

Title: **Haley vetoes \$41M from Legislature's \$7.5B budget**
 Author: BY SEANNA ADCOX Associated Press
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Haley vetoes \$41M from Legislature's \$7.5B budget

BY SEANNA ADCOX

Associated Press

COLUMBIA — Gov. Nikki Haley struck \$41 million worth of spending from the Legislature's \$7.5 billion budget and thanked legislators Thursday for not attempting to borrow money for college construction.

That's partly why the veto total isn't higher, she said. "They actually did what we said: 'Use the money that's there. Don't go and borrow.'"

Last year, Haley's opposition helped defeat proposals to borrow primarily for projects at universities and technical colleges. She publicly warned legislators in January not to try again.

On Thursday, she applauded the more than \$100 million the budget sends to technical colleges for one-time spending and \$30 million added to four-year colleges for recurring expenses. She called the lack of a college bond bill her "No. 1 win" this year.

But House Ways and Means Chairman Brian White said

colleges, cut deeply amid the recession, needed far more to cover deferred maintenance and building needs. State borrowing is still needed unless lawmakers want colleges to continue passing on costs through increased tuition and fees, he said.

"At some point, we're going to have to borrow to fix the institutions so they don't borrow on the backs of our kids," said

White, R-Anderson.

Haley said the other reason she didn't veto more is because "hidden earmarks" made it impossible.

Legislators are grouping unspecified spending together so she can't strike single items with her line-item veto authority, she said.

"They roll things up to where we can't get to it," she said.

Haley's 51 budget vetoes, issued minutes before her midnight Wednesday deadline, include \$8.7 million of what she calls "old-fashioned pork," such as \$3 million for sports marketing and \$100,000 for a Richland County swimming pool.

Legislators will return to Columbia next week to consider overriding them.

She struck several earmarks for museums, including \$3 million toward a new Medal of Honor museum — currently on the *USS Yorktown* in Charleston Harbor — \$1 million on the Children's Museum of the Upstate, and \$350,000 for the Gibbes Museum of Art in Charleston. She also struck \$50,000 for the *USS Laffey* in Charleston Harbor.

Those should be funded by "selling memberships, collecting admissions fees and soliciting philanthropic support," not "earmarking state funds to choose one site over another," Haley wrote in her veto message.

However, her pen did not touch \$4 million for the planned International African-American Museum in Charleston.

"I think we're a state that's still healing. We're coming on the anniversary," Haley said, referencing the massacre of nine black parishioners at a historic church in Charleston. "I very much feel a responsibility to hold our state together and make sure we understand the significance of June 17 and understand we can only grow from that, so I thought that was

important that that stay."

Fifteen of her vetoes strike mandates, not money.

She vetoed a budget clause calling for an evaluation of moving the Confederate Relic Room and Military Museum to Charleston.

Legislators opted for the study instead of spending anything to display the Confederate flag removed from Statehouse grounds and sent to the museum last summer following the massacre at Emanuel AME Church.

House members, who balked at a proposed \$3.6 million price tag for the flag display and museum expansion, argued its current location in Columbia doesn't attract enough visitors and needs to be more self-sufficient.

But Haley argued the study is a "veiled attempt to justify" combining the Relic Room and the Confederate submarine *H.L. Hunley* and is "nothing more than a legislative pet project."

Haley said when she worked with legislators in bringing down the Confederate flag, they talked about creating a "proper, respectful place for it."



Haley

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“Never in any of those conversations did they talk about moving it to Charleston,” she said.

She also dislikes the idea of a coyote bounty program meant to encourage hunters to kill the predators. Under the program, hunters who kill one of the 16 coyotes tagged by the Department of Natural Resources would receive a lifetime hunting license.

If DNR employees are in range to kill a coyote, they don't need to take the time to catch, tag and release it, she said.

“It just didn't make a whole lot of sense,” she said. “If you're that close, go ahead and get rid of it.”

Title: **Road funds for Aiken in bill signed by Gov. Haley**
 Author: BY CHRISTINA CLEVELAND ccleveland@aikenstandard.com
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Road funds for Aiken in bill signed by Gov. Haley

BY CHRISTINA CLEVELAND

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Aiken County could see an additional \$84 million in road resurfacing projects based on funding from the roads bill that has been signed into law by Gov. Nikki Haley, according to Rep. Bill Taylor, R-Aiken.

