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Subject: Afternoon Clips - Monday, March 7, 2016

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Governor Nikki Haley News:

USA Today: Huge racial disparities persist despite slow infant mortality drop

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2016/03/07/racial-disparities-infant-mortality/81003686/>

Jayne O'Donnell

Despite a 13% drop in the national infant mortality rate over nearly a decade, there remains a stubborn gap between the rates for black Americans and other racial groups as well as between some Southern states and the rest of the country. The most proven and promising way to reduce the disparities in premature births that lead to death — home visits by nurses — got a boost in the Affordable Care Act, but is reaching only a fraction of those in need, policy experts say.

Note: Last month, South Carolina Republican Gov. Nikki Haley announced \$30 million in additional funding of the Nurse-Family Partnership for her state. The announcement followed a newspaper series that chronicled the paltry prenatal services for rural, often black residents and the high death toll, especially in eight poor counties the series called the "cradle of death."

The State: Harvest Hope to celebrate 35 years in the Midlands with gala

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/article64520497.html>

Avery G. Wilks

Harvest Hope Food Bank is celebrating 35 years of service in the Midlands on Friday during its 35th anniversary gala. The event starting at 6 p.m. Friday at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center includes an auction, a surprise celebrity emcee and concert by Blues Traveler. The gala will celebrate Harvest Hope's response to the October storm in which the food bank officials say more than 2 million meals were served across the state in six weeks.

Note: Gov. Nikki Haley, who volunteered at Harvest Hope after the flooding, will be presented with the Michael J. Mungo Humanitarian Award.

Nancy Reagan News:

Associated Press: White House to lower flag for Nancy Reagan

<http://bigstory.ap.org/urn:publicid:ap.org:a3698d165ce7429b87c6de4d028c9807>

President Barack Obama has ordered flags flown at half-staff in memory of Nancy Reagan. The White House released a proclamation Monday directing federal buildings, embassies, military posts and naval vessels to lower flags to half-staff "as a mark of respect" for the former first lady until after her interment. Reagan died Sunday at her home in Los Angeles. She was 94.

Associated Press: Nancy Reagan funeral plans announced

<http://bigstory.ap.org/urn:publicid:ap.org:7a195d45880f42398d727f0489352b9d>

The funeral for former first lady Nancy Reagan will be held on Friday at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, California. The Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation announced Monday that Nancy Reagan will lie in repose for public visitation on Wednesday from 1 p. m. to 7 p.m. and Thursday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Transportation to the library will be by shuttle from a Bank of America property in Simi Valley. Parking will not be allowed at the library. Friday's funeral starts at 11 a.m. and will be closed to the public. Nancy Reagan will be buried next to her husband at the library.

S.C. General Assembly News:

Greenville News: House tax relief could hinge on Senate roads bill

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/politics/2016/03/07/house-tax-relief-could-hinge-senate-roads-bill/81314390/>

Tim Smith

Republican House leaders say what the Senate does this week with the roads bill could affect House plans for tax relief. The Senate is considering a GOP plan authored by Sen. Larry Grooms, a Berkeley County Republican and chairman of the Senate Transportation Committee, to provide \$400 million more per year for roads from recurring money in the General Fund. The House last year passed a roads bill that would raise about the same amount of money, taking it from the pump as well as by increasing the cap on the sales tax on cars. Some GOP House members would like to sweeten the tax relief pot even more, House Majority Leader Bruce Bannister of Greenville, told The Greenville News. But he said those thoughts depend on whether the Senate continues to pursue its roads plan using the General Fund instead of raising new revenue, such as the gas tax. "You can't do \$400 million in recurring revenue for roads and then turn around and do \$400 million in tax relief," said Bannister, who doesn't serve on the House budget-writing committee. "There's not that much money with the other things we have to address."

Note: Gov. Nikki Haley last year tied tax relief to a roads plan, saying she would support a 10-cent-per-gallon increase in the gas tax, which currently is 16.75 cents, but only if lawmakers also passed substantial tax relief and restructured the state Department of Transportation board. Haley suggesting cutting the top state income tax rate from 7 percent to 5 percent, phased in over 10 years.

