

Item  
Sumter, SC  
Circ. 19018  
From Page:  
6  
6/1/2016  
67039

# 148 Prospects for passage of military retirement deduction bill dim

**BY JIM HILLEY**  
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An attempt by state Sen. Thomas McElveen, D-Sumter, to have the South Carolina Senate approve the second reading of a bill providing income tax deduction for military retirees was thwarted Tuesday.

An objection to the bill by Sen. Gerald Malloy, D-Darlington, keeps it on the contested bills calendar making its passage this year "virtually impossible," McElveen said.

The final day of the 2016 General Assembly will be Thursday, though a session is likely to be called after the June 14 Primary Election to override any vetoes issued by Gov. Nikki Haley.

Proponents of the military retirement deduction say it gives members of the military an incentive to stay in the Palmetto State after retirement, providing a boost to the state's economy. Areas such as Sumter County, home of Shaw Air Force Base, would benefit from the bill, McElveen said.

"Most of these retirees go on to other careers," McElveen said. "They make the work force so much more work ready."

McElveen said 26 states already have some sort of legislation to exempt military retirement income from state income tax. The bill, sponsored in the House by Rep. Murrell Smith, R-Sumter, would allow military retirees younger than 65 to deduct the first \$15,000 of military retirement income from their taxable income in South Carolina, while retirees 65 or older could deduct as much as \$30,000.

Malloy said the state income tax system already provides for those who have military retirement income. People with income such as retirement effectively pay less in taxes than the poor already, he said. Malloy also said the bill would benefit some areas of the state which are already doing well, but would do nothing for poor and rural areas such as Darlington County, which he represents.

Military retirees already

have many advantages other people in the state do not have, Malloy said.

"They have health insurance," he said. "There are hundreds of thousands of people here who have to go without."

He said the best way to help retirees is to pass Medicaid expansion. He said there are numerous other issues the state should address before giving military retirees a tax break.

"The moral test of this government is how we treat our children," Malloy said. "We had the Abbeville case, and we still have not addressed rural education."

In other action Tuesday, the Senate approved a conference committee report on the Appropriations Bill. Among other provisions, the bill allows the state to use \$20 million in recurring funds to obtain \$2.1 billion in bonds to fund road repairs and allows the incremental forgiveness of \$12 million in loans to South Carolina State University.



Item  
Sumter, SC  
Circ. 19018  
From Page:  
7  
5/27/2016  
67039

# <sup>148</sup> Suspect extradited

## Grandmother faces old child abuse charges in 2 states

**BY ADRIENNE SARVIS**  
adrienne@theitem.com

Jaqueline Raysor, the grandmother from Louisiana arrested by Sumter County Sheriff's Office for reportedly abusing her two grandchildren, was taken back to Louisiana Wednesday after trying and failing to fight extradition.

Before being transported to Louisiana, the 55-year-old posted bail set at \$75,000 cash or surety with GPS monitoring on April 25 but was taken back into custody when Louisiana authorities issued a warrant for her arrest.

SEE **EXTRADITED**, PAGE A7

## **EXTRADITED** FROM PAGE A1

Sumter County Sheriff's Office Public Information Officer Ken Bell said the governor of Louisiana, John Bel Edwards, sent a warrant to South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley requesting that Raysor be returned to Louisiana.

After both governors signed the warrant, Raysor was taken to her former state.

On April 19, Raysor moved to Sumter with her 7-year-old granddaughter and 9-year-old grandson and was arrested on April 22 after she took her granddaughter to KershawHealth Medical Center for a severe foot burn. The girl also had bruises on her body consistent with physical abuse.

The 7-year-old's injury was later determined to be an immersion burn, meaning her foot had been submerged into scalding water. The granddaughter was later

taken to Palmetto Children's Hospital in Columbia where she underwent successful surgery to save her foot.

The sheriff's office also reported that the 9-year-old appeared to have been beaten with a belt and an electrical extension cord.

There was speculation at the beginning of the investigation as to whether Raysor actually is the biological grandmother of the children she said she began caring for following the death of her daughter, the children's mother.

Bell said Raysor is the biological grandmother of the brother and sister. He added that South Carolina Department of Social Services is working to re-unite the children with their other family members.

Through further investigation of Raysor's background, local authorities discovered that she faced child abuse charges in Louisiana and Mississippi.



Independent  
Voice of  
Fairfield County  
Winnsboro, SC  
Circ. 0  
From Page:  
1  
6/2/2016  
66817



# 148 Stewart resigns

District 3 up for Grabs  
in November

**James Denton**  
**Editor**

WINNSBORO – Walter Larry Stewart, who successfully appealed the November 2014 election results and unseated incumbent Mikel Trapp in a new election in March 2015, has officially resigned his District 3 County Council seat.