"This would include resurfacing five miles of I-20 from the Savannah River to Exit 5," Taylor said in a statement sent to the *Aiken Standard*. "The proposed bridge replacement program would target 22 structurally deficient bridges in Aiken County

(and nearly 400 bridges statewide over the next decade)."

Haley penned her name to legislation Wednesday, which will allow the state to borrow \$2.2 billion over 10 years for infrastructure and is funded with \$200 million annually in existing fees and vehicle sales taxes, reports The Associated Press.

Christy Hall, secretary for the S.C. Department of Transportation, said that will

free up other money DOT can use "to replace bridges and pave roads, allowing more than \$4 billion worth of total work," the article states.

The law also will address the governance of the agency.

AP reports the governor reluctantly signed the bill, saying in a letter to leaders in the legislature "to claim this law as anything close to a victory, to represent it in

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ROADS

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any way as a true solution to our infrastructure problems" would be deceiving the public.

Senate President Pro Tem Hugh Leatherman said in a statement Wednesday that he is "extremely happy" the governor signed the bill, which he said "overwhelmingly received bipartisan support" from the senate.

"This bill would generate billions for infrastructure projects throughout South Carolina. I want to make sure that the people of our state know that this is a starting point toward fixing our roads," Leatherman said. "We will have to come back next year and find a continual source for our roads. I believe this \$4 billion shot in the arm will be a great first step for fixing our roads and bridges."

State lawmakers have long said that a continuous source for funding the state's crumbling roads and bridges is needed, with many also calling for a reform

of DOT.

In a statement responding to the governor signing the bill, S. 1258, the agency said although the bill is primarily known for its funding components, the legislation also addresses several administrative and operational items. The statement later mentions the new governance provision for the agency is "very complex and it remains unclear where the ultimate accountability lies for the agency."

The legislation will remove the governor's ability to appoint the DOT secretary and keeps the agency's commission. Commissioners would hire the DOT secretary and the secretary reports to the commission, which reports to the governor, according to AP.

The law takes effect July 1 and the governor will have input in selecting all eight DOT commissioners. Legislators still must approve them.

"Without a new law, the agency would have reverted to its pre-2007 governance that gave the governor's office no control," AP's report says. "Haley said that's the only reason she signed it."

In terms of highway funding, SCDOT called the roads legislation a "good first step" though it noted it is not a long-term or complete solution to addressing the infrastructure needs of the state.

Hall said in the statement she anticipates the call for reform and funding of transportation infrastructure will continue.

"The goal will be to bring us much closer to providing a highway system in good condition that will be able to adapt as South Carolina continues to grow and to ensure our citizens that the funds are spent wisely on statewide priorities" Hall said.

In last year's budget, the legislature included around \$200

million to send to counties to complete work. Aiken County received \$10.5 million, which came from an additional \$7.8 million. The County typically gets a little more \$2.7 million in funds from state.

The County Transportation Committee proposed to use the additional funds to resurface roughly 47 miles.

"Those projects in Aiken County have been approved and Aiken County residents should start seeing some work very soon on those projects," said Sen. Shane Massey, R-Edgefield.

In this year's budget, Aiken CTC received an additional \$1.8 million in addition to the regular allotment, he said.

Christina Cleveland is the county government reporter at the *Aiken Standard*. **The Associated Press** contributed to this report.

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Haley

Title: **SRS ideal for short-term storage of plutonium**
 Author:
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EDITORIAL

SRS ideal for short-term storage of plutonium

A direct, positive correlation can be found between the intensity of people's reactions to issues of concern and their proximity to home.

And the not-in-my-back yard mentality is alive and well in Aiken County when it comes to many of the nuclear materials conversations recently focused on the newly assimilated plutonium from Japan. South Carolina political leaders have grabbed hold of strong sentiments from Gov. Nikki Haley's office – our state is not a nuclear dumping ground. Senators and Representatives alike used the catch phrase concurrently with the S.C. governor after news of the plutonium's arrival broke Monday.

