Alabama to host its new venture.

► Beretta is set to begin moving much of its entire U.S. operation next month from Maryland to Tennessee.

"We started our search by looking only at states that have a consistent history of support for and likelihood of future support

for Second Amendment rights," Beretta board member Jeff Reh said, announcing its choice of Gallatin, Tenn., last year after a review of 80 sites in seven states.

For many of the industry's big-

gest names, the moves involved expansions to escape restrictions, while PTR uprooted its entire manufacturing operation.

Keane said the recruitment continues still. "We are constantly getting calls from state economic development officials," Keane said. "It's not with the frequency that we experienced in 2013, but they still come."

Like other suitors, South Carolina had a lot to offer its recruits: the promise of a cavernous 58,000-square-foot manufacturing site; a hungry, non-union labor pool; and a cost of living that could melt some of the worst memories of doing business in the Northeast.

For PTR, which spent an average of \$70,000 per year just to clear the snow from its parking lot, the sunny climate and proximity to Myrtle Beach (about 30 miles east) was gravy on a deal that was announced in June 2013.

"Look what happened in South Carolina today," Gov. Nikki Haley said then, highlighting the \$8 million investment and the promise of nearly 150 jobs. "You have a great American company in PTR Industries that could have picked any state in the country to go to, and they chose South Carolina."

FORTUNES SHIFT

While the welcome couldn't have been warmer, the reality of the changing gun market sent a shiver through the company's headquarters soon after it opened last year on Aynor's Cool Springs Drive.

With the bursting of the rifle market, PTR fortunes nosedived. Production dropped from 9,600 rifles in 2013 to 4,000 last year, forcing the layoffs of eight workers just six months after opening amid so much optimism.

Unlike other, larger firearm companies with more diverse product lines, PTR struggled mightily.

"We knew a (market) cool-off was coming," Fiorini said. "But we didn't know how steep or how long it would last."

The losses were compounded

by the cost of physically moving the company, all of its sensitive machinery and 23 of its 46 Connecticut employees 752 miles south to Aynor (population: 647).

The convoy of 42 trucks, including 14 flatbeds, did not come cheap. It cost about \$600,000.

PTR was beginning to regain its footing this year when Grabowski took his own life March 31.

McNamara and Fiorini said they knew that Grabowski, who orchestrated much of the company's transition, suffered from chronic back pain. Yet the suicide was something they never saw coming.

"We didn't know how much he really did for us," Fiorini said.

MARKET UPSWING

PTR is now beginning to feel the benefits of a new spike in firearm purchases. The surge, not surprisingly, also follows a spate of deadly shootings across the country, including the June 17 massacre at a church in Charleston.

Last month marked the third straight month of increasing FBI background checks required of gun purchasers at federally licensed firearms dealers. July's 1.6 million checks were up nearly 300,000 from July 2013. The number of checks recorded in each of the past three months also marked monthly records. The actual number of firearms sold in recent months is likely higher because multiple firearms can be included in a transaction by a single buyer.

PTR is looking to capitalize on its new home by offering a new commemorative rifle, with the South Carolina state seal etched on the barrel and stamped with its "Made in Aynor, S.C." label.

Although the company is about a year behind on delivering on its promise of nearly 150 local jobs, PTR still enjoys the strong support of the county and the state.

"They are back on the road," Horry County Council Chairman Mark Lazarus said. "If you looked at the gun industry overall, it took a pretty significant hit, but it has rebounded and so has PTR. We're

Title: **FROM BOOM TO NEAR-BUST**

Author: Kevin Johnson USA TODAY

Size: 203.51 square inch

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very happy with them.”

Republican state Rep. Alan Clemmons, whose district includes Aynor and who helped lead the recruiting effort that landed PTR, said the state has pursued other firearm companies just as aggressively. One of them, Stag Arms, is another Connecticut rifle maker.

“We would be delighted for (Stag Arms founder) Mark Mal-

kowski and Stag Arms to call South Carolina home,” Clemmons said.

Malkowski said he regularly corresponds with interested states and will “continue to keep our options open.”

“We will only expand our business in a state that supports what we do,” he said.

Meanwhile, Fiorini and McNamara said business is now

“the best it’s ever been” since the move. “I don’t regret it,” Fiorini said. “We’re still here.”

The Sandy Hook shooting changed everything. PTR’s expansion plans were immediately suspended.