**Stewart**

In a letter dated May 24, Stewart informed the Fairfield County Board of Elections that he was resigning effective June 30. Stewart cited an unspecified health issue as the reason for his resignation.

Stewart in his letter said he would "continue to serve until an election is called or someone is designated to fill the position." Debbie Stidham, Director of Fairfield County Elections and Voter Registration, said that since Stewart's resignation was less than 180 days before the Nov. 8 general election, no special election would be called. Instead, she said, the District 3 County Council seat would be

## Stewart

From page 1

included on the ballot this November.

Stidham said she forwarded Stewart's resignation to Gov. Nikki Haley's office, which has the option to appoint someone to serve District 3 until a newly elected member can be sworn in in January. There was no word at press time if such an appointment would be made.

Candidates interested in filling the two years remaining on Stewart's term must file by petition by July 15 at the Voter Registration and Elections Office at 315 S. Congress St., Winnsboro.

Trapp edged out Stewart 489-484 in the November 2014 race, with the less than 1 percent margin triggering an automatic recount. The recount the following Friday unearthed one additional vote for Stewart and enough irregularities for Stewart to file an official protest of the results.

Debra Matthews, a Winnsboro attorney who represented the Stewart campaign in 2014, said after the recount that some absentee ballots did not conform to the state statute and three voters were given the incorrect ballot style at their polling place.

Stewart's camp prevailed in the protest hearing before the Fairfield County Election Commission, which ordered a new election. Trapp filed an appeal with the State Election Commission, which upheld the County Commission's decision in a hearing in early December 2014.

Gov. Haley set the new election date for March 3, 2015, at which time Stewart handily dispatched Trapp 429-380.

Efforts to reach Stewart for comment before press time were unsuccessful. Trapp, meanwhile, told The Voice that he had "no interest" at this time in running for his old seat again.

See **Stewart** page 2



The Link  
Cheraw, SC  
Circ. 8748  
From Page:  
4  
5/31/2016  
64869



# 148+.234 Capitol Report



Farmers in our state who suffered significant losses from October's catastrophic flooding will soon be able to apply for state financial help, now that the farm aid bill (H 4717) has become law (Act 174). After the House and Senate overrode Gov. Niki Haley's veto of the bill, it became law May 24.

The new law creates a \$40 million Farm Aid Fund and requires the state Department of Agriculture to put in place a grant program and application process. To be eligible for a grant, a farmer living in a disaster-declared county must provide receipts, ledgers and records verifying a 40-percent loss on an agricultural commodity such as tobacco, cotton, wheat or timber.

The counties hit hardest will get top priority in receiving grants. Each grant awarded may not exceed 20 percent of the loss, and the total cannot exceed \$100,000. The grants are intended to cover production expenses and losses, such as seed and fertilizer, and cannot be used to purchase new equipment. Criminal penalties are provided in the new law to address fraud.

Haley opposed the bill, calling it a bailout for one sector of the economy. But, as S.C. Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers has said, "This is no bailout. It is a lifeline that is desper-

ately needed."

How true his words are for our farmers.

Although farmers can qualify for federal crop insurance, these payments are expected to cover only a third of the \$400 million in estimated crop losses suffered by farmers statewide.

I am happy to report the House and Senate are one step closer toward agreeing to a financial plan to repair hundreds of roads and bridges in the state. The House has amended and approved S 1258, reflecting many changes desired by Haley and the Senate.

The bill would enable the borrowing of \$2.2 billion over 10 years without imposing new taxes.

The bill also would revamp the Transportation Commission, which carries out Department of Transportation policy. It would require the governor to appoint members to the commission, with the advice and consent of the General Assembly. Currently, legislative delegations largely have control over the selection of commission members.

The House is working hard to finish legislative business before June 2, the official end of the legislative session. Members will likely come back later in June to act on any outstanding vetoes by the governor, as well as compromises being developed in conference committees, including the budget bill for Fiscal Year 2016-17.

In other action, the Eye Care Consumer Protection Law (Act 173) was enacted

**See Capitol Report, 7**



The Link  
Cheraw, SC  
Circ. 8748  
From Page:  
7  
5/31/2016  
64869



## CAPITOL REPORT

Continued from Page 4

after the House and Senate overrode Haley's veto of the bill (S 1016). The new law establishes regulations and requirements for the sale of prescription eyewear in the state. It prohibits anyone from dispensing contact lenses, glasses or spectacles to a patient without a valid prescription from a "provider" licensed by the S.C. Board of Examiners in Optometry or the S.C. Board of Medical Examiners.