There's nothing wrong with the sentiment. In fact, it's downright understandable. No one wants their home to become a dumping ground for anything. Using the words "dumping ground" typically invokes images of filth piled high, replete with scavenger birds, varmints and heavy, nauseating air. But, that's not what Savannah River Site is. SRS is a technological wonder with capabilities unlike any other facility in the nation. It's a collective operation of some of the brightest American minds caring for and processing sensitive and dangerous nuclear materials. Sure, it has flaws. And anything run by federal government entities is going to move slowly as it navigates regulations, funding fluctuations and other red-tape obstacles.

As idealistic as we may want to be, County: Aiken

there is a certain reality that needs to be addressed – the plutonium has to go somewhere and it has to be dealt with. The U.S. was the first to isolate plutonium in the lab in 1940 and created a massive amount of the heavy metal throughout the Manhattan Project and Cold War. Whether we have a responsibility to the rest of the world to help address their plutonium storage and transportation issues is a matter of opinion and political tiptoeing on a case-by-case basis, depending on how much we trust a nation. What seems indisputable, however, is that we have the best facilities, best capabilities, best minds and greatest stability to be able to handle the material.

National security issues may not have been a primary concern in the Japanese plutonium case, but experts do expect a major earthquake to strike the Ring-of-Fire nation in the coming years. We do not want another incident like the one that occurred at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant. While the plant didn't hold any defense plutonium, even more secure, seismic tested facilities would be at risk in a major earthquake, especially if followed by a tsunami. Where else in the world would we want to ship that plutonium, or any other plutonium for that matter? Should we hand it to Russia or another European nation?

The plutonium from Japan and the plutonium we already have in storage, including the 34 metric tons of MOX applicable materials split between

South Carolina and Texas, have to be processed and prepared for long-term disposal. It can't just be buried in a box behind the house. The only facilities in the U.S. with the capability to handle both the MOX and non-MOX plutonium processing for long-term storage are at SRS. The site also has the infrastructure for security, research and transportation.

The local economy also benefits from bringing the material here. Savannah River Nuclear Solutions and Savannah River Remediation have invested heavily in the higher education programs in the area, especially at USC Aiken and Aiken Technical College. Aiken's workforce is more highly educated and has sustainable employment so long as the site continues operations. The plutonium from Japan will require monitoring, security and eventual processing – those things equal jobs.

The potential health and environmental dangers are clear, and keeping the plutonium at SRS for 50 or 100 years is not a consideration we should make. Certainly, residents of the state should advocate for more rapid development and construction of a functional and safe permanent disposal facility. However, until there is a viable option for permanent disposal, we should handle as much of these materials here as the site can manage and process to ensure they are properly handled. The cliché may say "not in my back yard," but if you want a job done right, sometimes you've got to do it yourself.

Title: **Roadsbillasmallstep forward**
Author:
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Roads bill a small step forward

It took the entire legislative session, but South Carolina finally has a bill that will fund some needed infrastructure improvements. Unfortunately, the bill overwhelmingly approved by both houses last week does not go far enough.

So, while lawmakers and Gov. Nikki Haley applaud the funding and changes to the structure of DOT, the state essentially is where it was at the start of this legislative session: in need of a longterm, stable revenue source to bridge a tremendous gap in infrastructure funding.

Yes, the bill will do some short-term good. But it is far from a solution, and we should not let anyone sell it as such.

At the end of the day, the bill will send \$216 million in recurring revenue to infrastructure. That money will be used to leverage up to \$4.3 billion (including some existing money that will be freed) over 10 years for needed improvements. That's a lot of money, no doubt, but is a bit

underwhelming in a state that needs more than \$700 million per year over 20 years.

South Carolina would need more than twice what the Legislature passed just to bring roads and bridges to good condition. . . . Some estimates put the amount approved last week at roughly one tenth of what's needed over the longer term to bring the state's roads to excellent condition, according to a report in The State newspaper.

- Greenville News

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YES, THE BILL WILL DO SOME SHORT-TERM GOOD. BUT IT IS FAR FROM A SOLUTION, AND WE SHOULD NOT LET ANYONE SELL IT AS SUCH.