S.C. Political News:

Associated Press: Beatty could be 2nd black chief justice since Reconstruction

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=YIRVdgz3

A statement Monday from the Judicial Merit Selection Commission shows Don Beatty of Spartanburg is the only person running for chief justice. Republicans had sought another candidate. Beatty would become South Carolina's second black chief justice since Reconstruction. However, President Barack Obama nominated Beatty last month to be a federal judge. State lawmakers will elect a new chief justice in May to replace Costa Pleicones (Pluh-KOH- nus). He must retire Dec. 31 after reaching the mandatory retirement age of 72.

The State: Now there is one: Beatty and only Beatty running for SC chief justice

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/article64539782.html>

John Monk

It's official: Associate Justice Donald Beatty will be the only candidate to run for chief justice of the S. C. Supreme Court. Beatty is the senior most associate justice on the Supreme Court. Beatty's being the lone candidate for chief justice means there will be no break with the tradition that the senior most senior justice ascends to the chief justice seat without opposition. At one time, Associate Justice John Kittredge, the second senior most justice, was interested in filing for chief justice and running against Beatty. But Kittredge, who last month had made a formal expression of interest to the state's Judicial Merit Selection Commission, decided not to run against Beatty for the top seat.

NBC News: Graham: GOP 'Will Get Killed' If Trump Is Nominee

<http://www.nbcnews.com/meet-the-press/graham-gop-will-get-killed-if-trump-nominee-n532906>

Sally Bronston

Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., unloaded on Republican front-runner Donald Trump on Sunday, asserting that if Trump is the nominee, "the Republican Party will get killed, we'll get creamed, we'll lose, we'll deserve it." In an appearance on NBC's "Meet the Press", Graham reiterated that he would support Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, if he's the only viable alternative to Trump. He explained, "I would

support Cruz over Trump. I'd prefer Rubio over Kasich; Rubio and Kasich over Cruz. But if Ted's the alternative to Trump, he's at least a Republican conservative."

Washington Examiner: Graham: Nominating Trump could destroy GOP

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/graham-nominating-trump-could-destroy-gop/article/2585089>

Dan Friedman

Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., on Sunday suggested Republicans back Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, who Graham has harshly attacked, to stop Donald Trump from winning the Republican nomination. "Here's my message to the Republican party and the conservative movement," Graham said Sunday on NBC's "Meet the Press." "I'd rather risk losing without Donald Trump than try to win with him, because it will do more damage over time." "If Donald Trump's the nominee, the Republican party will get killed, will get creamed, we'll lose, we'll deserve it," Graham said. "But call me after the convention."

WOLO: Rep. Gilliard visits Tent City to help residents get SNAP benefits

<http://abcnews4.com/news/local/rep-gilliard-visits-tent-city-to-help-residents-get-snap-benefits>

Lindsey Maloney

The City of Charleston wants to remove the people of Tent City from their temporary homes over the next 30 days. On Monday, state Rep. Wendell Gilliard and the Department of Social Services spent the morning at Tent City handing out application forms for SNAP benefits. Gilliard says he doesn't believe kicking these people out will help solve the problem. "They should not be kicked out; we need to put them in the proper place to get proper help and have a proper transition. If you kick them out of one place they're going to show up somewhere else," Gilliard said.

Note: "You cannot say that this is a great day in South Carolina, a great day? Well, I see a veteran with 20 some odd years, I see children that have been coming in and out of this tent city, and I see females. A great day in South Carolina, I don't think so." Gilliard says he has reached out to Gov. Nikki Haley but hasn't received much feedback on the issue.

Post and Courier: Palmetto Sunrise: Conservative PAC says it will help defeat "liberal legislators"

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160307/PC1603/160309536>

Maya T. Prabhu

A conservative political action committee last week launched a website residents can use to oust a lawmaker he or she has determined to be too liberal. The S.C. Club for Growth PAC launched www.DefeatMyLiberalLegislator.com Friday — almost two weeks before filing for all 170 seats opens — and asks users to name which state legislator is "too liberal" and suggest a candidate for the spot instead. Filing for the political party nomination for state House, Senate, several solicitor seats and some county-wide elected offices begins noon March 16.