A bill (H 4510) signed into law by Gov. Haley will limit the number of foster children placed in a foster home. Under the new law, a foster home will not be permitted to provide full-time care for more than five foster children, with the total number of children residing in the foster care home not exceeding eight. The new law does not apply to foster children placed in a

foster home before the law's enactment. The law also allows several exceptions, such as when brothers and sisters need to be kept together, when a child is returned to a home that was a previous placement and when a placement is deemed to be in the best interests of the child.

A bill on the way to Haley's office for her review is H 3848, the S.C. Founding Principles Act, which I co-sponsored. The bill would require the state Board of Education and the Education Oversight Committee to incorporate certain topics into the S.C. Social Studies Standards and into the required study of the U.S. Constitution. The topics that would need to be addressed include: principles shaping the founding of the United States, the Federalist Papers, the structure of government, the concept of separation of

powers, and freedoms guaranteed by the Bill of Rights. The House and Senate have approved the bill.

Thank you for the trust you have placed in me. I can be reached from January to early June in Columbia on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays at (803) 212-6896. My Columbia address is Rep. Patricia Moore Henegan, 333A Blatt, P.O. Box 11867, Columbia, SC, 29211 or [pahenegan@schouse.gov](mailto:pahenegan@schouse.gov).

On Mondays and Fridays, you can reach me at (843) 479-7838. You may also call (843) 479-5622 to set up an appointment to meet me on Mondays or Fridays at my Bennettsville office at the Office of Veterans Affairs in the D.D. McColl House, 300 West Main St.. The address of my local office is P.O. Box 41, Bennettsville, SC 29512.



Weekly  
Observer  
Hemingway, SC  
Circ. 2192  
From Page:  
1A  
6/1/2016  
64144



## <sup>148</sup>Eagle awards presented to six scouts

From staff reports

FLORENCE – Six Eagle Scout awards were presented during an Eagle Scout Court of Honor on May 23 at First Presbyterian Church in Florence.

The six Scouts – Zachary Blakelock, Harrison Troy Smithey, Hong-Wei Evan Tan, Bryant Callaway Stokes, Harry Patterson Kannon and Griffin Walters – have a total of more than 30 years as being part of the scouting ministry of Troop 477. The Scouts along with friends spent more than 1,600 hours of community service working on their Eagle Scout service projects.

Pee Dee Area Scout executive Barry McDonald offered congratulations from the National council, and past council President Walt Barefoot read letters of congratulations from Florence Mayor Steven Wukela and S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley.

The Scouts were presented U.S. flags

flown over the state capital in their honor, a gift from S.C. Rep. Jay Jordan of Florence.

### **Zachary Blakelock**

Blakelock is the 18-year-old son of Richard and Ann Blakelock. He is a senior at West Florence High School and a member of St. John's Episcopal Church, and he participates in the church's youth group.

Blakelock started his scouting journey in Bristol, Connecticut, as a Tiger Cub in Pack 425. He was an active Cub Scout and attended Cub Scout summer camp three consecutive years. He completed his Cub Scout journey by earning the Arrow of Light in early 2009. Moving into Troop 425, he continued his scouting journey and especially looked forward to the historic

See **SCOUTS**, Page 6



# Scouts

From Page 1

trails trips, where he had the opportunity to visit Gettysburg, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, Annapolis and Valley Forge and learn about their history.

In the summer of 2013, Blakelock and his family moved to Florence as part of his father's relocation with Otis Elevator Company. Wanting to continue his scouting journey, he joined Troop 477 that fall. Having trouble with the 2nd class swimming requirement, he was enrolled in a swim class and completed the requirement within a few months. He's still not a fan of swimming, though. With that behind him, he quickly moved up the remaining Boy Scout ranks and continued participating in most monthly campouts. His favorite trips have been the 50-mile AT (Appalachian Trail) hike in 2015, the Great Smoky Mountain Lost Sea Trip in 2014 and warm water tubing in Lake Robinson.

Blakelock's Eagle Service Project was clearing and installing marked posts along the nature trails at the Florence Presbyterian Community Home off West Lucas Street. A total of 56 service hours were recorded.

Blakelock is pursuing a job at the Otis Elevator factory and plans to enroll this fall at Florence-Darlington Tech.

## Harrison Troy Smithey

Smithey is the 18-year-old son of Harry and Bonnie Smithey. He has two brothers, Cody and Ryan. He is a senior at South Florence High School and holds the rank of 1st lieutenant for South Florence NJROTC. Smithey is a member of the 1758 robotics team, the Technomancers, and has been all through high school. He is also a member of the Gooney Birds RC flying club and enjoys flying

his radio-controlled planes on weekends.