Title: **State of grace? Not at the State House**

Author:

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CINDI ROSS SCOPPE
ASSOCIATE EDITOR
THE STATE

State of grace? Not at the State House

IT FELT, FOR a too-brief time, like everything truly had changed.

After we were shocked by the horror of a pastor and eight members of his flock massacred in their church, for the sin of being black. After we stared into the face of pure evil — and then were bathed in redeeming grace as we witnessed, in those forgiving family members, deep and abiding faith. After our horror turned into compassion as we realized the faith that unites us is stronger than race or ideology or class or anything else that divides us.

After white South Carolina, inspired by that newly recognized kinship, was horrified anew to realize that out of our ignorance or indifference, we had caused pain to our fellow Christians, and our political leaders responded by removing the Confederate flag — the one the evil killer had wrapped himself in — from the grounds of our State House.

After all of that, we thought we were a new people.

People who understand the politics of South Carolina said they had to act immediately to remove the flag because waiting until January would be too long. This wouldn't last, at least not inside the State House. And a year after the massacre, it seems all too clear that they were right.

It was never realistic to think

there would be policy changes beyond the flag, at least not in the short term. Even the politician who seemed the most deeply moved by the massacre, Gov. Nikki Haley, drew a very bright line between symbolism and tone on the one hand and public policy on the other.

She could have great empathy for the families of the Emanuel innocents; she could condemn a presidential candidate's inflammatory and divisive rhetoric. But in her worldview, expanding Medicaid was simply throwing good money after a bad program. Mourning the death of state Sen. Clementa Pinckney, who considered expanding Medicaid a top political priority, would never change that.

In her worldview, the most dangerous thing about guns is that there aren't enough people carrying them. Her compassion for people whose loved ones were massacred with a gun that couldn't have been bought but for a loophole in federal gun laws wasn't going to change that. Nor would it change her support for tax cuts that Sen. Pinckney saw as stealing resources that could have helped the poor in other ways.

What did seem realistic following the massacre and the flag removal — a Kumbaya period that was extended by the grace-filled response to the October floods — was that we

might have a different kind of relationships and a different kind of dialogue. Relationships built on a willingness to consider the experiences and expectations and opinions of people who have very different life experiences than we do. Dialogues that begin with looking afresh at assumptions we never really questioned.

After all, in the days after the Emanuel tragedy, our legislators reached across racial divides and talked and listened to each other in ways most of them never had before.

If that continued into 2016, it was subtle and sporadic at best. If white Republicans recognized that they had pursued policies that disproportionately injured black people, and rejected policies that would have offered a helping hand to those who need it most, they didn't let on. If black Democrats recognized that they had been too quick to assume deliberate racial motives on the part of Republicans, they didn't say so. If white and black, Republican and Democrat recognized that race is not always the motivation for others' actions, if they were willing to listen more openly and try harder to come to agreement on making South Carolina a better place for us all, it didn't show.

I don't suggest that lawmakers were extra divisive or went out of their way to give or take

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offense. I mean they did not go out of their way to *not* give or take offense. There were no moments of insight, when they understood each other in ways they never imagined they could, no surprising new consensuses. They are no worse than they were a year ago. They are simply no better.

And what of the rest of us?

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OUR LEADERS ARE NO WORSE THAN THEY WERE A YEAR AGO. THEY ARE SIMPLY NO BETTER. AND WHAT OF THE REST OF US?



Have we done any better than our leaders? Have we changed? Or have we scurried back to our safe places, where we have our opinions and assumptions affirmed by people who think like us and look like us and exist in the same echo-chamber as we do?

If we truly are people of faith

and of good will, then the challenge remains as it ever has been: to love our neighbors as ourselves. To become people who are willing to apologize when we are wrong — and forgive when we are wronged. To become people who recognize that we sometimes do harm even when we mean no harm —

and that others sometimes mean no injury even when they injure us.

We need to insist our elected leaders do the same — or else replace them with leaders who already have.

Ms. Scoppe can be reached at cscoppe@thestate.com.