The Herald: Climer launches S.C. Senate challenge against Rock Hill's Hayes

<http://www.heraldonline.com/news/politics-government/election/local-election/article64501482.html>

Bristow Marchant

An incumbent lawmaker has drawn a challenger in this year's primaries. Wes Climer, the chairman of the York County Republican Party, announced Monday that he will be running for the S.C. Senate seat currently held by GOP Sen. Wes Hayes. Climer plans to make a formal announcement at 10 a. m. Tuesday at his family's hardware store, Mallard Hardware on Cherry Road.

WMBF: Richard Skipper seeks seat in SC Senate

<http://www.wmbfnews.com/story/31404719/richard-skipper-seeks-seat-in-sc-senate>

Kelly Matter

Businessman Richard Skipper is seeking a seat in the South Carolina Senate and expected to speak in Florence Tuesday. Skipper has owned and operated a local insurance agency for 25 years in Florence. He is a dedicated Christian and active in Cornerstone Baptist Church. Skipper currently serves as Chairman of the Florence County Republican Party. Skipper is expected to speak at 1:30

p.m. Tuesday, March 8 at the Florence Veterans Park.

WMBF: Scott Pyle to announce District 33 seat intentions

<http://www.wmbfnews.com/story/31402410/scott-pyle-to-announce-district-33-seat-intentions>

Kelly Matter

Scott Pyle, president and owner of Pyle Financial Services will be formally announcing his intentions to seek the Republican nomination for the District 33 seat in the South Carolina Senate. Senator Luke A. Rankin currently holds the District 33 seat, he is a Republican member of the South Carolina State, representing District 33. He was first elected to the chamber in 1992. Pyle's announcement will be made at the Rioz Brazilian Steakhouse at 12 p.m. Monday.

Opinion / Editorial Roundup:

Post and Courier: C of C strives for diversity

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160307/PC1002/160309532>

Editorial

College of Charleston has made a priority of increasing diversity at the school, so the end of a program designed to support minority students is an unfortunate setback. But the College is stepping up in other ways. Last week, College of Charleston officials announced the Reach-Overcome-Achieve Results (ROAR) Scholars program would be dropped after the federal Department of Education discontinued the grant that funded it. ROAR provided academic support, a small amount of financial aid and other services to first-generation, low-income and disabled students, many of whom are minorities. Students protesting the program's end last week called for the college to find another funding source to make up for the loss of federal grant money. Doing so would give C of C more leeway to extend support to the students who need it and would allow for a more efficient use of resources than was possible under the strict constraints of the federal program.

South Carolina News:

The State: 12 killed on S.C. roadways over the weekend

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/article64522167.html>

South Carolina Department of Public Safety officials said there were 12 road deaths reported over the weekend. Officials said two of the deaths occurred on interstates, while eight of the deaths occurred on U.S. routes, S.C. roads and secondary roads, while two deaths occurred on county roads. In three of the deaths, officials said a seat belt was used, while five others did not use seat belts. Four of those killed were motorcyclists not wearing helmets, while two others were pedestrians

Post and Courier: Wal-Mart workers getting latest pay increase this week

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160307/PC05/160309526>

Warren L. Wise

Wal-Mart's latest round of wage increases to help 1.2 million employees live better will show up in paychecks Thursday. It's the third step in a two-year, \$2.7 billion investment by the world's largest retailer in higher pay and other perks to dent criticism of paying employees little money while providing poor customer service. The Arkansas-based company is billing it as "the largest single-day, private-sector pay increase ever." In South Carolina, about 27,500 workers at Wal-Mart and Sam's Club, which Wal-Mart also owns, are receiving the pay hike. About 1,400 of those work in the Charleston area.

Post and Courier: S.C. gasoline prices rise for the 2nd straight week

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160307/PC05/160309530>

Warren L. Wise

Pump prices climbed for a second consecutive week across South Carolina. The average price rose 2.3 cents during the past week to \$1.54 a gallon across the Palmetto State, according to gas price

service GasBuddy. Motor Club AAA's Daily Fuel Gauge Report puts the price a penny higher. The price in S.C. is still down nearly 60 cents a gallon from one year ago at this time. Nationally, the price jumped 6.8 cents during the past week to an average of \$1.81 per gallon, according to both gas price services. That's about 64 cents per gallon lower than this time last year. In South Carolina, which ranks No. 2 in lowest average gasoline prices, according to AAA and GasBuddy, the lowest average prices can be found in the Greenville-Spartanburg area at \$1.53 a gallon.