Smithey began scouting with Cub Scout Pack 241 in Lantana, Florida, and joined Boy Scout Troop 477 in 2009. He has held various patrol positions each year. He has been to Camp Coker six summers and has participated in two backpacking trips to Mount Rogers, Virginia, with one being a 50-miler on the Appalachian Trail. In 2013, he traveled to Canada's Algonquin Provincial Park and spent a week canoeing 50 miles in the wilderness. In 2014, he traveled to Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico, where he backpacked more than 70 miles in his 12-day trek and summited 12,441-foot Baldy Mountain. Smithey

was elected into the Order of the Arrow in 2011, earned 33 merit badges, the mile-swim award and three 50-miler awards.

For his Eagle Scout Project, Smithey removed a runway that was 12 feet wide and 200 feet long for the Gooney Birds. This included relocating a fence and capping a water line. Most of the work was done the first day, with some follow-up work the next day with a project total of 59 service hours.

Smithey will be staying in touch with Troop 477 and the friends he has made during camp outs. He plans to continue his path of controlling aircraft in the sky by pursuing a career in air traffic control.

## Hong-Wei Evan Tan

Tan is the 15-year-old son of Kai-Song and J.C. Tan. He is a freshman at Florence Christian School, where he is a member of the Beta Club and golf team. Tan has been playing the violin since he was 6 years old, and he is a member of the Florence/Darlington Strings Orchestra. His music ability has qualified him to play at the All-Region and the All-State Orchestra. Tan is active in

the Florence Baptist Temple youth group.

Tan joined Cub Scout Pack 504 in the fourth grade and received his Arrow of Light. He then joined Troop 477 during his seventh grade year. Tan served as troop scribe and patrol leader during his second year in the troop. He was elected into the Order of the Arrow and took his ordeal in the fall of 2015. He holds the position of assistant senior patrol leader.

Tan's first big trip with Troop 477 took place in the summer of 2014, a five-day journey to the Great Smoky Mountain Lost Sea that really inspired his appreciation for nature and the wilderness. In the summer of 2015,

Tan and his father hiked the Appalachian Trail at Mount Rogers. Tan has been to Camp Coker two times and has earned 32 merit badges. He also earned the religious award, God and Country, in 2014. He plans to go to the 2017 National Scout Jamboree with his brother in West Virginia next summer.

For his Eagle Scout project, Tan designed, coordinated and created a raised flower bed for Presbyterian Communities of South Carolina. He researched and developed the plans and put together times for fellow Scouts and friends to participate. The flower bed is being enjoyed every day at the facility. Tan totaled more than 85 hours of work on his project.

Scouting has provided Tan with many valuable lessons and helped him transform into the young man he is today. He plans to use these valuable lessons toward his next venture.

## Bryant Callaway Stokes

Stokes is the 16-year-old son of Brantley and Stephanie Stokes. He is a sophomore at South Florence High School, where he is a part of the honors program. He is a member of South

Weekly  
Observer  
Hemingway, SC  
Circ. 2192  
From Page:  
6A  
6/1/2016  
64144





Weekly  
Observer  
Hemingway, SC  
Circ. 2192  
From Page:  
6A  
6/1/2016  
64144

Florence Baptist Church and is active with the youth program. Stokes enjoys fishing, hunting and power lifting. He plans to pursue a career in physical therapy and kinesiology after completing high school.

Stokes began scouting in the first grade. He joined Cub Scout Pack 477 and worked his way through the ranks. He developed his love of camping during those Cub Scout years. Stokes enjoyed fishing, exploring, learning about nature and camping on The Yorktown Carrier. Building Pinewood Derby cars and attending Cub-O-Weens at Camp Coker are some of his favorite

Cub Scout memories. After earning the Arrow of Light, Stokes crossed over to Boy Scout Troop 477.

Being a Boy Scout has helped Stokes develop into a well-prepared young man. Holding different positions in his troop has helped him develop leadership skills. Stokes has enjoyed adventures such as snorkeling with manatees in Florida, hiking on the Appalachian Trail and kayaking to Bulls Island. His favorite trip was in 2013 when he traveled to Canada's Algonquin Provincial Park. He spent more than a week camping there and canoed 50 miles of lakes. Stokes was elected into the Order of the Arrow in 2013, has earned the God and Church award and 26 merit badges. Most important, he has learned life skills that will be with him forever.

For his Eagle Scout Project, Stokes, with a crew of helpers, put in a handicap access ramp at the playground of his church. His project totaled 61 service hours.

### **Harry Patterson Kannon**

Kannon is the 17-year-old son of Emily and Roger Coward and Pete Kannon of

Hope Mills, North Carolina. He is a junior at West Florence High School, where he has been a member of the tennis team for the past three years. Kannon also is involved in the tennis club and is a member of the Beta Club.