Title: **Haleyvetoesmopedssafety billoverhelmets,vests**
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Haley vetoes moped safety bill over helmets, vests

BY SEANNA ADCOX

Associated Press
 COLUMBIA

Gov. Nikki Haley has vetoed a moped safety bill, saying it is government overreach to require reflective vests for nighttime driving and helmets for drivers under 21.

People over 18 “should decide for themselves what they should wear for their personal safety,” the Republican governor wrote in her veto message, signed Friday.

Sen. Greg Hembree, R-North Myrtle Beach, said he believes mopeds are the most dangerous vehicles for people to drive, partly because there are no regulations. He’s been pushing for safety legislation since his 2012 election.

“They’re slower, and you can’t see them as well,” Hembree said Monday about the need for vests. “That’s how they get hit. They get run over at night.”

According to the Department of Public Safety, 50 people died in moped crashes last year – 18 of those in Horry County, which topped the fatality

list. The statewide toll was up from 32 moped deaths in 2014 and 24 in 2013. At least 16 moped drivers and/or passengers have died so far this year.

In her veto letter, Haley said the proposed restrictions for mopeds exceed those for motorcycle drivers.

But state law does require anyone under 21 who’s driving or riding on a motorcycle to wear a helmet. The motorcycle advocacy group ABATE – which stands for A Brotherhood Against Totalitarian Enactments – has long squashed any effort to require helmets for older riders.

But ABATE spokesman Chad Fuller said the group wanted legislators to add the helmet provision for mopeds.

“We supported them having the same regulations that we as motorcyclists have,” he said. The group, of which Haley has been a member, took no

position on the vest issue.

Legislators will decide later this week whether to overturn Haley’s veto.

State Rep. Bill Crosby, the main House sponsor, said the bill is not about helmets or vests, but saving people’s lives.

“I wish she would reconsider,” said Crosby, R-North Charleston. “I would think it would sit on her conscience if this doesn’t pass. ... We’ll continue having people killed.”

He likened the moped restrictions to requiring people in vehicles to wear seat belts.

While a House member, Haley voted against the 2005 law that allowed officers to stop drivers for not wearing a seat belt.

The moped bill would allow officers to charge intoxicated moped drivers with drunken driving.

“Literally, you can be stinking drunk on a moped and can’t be arrested,” said Hembree, formerly the chief prosecutor for Horry and Georgetown counties.

That’s because state law specifically excludes mopeds from the definition of a motor vehicle. Proposals to close that loophole have died repeatedly since

2010. People who lose their license due to a DUI conviction often use a moped to get around. In a state where public transportation is lacking, legislators didn’t want to prevent people from getting to work.

To solve that sticking point, the bill creates a special moped license. People who lose their regular license, for whatever reason, can get the separate license, starting the point system over. But a moped license could be suspended too.

“If that happens, we’re starting to lose sympathy for you. You’re going to have to be walking,” Hembree said.

The bill would require people to register their mopeds and attach a license plate, which the bill creates as a way to cut down on theft and identify mopeds in crashes. Mopeds would still be exempt from property taxes and insurance.

The bill makes it illegal for mopeds to be driven on highways where the posted speed limit is 55 mph or greater.

Title: **Races to watch in primary**
 Author: CASSIE COPE CCOPE@THESTATE.COM
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Races to watch in primary

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Republican Gov. Nikki Haley's approval rating soared last year in the aftermath of the removal of the Confederate flag from the State House grounds. Haley is aiming to cash in today on that popularity and her fundraising ability, hoping to oust powerful Republican state senators she has clashed with on roads, ethics reform and other issues.

Meanwhile, in the Upstate, the S.C. Chamber of Commerce is trying to oust firebrand libertarian state Sen. Lee Bright, R-Spartanburg. Also, the GOP chairman of the powerful Senate Judiciary Committee has drawn three challengers.

The result? Five key races to watch statewide Tuesday – all in the state Senate – and three more to watch closely in the Midlands.

The firebrand

State Sen. Lee Bright, R-Spartanburg, is known for making headlines, including introducing an unsuccessful proposed statewide ban this year on transgender people using the bathroom of their choice.