Local News:

The State: Shop Around: Flooded stores reopen at Rosewood Crossing

<http://www.thestate.com/news/business/article64531287.html>

Janet Jones Kendall

Life is returning to the Rosewood Crossing shopping center at 4400 Ft. Jackson Blvd. following the flooding that gutted the interiors of two major anchor stores there in October. Michaels craft store is hosting its grand reopening all week this week while Marshalls department store has announced its grand reopening date of April 7. Both stores had opened only two months prior to the flooding which destroyed all inventory in each of them. Store managers at Michaels are not permitted to give comments to the media. Michaels was packed with customers at its reopening ribbon cutting festivities on Sunday where \$10 gift cards were distributed to the first 100 customers.

Post and Courier: New robots will help Boeing's North Charleston plant meet production hike

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160306/PC05/160309531>

David Wren

With a summertime production increase looming, Boeing Co.'s North Charleston campus is counting on a new technology to keep up with the demand for aftbody sections for the 787 Dreamliner commercial airplane. A four-armed robotic machine called a quadbot will reduce the amount of time it takes to drill and fill thousands of holes in the Dreamliner's aftbody to just 11½ days. It's a process that used to take five days or longer to complete. "This machine does a lot more work in a lot less time," said Mike Bunker, director of operations for the North Charleston plant.

Independent Mail: Investigation of fire at Oconee Nuclear Station continues

<http://www.independentmail.com/news/investigation-of-fire-at-oconee-nuclear-station-continues-2d7a3fe5-6afa-3a36-e053-0100007f4548-371294081.html>

Kirk Brown

The executive in charge of Duke Energy's Oconee Nuclear Station said Monday that an investigation is continuing into Sunday's transformer fire that caused a reactor shutdown and prompted the first "alert" at the facility since 1991. "Every hour that goes by we are getting more information," said Scott Batson, Duke Energy's vice president at the Oconee Nuclear Station. "I would like to think that we will begin to have some preliminary information relative to the cause of what might have transpired on that transformer within a week to two weeks."

Island Packet: Workers delayed at Hilton Head Plantation gate for ID check

<http://www.islandpacket.com/news/local/article64531727.html>

Lucas High

Workers were delayed getting to jobs in Hilton Head Plantation Monday morning. Security personnel with the gated community stopped each commercial vehicle to ensure drivers were properly licensed and authorized to enter. "This is a check to make sure we are dealing with a licensed driver," he said. In the past, decals and passes granting access to the community have been "passed along by unscrupulous" contractors to unlicensed drivers, he said.

The State: S.C. DOT officials announce Longwood Road closure until early April

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/article64577742.html>

South Carolina Department of Transportation officials announced that a portion of Longwood Road

will be closed beginning Thursday and will remain closed until early April. Officials said bridge repairs will begin on Longwood Road between Bluff Road to the dead end. The roadway will be closed to traffic until April 8, officials estimate. No detour will be put in place because there are no residential or commercial properties on the affected section of Longwood Road, officials said.

Sun News: Parking fees could be on the rise in Surfside Beach

<http://www.myrtlebeachonline.com/news/local/article64530212.html>

Emily Weaver

Parking fees could be on the rise in Surfside Beach. The town council is set to consider the final reading of an ordinance that would increase parking fees in the town's lots and limit parking along Surfside Drive to one hour with free spaces. The council concurred to consider a plan to increase the town's parking fees by 50 cents at a workshop Feb. 12.

WLTx: "In God We Trust" Added to Saluda County Patrol Cars

<http://www.wltx.com/news/in-god-we-trust-added-to-patrol-cars/72294564>

Scott Cooke

Saluda County is adding the phrase "In God We Trust" to the county's fleet of patrol cars. Sheriff John Perry dedicated the new graphics Monday afternoon. The Sheriff says he came up with the idea for the decals during a Lent service at church. He says he shared the idea with leadership in the department and they decided to move forward with the decals. Sheriff Perry says a private donation is paying for the graphics and that no public funds are being used. The stickers are being placed on all the county's marked patrol cars.