Kannon is a member of St. John's Church and has been active in the youth group. He also serves as a Crucifer during church services.

Kannon began scouting with the guidance and encouragement of his uncle, Richard Walker. Kannon began as a Webelos in Pack 475 and joined Troop 477

in 2010. He has served the troop in various leadership roles, including quartermaster, patrol leader and senior patrol leader. Kannon enjoyed three summers at Camp Coker and was elected to the Order of the Arrow. He has earned 22 merit badges.

Being a member of Troop 477 enabled Kannon to experience backpacking adventures. Under the direction of Hunter Morgan, Kannon has hiked in the High Sierras of Yosemite National Park, paddled in Algonquin, Canada, and hiked 50 miles on the Appalachian Trail twice. In the summer of 2014, he braved the elements at Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico. Kannon has earned the 50-Miler Award four times.

For his Eagle Project, Kannon organized members of the Beta Club at West Florence High School to ring the bells for the Salvation Army's yearly Christmas fund drive. He approached the Salvation Army with a proposal to recruit students to ring bells every afternoon for one week, plus two entire Saturdays. He involved more than 33 students who rang bells for a total of 70 hours and raised nearly \$1,000.

Kannon is following in the proud footsteps of his Uncle, Pat Patterson, and his two cousins, Lawson

Walker and Ricky Tyner, as an Eagle Scout.

### **Griffin Walters**

Walters is the 14-year-old son of James and Darlene Walters Jr. He is in the ninth grade at Florence Christian School and has been attending FCS since 3K. Walters' favorite sport is soccer, which he has played since he was 3. Walters has played seven years of recreational soccer and seven years of select soccer and just finished playing his second year for the Florence Chris-

tian varsity soccer team. Walters attends Florence Baptist Temple and is active weekly in youth group.

Walters was a Cub Scout in Pack 476 and joined Troop 477 in 2012. He has enjoyed many outdoor activities in Troop 477, including his favorite, a 2014 multi-state trip that included the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, seeing the Cherokee outdoor drama, North Carolina whitewater rafting, spelunking the Lost Sea Cave in Tennessee and an Atlanta Braves game. In 2015, Walters hiked 50 miles on the Appalachian trail and biked the Virginia Creeper rail trail. Another favorite was a trip to Disney and camping in its Fort Wilderness campground and swimming with the manatees at Crystal River, Florida. Walters learned to snow ski during annual scout ski trips to the North Carolina mountains and water ski on camping trips to Lake Robinson.

Walters held multiple leadership positions, including scribe and assistant patrol leader. He was elected into the Order of the Arrow in 2013. He plans to attend Philmont Scout Ranch next summer.

Walters' Eagle Scout service project was building a boardwalk at Lee State Park to give easy access to the water for fishing and boating in the group camping area. He worked on the project for three months. The first







month was planning and working with Brad Lane, the Lee State Park ranger. The second and third month of the project was gathering supplies and raising

money while building the boardwalk. The total boardwalk length ended up being 68 feet long. It cost more than \$1,300 and totaled more than 1,500 service hours

Walters' plans include college at Francis Marion University and Georgia Tech and an engineering degree.

Weekly  
Observer  
Hemingway, SC  
Circ. 2192  
From Page:  
6A  
6/1/2016  
64144



Six new Eagle Scout awards were presented on May 23 to (from left) Bryant Stokes, Zachary Blakelock, Patterson Kannon, Griffin Walters, Troy Smithey and Evan Tan.



# 148 'Conservative' doesn't really mean much anymore

Hartsville  
Messenger  
Hartsville, SC  
Circ. 6303  
From Page:  
4  
6/1/2016  
63276

**Y**ou don't see political yard signs in South Carolina that say, "Vote John Smith, liberal." All over the state, however, it is common for candidates to tout they are "conservative."

In today's media-saturated world of buzzwords, does the word "conservative" actually mean anything? Hasn't the word lost its meaning, just like the words "liberal" or "progressive" are relatively simplistic frames of reference that do little to outline a candidate's full perspective?

"The word 'conservative' now causes some people to wince because they think they're being perceived as [state Sen.] Lee Bright rather than [President] George H.W. Bush," said Upstate political analyst Chip Felkel.

You might be surprised to know the actual dictionary definition of "conservative." It's an adjective that describes a person "disposed to preserving existing conditions, institutions, etc., or to restore traditional ones, and to limit change." A companion definition is one who is "cautiously moderate."

In other words, "conservative" generally is accepted as "resistance to change," according to College of Charleston political science professor Gibbs Knott.

So let's look at how serious South Carolina's conservatives were about opposing change this year:

They voted for \$40 million more for farmers hammered by flooding.