Bright's incendiary politics have drawn three GOP challengers — Greer financial adviser David McGraw, Duncan Mayor Lisa Scott and former state Rep. Scott Talley of Moore, an attorney.

In the battle of would-be senators, who say they will focus on getting things done, versus a libertarian ideologue, the S.C. Chamber of Commerce's political committee and Conservation Voters of South Carolina also are opposing Bright.

Climer vs. Hayes, but also Haley vs. McMaster

State Sen. Wes Hayes, R-York, is regarded as a leader on the effort to strengthen state ethics laws and a public education advocate. However, Gov. Haley has endorsed Hayes' opponent, Rock Hill financial adviser Wes Climer.

Other state GOP heavyweights – including Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster, schools superintendent Molly Spearman and the Senate Republican Caucus – are backing Hayes.

A former York County Republican Party chairman, the 33-year-old challenger is taking on a 63-year-old incumbent who has been in the state Senate since 1991, and previously served in the House from 1985 to 1991.

State's most powerful pol vs. the governor

Critics of state Sen. Hugh Leatherman of Florence say the 85-year-old Republican holds too many positions and sits on too many powerful committees that determine state spending.

Senate President Pro Tempore Leatherman also chairs the Senate's powerful budget-writing Finance Committee. He and Haley are not fans of each other. Haley has made Leatherman a prime target and is backing former Florence County GOP chairman Richard Skipper, who is challenging Leatherman. Florence County Treasurer Dean Fowler also is running.

Leatherman has the backing of other GOP leaders — House Speaker Jay

Lucas, Spearman and McMaster, who perhaps has his eye on building alliances for the 2018 governor's race.

Judiciary Committee chairman vs. 3 challengers

State Sen. Larry Martin, the Pickens Republican who chairs the Senate's powerful Judiciary Committee, has drawn three primary challengers: Donald Joslyn, an Army veteran who has worked in politics with the Anderson County GOP; Allan Quinn, also an Army veteran and a retired Oconee Nuclear Station employee; and Rex Rice, a former state representative who owns a construction and land development company and cattle farm.

Rice ran unsuccessfully as a petition candidate against Martin in 2012.

Haley is not opposing Martin, and the Senate Republican Caucus is weighing in on the incumbent's behalf, trying to persuade voters to re-elect Martin.

War by the shore

State Sen. Luke Rankin, a Myrtle Beach attorney who chairs the Senate Ethics Committee, has drawn Haley's opposition because, she says, he has blocked her on ethics reform.

The 54-year-old Republican, who has been in the Senate for 23 years, faces a primary challenge from financial adviser Scott Pyle, who has the support of Haley and the limited-government Club for Growth group.

Another fundraising group is supporting Rankin, as is fellow Republican McMaster.

Title: **Haley vetoes proposed moped bill**
 Author: TIM SMITH TCSMITH@GREENVILLENEWS.COM
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Haley vetoes proposed moped bill

Legislation would require license tags, safety vests

TIM SMITH

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COLUMBIA - Gov. Nikki Haley has vetoed a bill regulating mopeds, telling legislators that requirements for helmets and safety vests amounts to “government overreach.”

The bill would require owners to purchase license tags, register their vehicle, obtain either a moped license or a driver’s license and follow traffic laws.

It would also require operators to wear reflective vests at night and for those under 21 to wear helmets.

“I believe adults over the age of 18—who are allowed to vote and serve our military—should decide for themselves what they should wear for their personal safety,” Haley wrote in her veto message Monday.

The Senate on June 2 voted 41-1 to give the bill final approval without debate. The House concurred by a vote of 68-31.

The governor wrote that while she supports safety laws for children and requirements in the bill for working lights on mo-

pedes at night, other provisions “go too far in regulating the behavior of adults.”

“State moped laws should continue to allow for this kind of inexpensive, reliable transportation for citizens, but this bill goes too far,” she wrote.

Haley said she would work with lawmakers next year in crafting a moped bill that defines mopeds, provides regulations and “balances public safety with personal responsibility.”

Sen. Greg Hembree, an Horry County Republican and former prosecutor who shepherded the bill through the Senate, said he disagrees with Haley.

