

Title: **This could be year for state road plan**
 Author: By The Herald Editorial Board
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OUR VIEW

This could be year for state road plan

By The Herald Editorial Board

A group of S.C. House Republican leaders will try again this session to increase the state's gas tax. Maybe, with a new governor, they will succeed.

The bill is co-sponsored by House Speaker Jay Lucas, R-Darlington, House budget chairman Brian White, R-Anderson, and House Majority Leader Gary Simrill, R-Rock Hill. One Democrat – state Rep. Jimmy Bales of Richland – also is a co-sponsor.

The bill would increase the 16.75-cent-a-gallon gas tax by 10 cents over the next five years at a rate of 2 cents a year. When fully phased in, the additional tax would raise an estimated \$600 million a year to repair the state's crumbling roads and bridges.

The plan also would increase the sales tax cap on vehicle sales to \$500 from \$300. And motorists moving to South Carolina would pay a one-time \$250 fee to register their cars.

The plan also would charge a \$60 fee for hybrid vehicles and a \$120 fee for electric vehicles. The rationale is that hybrids and electric vehicles use less gas but still use state roads.

The proposal is almost identical to one produced two years ago by a special House road panel led by

Simrill. That plan passed by a veto-proof majority in the House in 2015 but bogged down in the Senate.

Gov. Nikki Haley has impeded any increase in the state gas tax for the past two years with unreasonable demands to couple a gas tax increase with even higher cuts in state income tax rates. Without the tax cuts, she said, she would veto the road bill.

But Haley soon will be the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations and Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster will take her place in the governor's mansion. While McMaster has refused to reveal his stance on the House plan, there is hope that he will be more amenable to it than Haley was.

If South Carolina is serious about fixing its roads, a gas tax increase almost surely must be part of the solution. Even with \$600 million in new revenues from a higher gas tax – which wouldn't be fully phased in for five years – the state still would fall short of the nearly \$1 billion a year the S.C. Department of Transportation estimates it would need to make state roads safer.

But raising the gas tax is a sensible and even crucial

component to any roads bill. The state gas tax, the second-lowest in the nation, hasn't been increased since 1987.

Raising the tax would capture money from the millions of out-of-state motorists who use our roads. And even with a 10-cent tax increase, gas prices in South Carolina still would be lower than in neighboring states.

The gas tax should be regarded as a user fee paid by all who put wear and tear on our roads. Unfortunately, some lawmakers are so averse to any tax hike that they reflexively oppose one that would raise money for roads from tourists, business commuters and cross-country truckers in addition to residents.

But if lawmakers are worried about paying a political price for raising the gas tax, they also should worry about the price they could pay for failing to maintain the state's roads. South Carolinians have listed road repairs as a top priority for years, and state lawmakers have failed to deliver.

We hope McMaster will help shepherd a road bill through the Legislature this year. But even if he doesn't lead the way, we hope he at least won't impede it as Haley did.

Title: **Haley confirmed, McMaster sworn in as S.C. governor**
 Author: BY JAMIE SELF jself@thestate.com
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Haley confirmed, McMaster sworn in as S.C. governor

BY JAMIE SELF

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Exit Gov. Nikki Haley. Enter Gov. Henry McMaster.

South Carolina's lieutenant governor became its governor Tuesday, within an hour of Haley being confirmed as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations and resigning from her job as the state's chief executive.

After the U.S. Senate voted 96-4 to confirm Haley's appointment by President Donald Trump, McMaster and Haley

appeared at the State House with S.C. Supreme Court Chief Justice Don Beatty in a ceremonial transfer of power.

McMaster, 69, thanked Haley for her contribution to the state

and said he is "humbled, honored and deeply appreciative of being granted one of the rarest opportunities to serve the people of my state, my home and that of my forefathers. Great prosperity, success and happiness will be ours, and we will serve as a beacon of inspiration for others," McMaster added, not taking questions from reporters.

A Columbia Republican elected lieutenant governor in 2014, McMaster took the oath of office Tuesday despite not being required to do so. Under the state Constitution, the lieutenant governor automatically becomes governor when a va-

cancy occurs in the state's highest office. McMaster said little Tuesday about his plans as governor.

The leaders of state agencies that form the governor's Cabinet — all appointed by fellow Republican Haley — are staying on board in the new administration, McMaster's office confirmed Tuesday. That includes Commerce Department Secretary Bobby Hitt, credited, with Haley, with attracting thousands of new jobs to the state.

Also, McMaster and wife Peggy plan to move into the Governor's Mansion as soon as possible.



TIM DOMINICK tdominick@thestate.com

South Carolina Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster is sworn in Tuesday as governor after Gov. Nikki Haley was confirmed as U.N. ambassador.