They voted to borrow \$2 billion to pay for much-needed road improvements by obligating the state for years to spend \$200 million annually of existing tax revenue. They dumped jumping at something that was all the rage in conservative circles in years past — a "user

fee" of an increased gas taxes paid, in part, by visitors.

They voted to ban abortions after 19 weeks — a huge change from the constitutional standard on abortion.

On the national front, self-proclaimed conservatives want to change immigration laws and trade agreements. They want activist judges who will change Supreme Court precedents. And they want to create wholesale change by eliminating some government agencies.

All of this zeal for change doesn't sound too "conservative." Of course, there's also something to be said that with a whole lot of nothing going on in Washington, the do-nothing GOP-led Congress really has some credibility about being "conservative," although many think they mostly waste time.

Knott suggests the word "conservative" doesn't have as much



**Andy Brack**  
Statehouse Report

of a punch any more other than being a synonym for "Republican," as the label "liberal" is often trotted out to describe all Democrats.

"I also think the rise of hyper-partisan media has continued to keep words like 'conservative' and 'liberal' alive," he said. "So yes, I think the word still has meaning in 2016. But it is much more connected to partisanship (conservative equals Republican, liberal equals Democrat) than ever before."

University of South Carolina political science professor Mark Tompkins had similar thoughts. "It seems to me that many on

the right have succumbed to a tribal impulse — our folks and their folks," he said. "This impulse leads to a variety of policy positions and legislative and regulatory actions that abandon 'conservative principles.'"

Felkel added that "conservative" meant a broad range of things today, which leads to adjectives to explain what kind of Republican they may be — tea party conservative, evangelical conservative or country club conservative.

"Does it mean 'fiscal conservative' or 'social conservative?' Or is it a mix of both?" he asked. "In our own state, we see how you tend to have more fiscal conservatives and social moderates [in the Republican Party] on the coast, where in the Upstate there are more social and fiscal conservatives."

He added, "Unfortunately, there's so much controversy within the GOP on what that term means — and disagreement over what is required to meet the criteria or even what is that criteria — that it has lost its punch."

All in all, it seems the red GOP tent is packed with "conservatives" of various stripes, from the bombastic, fire-breathing Bright of Spartanburg to Gov. Nikki Haley to thoughtful senators like those targeted by Haley in the coming June primary.

Nevertheless, it's important to know the big red tent is also pretty white. It's not very brown or black because the state's minorities don't seem to feel comfortable inside. Maybe that's because they're not sure exactly what a "conservative" is, but they don't like what they see now.

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



Journal  
Williamston, SC  
Circ. 3764  
From Page:  
2  
5/25/2016  
61249



148

## STATE HOUSE REPORT FROM REP. ANNE J. THAYER House District 9

Dear Friends,

With only a few weeks left in the 2016 legislative session, the House is working diligently on getting some Senate legislation through for a vote and tying up loose ends.

The first issue we dealt with last week was overriding Governor Haley's veto of the Farm Aid Bill. Her veto was overridden with a near-unanimous and bipartisan vote. When the governor requested federal disaster resources as a result of the 2015 floods, she requested funds for homeowners and small businesses but did not include resources for our farmers (although agriculture is the state's #1 industry). The day after the floods, the governor stood with her Cabinet and said we're going to help every citizen in South Carolina. This past week your legislature honored that commitment by overriding her veto. By overriding the veto, we made certain our state's farmers and the jobs they provide stay right here in South Carolina and we don't lose market share to China and Mexico. Thank goodness we live in a Democratic Republic with checks and balances. The Governor is entitled to be wrong, but fortunately, 97% of the legislators voting stood with our



SC family farmers knowing that some desperately need help.

My House colleagues and I continue our commitment to pass strong ethics reform legislation. This week we strengthened and improved legislation providing for independent ethics oversight of all public officials. This legislation discontinues the current practices of the legislative and executive branches each exclusively investigating alleged ethics violations of their own members. Instead, this bill calls for allegations of public misconduct to be investigated independently by a reconstituted State Ethics Commission. If investigators find probable cause that a legislator has committed an ethics violation, the findings would be made public and relayed to the appropriate legislative ethics committee to pursue the matter.

Also, I'm pleased to report final passage was granted this week for the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act. Currently in our state, approximately 28 babies are aborted each year after 20 weeks (5 months). Governor Haley has indicated she will sign the new law which prohibits most abortions at 20 weeks after fertilization, the point when an unborn child can feel excruciating pain when aborted. We now join 17 other states that have also passed similar measures.