He said the helmet requirement is the same as that for those riding motorcycles who are under 21. He said the safety vests can be bought for as little as \$5.

“The moped operators who are killed are killed at night and usually are hit from behind because you can’t see them,” he said. “That’s the whole point.”

He said while the governor in her message is comparing mopeds to “other low-speed vehicles,” some mopeds can reach speeds of 50 mph.

“It’s not like a bicycle,” Hembree said. “Obviously I disagree with her.”

He said her staff had objected to a provision requiring moped operators to carry liability insurance, which was removed.

“Had that been the issue, it would have been easier to understand,” he said. “But the safety part, I guess it’s just different viewpoints.”

The legislation, years in the making, was the result of concerns by law enforcement and a spike in moped-related accidents.

According to the state Office of Highway Safety, 55 people died in moped accidents in 2015, up from 35 in 2014, a 57 percent increase.

That compares to about a 16 percent increase in traffic deaths overall near the end of 2015.

Title: **GOP continues war on women**

Author:

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GOP continues war on women

Recently, we learned the GOP's war against women continues unabated with Gov. Nikki Haley's signing of the dubiously named Pain Capable Unborn Child Protection Act. This unbridled attempt to control

the lives of s women will have harsh repercussions on their families and will cause much unnecessary pain and sorrow. This new law goes so far so deny victims of rape and incest the choice to make decisions for themselves as well.

The science behind the law is questionable in that a fetus can feel pain as early as the 19th or 20th week. Virtually all the research shows that it occurs much later.

In truth the majority of pregnant women that far along in their pregnancy want their babies and don't make capricious decisions to terminate. Sadly what happens for a minority of women is something goes horribly wrong in fetal development and after given the best information by their doctors, they must decide for themselves and families what should be done next, And should the severely disabled child live don't expect any assistance from the government because only fetuses warrant the concern of the GOP. Ladies, beware the GOP is not done limiting your choices involving your health.

Chris Allison
Simpsonville

Title: **Groups invest in GOP primary**
 Author: JAMIE SELF THE STATE
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Groups invest in GOP primary

At least 3 targeting incumbent leaders

JAMIE SELF

THE STATE

COLUMBIA - At least three political groups — including one backing Gov. Nikki Haley's political agenda — are waging a six-figure campaign to topple state Senate Republican leaders in Tuesday's primary.

Spending the most — \$500,000 — is a political group, run by Haley's political adviser, that hopes to oust powerful state senators who have clashed with the governor on roads, ethics reform and other issues or fallen out of her favor.

Other groups are supporting the Senate incumbents, including the S.C. Senate Republican Caucus, which will spend \$100,000 to back two GOP state senators facing primary opponents.

The pro-Haley group's ef-

fort to sway the Senate races is unusual compared to previous elections, said Winthrop University political scientist Scott Huffmon.

"It's a lot more money than you would ever normally see in this type of race," Huffmon said. "It is definitely symbolic of how important each side feels that the fight for the soul of the Republican Party in South Carolina is."

A Great Day SC has spent or plans to spend at least \$500,000 to back Haley's agenda. That is more than the Senate challengers, endorsed by the governor, have raised for their bids combined, according to a *State* newspaper review Wednesday of campaign finance records and public filings for political TV ads.

Haley's targets include

Senate President Pro Tempore Hugh Leatherman, R-Florance, the most powerful legislator in the state, and Sen. Luke Rankin, R-Horry, who the Republican governor has accused of blocking her ethics-reform efforts.

Haley and Great Day also are targeting long-time Sen. Wes Hayes, R-York, and are working to block Rep. Stephen Goldfinch, R-Georgetown, from winning an open Senate seat.

A Great Day SC also has help from limited-government groups that are targeting the incumbent lawmakers.

Other state senators also are being targeted by groups as well.

The Senate's loudest conservative firebrand, Sen. Lee Bright, R-Spartanburg, faces

opposition in his re-election bid from two lobbying groups — the S.C. Chamber of Commerce's Good Government Committee and the Conservation Voters of South Carolina.

Anti-abortion and pro-2nd Amendment advocacy groups are targeting incumbents in Senate districts around the state, including in Anderson, Edgefield and Lexington counties, senators say.