PHOTOS BY BRETT FLASHNICK FOR USA TODAY

Stan Parker, 51, of Aynor, S.C., works on stamping receivers for rifles out of sheet metal at PTR Industries last month.

PTR Industries’ Josh Fiorini says his company faced “a perfect storm.”



“We knew a (market) cool-off was coming. But we didn’t know how steep or how long it would last.”

Josh Fiorini, PTR’s CEO

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South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley warmly welcomed PTR's arrival to the state.



PHOTOS BY BRETT FLASHNICK FOR USA TODAY

Steve Clark works on final assembly and inspection of a rifle at PTR Industries in Aynor, S.C., the company's new headquarters.

Title: **DPS: \$80K paid in OT**
 Author: BY SEANNAADCOX The AssociatedPress
 Size: 46.5 square inch
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DPS: \$80K paid in OT

BY SEANNAADCOX

The Associated Press

Department of Public Safety workers racked up overtime hours in month following Charleston shooting up until simultaneous rallies at the State House
Legislators: State officials didn't use common sense in allowing rallies by KKK, New Black Panther Party on same day

COLUMBIA

South Carolina Department of Public Safety officers worked roughly \$80,000 in overtime in the month following the massacre at "Mother Emanuel" AME Church in Charleston as they provided security at the victims' funerals and kept the peace during demonstrations at the Statehouse over the Confederate flag.

The agency provided estimates to The Associated Press for the period between June 21 and July 18 – from the day before Gov. Nikki Haley called for the Confederate flag to be removed from Statehouse grounds through the day that opposing groups rallied at the Statehouse.

\$44,300
Overtime estimated from June 21-July 4

\$34,000
Overtime estimated from July 5-July 18

Some legislators say state officials didn't use common sense when they authorized a North Carolina-based Ku Klux Klan

group and a Florida-based group affiliated with the New Black Panther Party to hold the overlapping rallies.

While applauding law enforcement's handling of the spectacle, they have asked what it cost taxpayers.

At a hearing last month, a Department of Administration official told legislators the approval of the rallies came down to people's free speech and assembly rights under the First Amendment.

Sen. John Courson, R-Columbia, said Friday he understands First Amendment rights but still faults the agency for not even suggesting

SEE OVERTIME, 4A

FROM PAGE 3A

OVERTIME

one group protest on another day or at least another time.

"I do think common sense should prevail," said Courson, whose district includes the Statehouse grounds. "Someone should recognize and apparently did not that these people weren't there

to socialize."

At least five people were arrested during the rallies, which attracted an estimated 2,000 people at the peak.

Richland County Sheriff Leon Lott has said law enforcement did its best amid the chaos, but officers were outnumbered and over-

whelmed, as they put themselves between the opposing sides. His department was among other local and state law enforcement agencies that worked the rallies.

The situation prompted the Department of Administration to change how it

reviews requests to use Statehouse grounds, to allow for input from both the State Law Enforcement Division and the Department of Public Safety.

The Department of Public Safety's overtime estimates, provided Thursday, cover two pay periods for its offi-



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cers assigned to either the Statehouse or the funerals of the nine victims killed at the historic black church June 17. The department, which is responsible for Statehouse security, said it could not determine overtime for the day of the rallies by itself.

Officers received an estimated \$44,300 for overtime worked from June 21 through July 4. The period

included President Barack Obama's visit June 26 to provide the eulogy in Charleston for the church's slain pastor, Sen. Clementa Pinckney, as well as the public viewing of Pinckney under the Statehouse dome. A Highway Patrol honor guard carried his casket inside.

The last funeral for the

victims was July 2.

Officers with Public Safety's three security divisions worked an estimated \$34,000 in overtime from July 5 through July 18.

That period included the Legislature's votes to remove the Confederate battle flag from its 30-foot perch on Statehouse grounds, as well as its July 10 removal

ceremony. An honor guard of troopers lowered the flag from the pole where it's flown since a 2000 compromise took it off the dome.

Courson said a primary responsibility of state government is to protect residents, so he has no issue with the extra security for the events – only with the decisions that allowed for the overlapping rallies.

Title: **Public safety officers worked \$80K in overtime in month after AME church massacre**
 Author: By SEANNA ADCOX Associated Press
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BY SEANNA ADCOX
 Associated Press

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FILE/PAUL ZOELLER/STAFF

Members of the crowd yell at law enforcement officers as they move in during a demonstration by the Loyal White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan from Pelham, N.C., at the Statehouse in Columbia on July 18.