A Senate bill bonding \$2.2 billion to repair our dangerous roads and bridges was sent to the House and has been given final approval by the House Ways and Means Committee. The committee amended the bill to add in strong Department of Transportation (DOT) restructuring and accountability measures which were not included in the Senate version. As I have said all along, we must have DOT reform before any additional taxpayer dollars are given to this agency. It is important to note this bill does not allow for any new roads to be built, but requires the additional funds be used to fix our existing dilapidated roads and bridges. The bill now heads to the House floor for a vote.

Lastly, let's celebrate the following jobs: Jiangnan Molding Plastic Technology is building a \$45 million facility in Spartanburg and bringing 150 jobs over the next 5 years; Autoneum is adding a \$35.5 million expansion and will add 40 new positions; Baxter Enterprises is establishing a new facility in Oconee bringing a \$20.7 million investment and 37 jobs over the next 5 years; Falcon Boats is building a \$1.5 million facility in Newberry adding 35 jobs over 5 years; WG Plastics



is building in Abbeville with a \$2.7 million facility and 50 jobs over the next 5 years; SterAssure is investing \$2.2 million in Greenville bringing 25 jobs over the next 5 years.

As always, I appreciate the opportunity of serving you.

Rep. Anne Thayer

Journal  
Williamston, SC  
Circ. 3764  
From Page:  
2  
5/25/2016  
61249



The Morning  
News  
Florence, SC  
Circ. 35092  
From Page:  
3  
6/1/2016  
61050



# 148 + 4 Haley's veto kills bill keeping teacher evaluations private

The Associated Press

COLUMBIA — Gov. Nikki Haley's veto has killed legislation exempting teacher evaluations from public disclosure, but the Republican governor said she will support a better-written bill next year.

Haley said she recognizes the bill's intent is to promote a more candid evaluation process, but she said it is too broad.

The one-sentence measure exempts educator evaluations with "personally identifiable information" from the state's Freedom of Information Act.

Haley said that allows school districts to withhold any record related to an evaluation, including information on teacher misconduct that should be publicly available, she wrote in her veto message signed Friday.

The bill's sponsor, Rep. Kenny Bingham, said he supports the veto, as he didn't intend to create a potential loophole.

"We're working on language now to fix it," he said.

The House voted unani-

mously Tuesday to sustain Haley's veto, after Bingham took the podium to make the rare request that they do so. It marked Haley's first successful veto this year.

Bingham, R-Cayce, said he introduced the bill as a precaution after the state Department of Education introduced a new evaluation process.

"It's designed to be more critical and more specific — to drill down more on teachers in an effort to help them," he said. "At the same time there was concern that people can take that out of context. If it's FOIA-able, principals are less likely to note any deficiencies for the public record, which defeats the purpose of an evaluation."

The House passed the bill unanimously last year. The Senate passed it 35-1 two weeks ago.

Haley said she's working with Bingham and state Superintendent Molly Spearman on legislation that will protect teachers' privacy while allowing "reasonable public access."



The Morning  
News  
Florence, SC  
Circ. 35092  
From Page:  
1  
5/30/2016  
61050



# 148 Gov. Haley coming to Florence to formally endorse Skipper

From staff reports

FLORENCE — S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley will make her endorsement of Richard Skipper official during a Wednesday visit in Florence.

Skipper is bidding for the District 31 seat in the S.C. Senate in a Republican primary-election challenge to 36-year incumbent Hugh K. Leatherman Sr., the president pro tempore of the Senate.

Haley will appear at noon at Wholly Smokin, a downtown restaurant at 150 S. Dargan St.

restaurant at 150 S. Dargan St.

"Florence deserves new leadership that fixes our roads and delivers tax relief, instead of funding legislative pay raises and pet projects, and that's the kind of leadership they'll get with conservative businessman Richard Skipper in the Senate," Haley said in a news release.

Skipper said he is honored to have Haley's support.

"With Gov. Haley's endorsement and visit here ... I'm confident that we'll take a great stride in continuing to build the kind of successful campaign it's going to take to win against such an entrenched politician like Hugh Leatherman," Skipper said in the news release.

Dean Fowler, who is retiring as the Florence County treasurer, also is running for the District 31 seat.

The event is open to the public.

## IF YOU GO

» WHO: S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley

» WHAT: Formal endorsement of Richard Skipper, a challenger in the S.C. Senate Seat 31 Republican Primary race.

» WHEN: noon Wednesday.

» WHERE: Wholly Smokin, 150 S. Dargan Street, downtown Florence



148

# Random thoughts about graduations, politics, meat and ...

The Morning News  
Florence, SC  
Circ. 35092  
From Page: 8  
5/29/2016  
61050



**C**ongratulations to the Class of 2016. Take a bow, graduates. Take two bows, parents. Even uncles can celebrate.

I did. One of my nieces graduated with honors last weekend from my alma mater in Columbia, Missouri. How nice. The 2,125-mile, four-day drive was well worth it. But that didn't leave much time for anything but random thoughts. ...