Note: "I am very proud of my beliefs, and in a world that is turning against not only faith but law enforcement, I feel it is the right thing to do," Sheriff Perry says. "I want my guys to know that when they get in the car, and they hear the passenger door close, they know who is riding with them."

Post and Courier: Dorchester County Sheriff's Office to get first state accreditation

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160307/PC16/160309528>

Dave Munday

The Dorchester County Sheriff's Office will receive its first state accreditation today. Sheriff L.C. Knight will become the first sheriff in Dorchester County to have his agency receive any level of accreditation, according to Chief Deputy Sam Richardson. The recognition will be presented at 7 p.m. today in County Council chambers in Summerville.

WCSC: Dorchester Co. to discuss school resource officer options, again

<http://www.live5news.com/story/31406019/dorchester-co-to-discuss-school-resource-officer-options-again>

Karina Bolster

Changes in security could come to Dorchester County schools in the 2016-2017 year. Monday night Dorchester County Council will again look at the costs for hiring school resource officers as compared to private security officers. County Councilman Larry Hargett will present a motion to move that the 2016-2017 fiscal year budget include a credit to all taxpayers who are having to pay more right now because of a decision made in July to fund SROs in the school district.

The State: Richland County officials to start spraying for mosquitoes

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/article64516382.html>

Jane Moon Dail

The Richland County Vector Control Program will start spraying for mosquitoes soon in densely populated areas and is encouraging residents to do their part to keep the population under control. Trucks in Richland County outside of Columbia city limits will typically spray for adult mosquitoes between midnight and dawn. Spraying may be conducted earlier depending on conditions.

National News:

Associated Press: Mexican president: Trump language like that of Hitler

<http://bigstory.ap.org/urn:publicid:ap.org:24ea91ab07bb4968b26ec03b3a3b76b3>

Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto compared the language of Republican presidential hopeful Donald Trump to that of dictators Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini in an interview published Monday, and said it has hurt U.S.-Mexico relations. Asked about Trump, Peña Nieto complained to the Excelsior newspaper about "these strident expressions that seek to propose very simple solutions" and said that sort of language has led to "very fateful scenes in the history of humanity." "That's the way Mussolini arrived and the way Hitler arrived," Peña Nieto said. Peña Nieto until now had avoided direct comments on Trump, who has pledged to build a wall along the two countries' borders. Trump also has said Mexican immigrants bring crime and drugs to the U.S. and are "rapists."

Associated Press: Class action suit filed by residents over Flint water crisis

<http://bigstory.ap.org/urn:publicid:ap.org:dceac2469e9a47e9b57d6a6bd118a092>

A lawsuit stemming from Flint's lead-contaminated water was filed Monday on behalf of the city's residents against Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder as well as other current and former government officials and corporations. The federal lawsuit — which is seeking class-action status — alleges that tens of thousands of residents have suffered physical and economic injuries and damages. It argues officials failed to take action over "dangerous levels of lead" in drinking water and "downplayed the severity of the contamination" in the financially struggling city. Snyder's spokesman Ari Adler said the administration doesn't comment on pending litigation, but is "staying focused on solutions for the people of Flint."

Associated Press: Navy SEALs tell congressman there is a combat rifle shortage

<http://bigstory.ap.org/urn:publicid:ap.org:6af676513c55489fbc333d3db02b7dd1>

Richard Lardner

Navy SEAL teams don't have enough combat rifles to go around, even as these highly trained forces are relied on more than ever to carry out counterterrorism operations and other secretive missions, according to SEALs who have confided in Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-Calif. After SEALs return from a deployment, their rifles are given to other commandos who are shipping out, said Hunter, a former Marine who served three combat tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. This weapons carousel undercuts the "train like you fight" ethos of the U.S. special operations forces, they said. The problem isn't a lack of money, according to Hunter. Congress has frequently boosted the budgets of special operations forces in the years since the 9/11 attacks, he said. "There is so much wasteful spending," he said. "Money is not reaching the people it needs to reach."

Associated Press: Michael Bloomberg, the billionaire former three-term mayor of New York City, has decided against mounting a third-party White House bid

<http://bigstory.ap.org/urn:publicid:ap.org:0e5a4da024a94ec29e3bc546b446e103>

Michael Bloomberg, the billionaire former three-term mayor of New York City, has decided against mounting a third-party White House bid.

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