An anonymous group called Free Speech Unites — its identity shielded by the state's lack of disclosure rules for so-called "dark money" groups — has sent out a mail piece opposing Sen. Kevin Bryant, R-Anderson.

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Dark-money groups opposed at least two state senators — Hayes and state Sen. Larry Martin, R-Pickens — in 2012. The emergence of the groups has driven State House attempts to force the groups to report their donors and agendas. But those efforts, thus far, have failed.

Bryant, one of the Senate's most conservative members, said it is the first time he has been targeted by a group he could not identify. "I have

been targeted by liberal organizations who we know who they are, and I support their right to free speech," Bryant said. "But a totally dark organization? This is the first time I've seen this."

Big money

The big spender in Tuesday's primary is A Great Day SC, the pro-Haley group that can raise unlimited contributions.

As of April, Great Day had raised \$515,000 in its attempt to reshape Senate leadership. The money came from six donors in six states, including one in South Carolina who gave \$100,000.

The TV ads Great Day is running are a welcome boost for the candidates who Haley is backing, including Wes Climer, who is challenging incumbent Sen. Hayes in the District 15 GOP primary.



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“Wes Hayes gets backing from every lobbyist, trade association and special interest in Columbia,” Climer said Wednesday while out campaigning. “The support from the governor is very helpful to push back on the special interests that are trying to buy this election. It’s always hard to beat a career politician.”

A Great Day is not alone in targeting the incumbents.

Americans for Prosperity, backed by the billionaire political activist

Koch brothers, plans to send out at least five mail pieces criticizing Senate leader Leatherman’s record, said Chris Neefus, a spokesman for the group. The group also has about a half-dozen field staff working with volunteers to knock on doors to share its message.

The group, which opposes raising the state’s gas tax, is criticizing Leatherman, in part, of trying to pass a bill that would force groups attempting to influence an election to disclose their donors.

That proposal is an assault on donors’ rights of privacy and free speech, Americans for Prosperity says.

“The public deserves transparency from government and privacy for themselves, but Sen. Leatherman wants to flip it around,” said Mark Lucas, the group’s regional director. “Instead of working to chill speech, he should focus on getting some accountability for the dollars the

state is spending.”

The S.C. Club for Growth’s political arm also is targeting incumbents.

The group has endorsed the opponents of Leatherman, Hayes and Rankin and one of Goldfinch’s opponents, Reese Boyd, paying for mail pieces in those districts. The group also gave \$1,000 contributions to Richard Skipper and Climer, who Haley is backing in their efforts to unseat Leatherman and Hayes, respectively.

Protecting incumbents

Some targeted senators have received reinforcements.

The Senate Republican Caucus is spending more than \$100,000 to shore up support for Hayes and Martin, the Republican chairman of the Senate’s powerful Judiciary Committee, said Senate Majority Leader Shane Massey, R-Edgefield.

The caucus is sending out mail pieces supporting Hayes and Martin, and running television ads praising the senators’ records, Massey said.

The caucus decided to focus its efforts on the two districts after polling in every Senate district where an incumbent faced primary opposition.

“Sen. Martin and Sen. Hayes’ districts are the two where we thought we could have the best impact,” Massey said.

For Senate GOP leaders to get involved could mean they think

Hayes and Martin are vulnerable or face a “credible threat,” Huffmon said.

Another group, the Palmetto Conservatives Fund, is spending \$15,000 to run ads against businessman Scott Pyle, said David Wilson, who is buying ads for the group. Pyle, who Haley has endorsed, is challenging state Sen. Rankin.

The odds favor the incumbent state senators, Winthrop’s Huffmon added.

But a few dedicated voters could swing an election, causing trouble for an incumbent, he added.

Haley is “definitely seeking to leave a mark on the S.C. Republican Party and remake it in the image of Southern conservatism that she’s been developing,” Huffmon said.

But Haley and her allies face “an uphill battle simply because of the strength of incumbency,” he added.

“A lot of people have trust in the incumbent, and seeing these attack ads will get a lot of long-time supporters out of their seats and to the polls.”

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SEN. KEVIN BRYANT