» **Seriously?** Seniors in my niece's class were not allowed to turn their tassels. The school's printed guidelines for graduation behavior said moving the tassel is no longer considered "proper etiquette."

» **At least:** My alma mater recognized a valedictorian. Actually, seven of them. What's up with that?

» **Well ...** That's seven more than Darlington County schools recognize. None or many ... these seem to be a growing trend.

» **Come on:** What's wrong with recognizing one? Competition is OK in sports but not in a classroom? Students who truly finish at the top of their class deserve the recognition. You can have a top 10 but still have a No. 1.

» **Speaking of recognition:** We will start a series Wednesday in Pee Dee Weekly that will feature profiles on a top scholar from 15 public schools in the Pee Dee. It's easier to pick the student to profile when a school names one valedictorian. Just sayin' ...

» **Why?** Top scholars don't get nearly as much attention as top athletes.

» **Wow:** If I may brag, our staff covered eight high school graduations Friday night. Whew!

» **Just wondering:** What do

top scholars think of Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton?

» **Slick or sick?** That's what you call a transition.

» **Now that we're talking politics:** S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley will appear at 10 a.m. Wednesday at Wholly Smokin (150 S. Dargan St.) to formally announce that she is endorsing challenger Richard Skipper in his challenge to 36-year incumbent Hugh K. Leatherman Sr., the president pro tempore of the S.C. Senate. The event is open to the public.

» **Huh?** Didn't we already know that Haley desperately wants Leatherman out?

» **Where's Dean Fowler?** I heard on a local radio show Friday that the third candidate in this Republican primary race has been on a cruise. That's an interesting way to campaign. Maybe he has the right idea.

» **Speaking of endorsements:** Why hasn't Fowler, the retiring Florence County treasurer, endorsed his deputy treasurer, Laurie Walsh Carpenter, in her race against Julian Young? Or did I miss it?

» **Explain:** Why do we elect county treasurers?

» **Speaking of the treasurer:** It's a shame that money matters so much in elections. I wish we could limit campaign contributions. Maybe to \$27?

» **Let's be frank:** Former Florence Mayor Frank Willis



**Don Kausler Jr.**  
Editor

deserves more credit than he gets for downtown Florence's

resurrection.

» **Tune:** "Ev'ry night on my knees I pray Dear Lord, Hear my plea; | Don't ever let another take her love from me or I would surely die. | Her love is heavenly, when her arms enfold me, | I hear a tender rhapsody; but in reality she doesn't even know me. Name that tune.

» **Bad intersection:** Second Loop Road and South Irby Street. What's worse?

» **Something different:** Columbia, Missouri, has a "diverging diamond" interchange at one Interstate 70 exit. Look it up. It works.

» **Really radical:** CoMo not only has traffic circles, but it is working on a double "round-about." I heard it referred to as a "dogbone."

» **Sorry:** I don't like these flashing yellow turn signals. Too confusing. What was wrong with the "Left turn yield" signs?

» **Sign language:** I prefer words to images when it comes to road communication.

» **Bad enough:** Abbreviations such as LOL were a step backward for civilization.

» **Worse:** Emoticons or emojis are a sign that we are headed back to hieroglyphics.

» **Know what I mean?** ;-)

» **That tune named:** "Just My Imagination," The Temptations.

» **Motown:** Soul music! Soothing music. What a wonderful genre.

» **Mystery:** How is it that Alfred Hitchcock never won an Academy Award for Best Director?

» **Charcoal or propane?** Charcoal. But my roommate prefers gas. She wins.

» **Actually:** I prefer wood. I'll be smoking a brisket this weekend, weather permitting. I used to have a charcoal smoker. Now





it's electric.

» **Hickory or mesquite?**

Mesquite. But my roommate prefers hickory. She wins.

» **And you?** Two-thirds of people who answered our latest online poll said they prefer charcoal.

» **Best of the Pee Dee:** The voting deadline is Tuesday. Cast your votes at [scnow.com/be-](http://scnow.com/be-)

stof.

» **Back to Missouri:** I understand why Kansas City, Kansas, is so named. But why isn't Kansas City, Missouri, named Missouri City?

» **Back to politics:** Where would Lindsey Graham be if he had made it to the main stage of the first Republican debate? Or the second or third? Maybe

... nah.

» **Sorry:** It was just my imagination.

» **Give blood:** Save a life. Give platelets. Save lives.

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The Morning  
News  
Florence, SC  
Circ. 35092  
From Page:  
8  
5/29/2016  
61050