Title: **MovementMortgage to add 700-plus jobs**
 Author: BY MICHAEL HARRISON mharrison@fortmilltimes.com
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INDIAN LAND

Movement Mortgage to add 700-plus jobs

BY MICHAEL HARRISON
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INDIAN LAND

Movement Mortgage is expanding its corporate headquarters in Bailes Ridge Corporate Park on S.C. 160 East with an \$18 million investment expected to create more than 700 new jobs, the company announced Tuesday.

The jobs will be added over the next five years, according to a company release.

"This hiring and expansion is going to help drive our business forward as we continue to lead a 'movement of change' in the mortgage industry, corporate culture and our communities," Movement Mortgage CEO and co-founder Casey Crawford said in the release.

Crawford and Gov. Nikki Haley praised each other over the move – Haley for continuing to invest in the state, and Crawford for Haley helping to create "a business-friendly" environment that invites investment.

"Movement Mortgage

has been an incredible partner to our state since its doors opened in Lancaster County two years ago," Haley said.

"This \$18 million investment, and the 700 jobs it means for Lancaster (County), shows that

Movement Mortgage is committed to our state and its people, and we couldn't be more excited to see this fantastic company continue to grow and thrive here for a very long time," Haley said.

"Once again, Governor Haley and the state of South Carolina have proven to be great partners in creating a business-friendly climate that promotes growth and a spirit of partnership between the government and the private sector," Crawford said.

Founded in 2008, Movement Mortgage has grown from four employees to more than 4,100 in 48 states, including more than 650 at the Indian Land facility. The compa-

ny, named in one survey a year ago as the best place to work in the Carolinas in part for the amenities it offers its workforce, will receive job credits to help offset the cost of its investment, the release states.

"Today, we congratulate Movement Mortgage on all of their successes here in the Palmetto State and around the country," S.C. Secretary of Commerce Bobby Hitt said.

Lancaster County Council Chairman Steve Harper lauded the company.

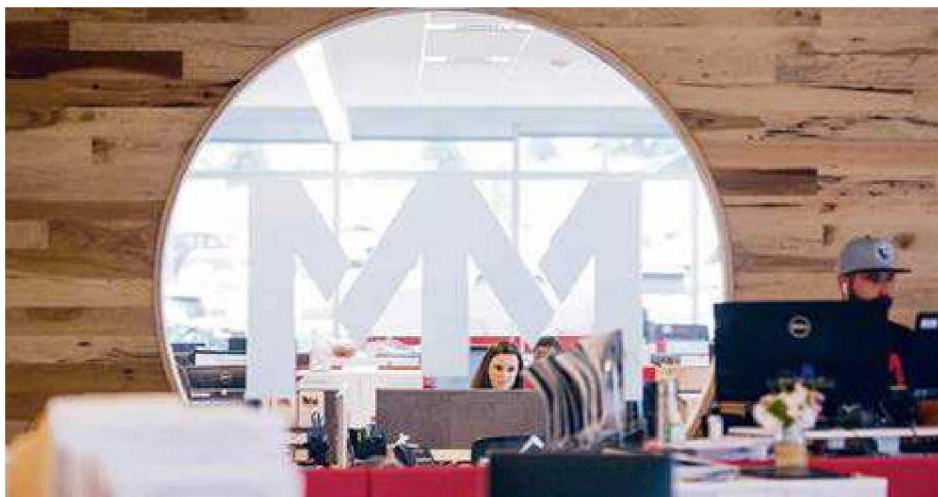
"Lancaster County is very excited that Movement Mortgage will expand its headquarters in Indian Land," he said. "In just over a year, they have become one of the county's leading corporate facility operations and have exceeded their initial projection for jobs and investment. The county council thanks Movement Mortgage for their new commitment to our community, as well as the

state and county economic development team that worked with them to get it done."

The new jobs may be coming at an opportune time. While the latest figures show unemployment falling to near historic low levels, the jobless rate ticked up slightly in December in York, Lancaster and Chester counties.

Hiring for the new positions is expected to begin in the first quarter of 2017. Interested applicants should visit the company's careers page online at movement.com/careers.

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JASON E. MICZEK WWW.MICZEKPHOTO.COM

Movement Mortgage in Indian Land has announced an \$18 million expansion that will include more than 700 jobs.

Title: **Widening I-95 would cost an estimated \$4B**
 Author: CASSIE COPE THE STATE
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Widening I-95 would cost an estimated \$4B

CASSIE COPE

THE STATE

It would cost up to \$4 billion to widen Interstate 95 to six lanes in South Carolina, transportation officials said Monday.

That initial estimate includes widening about 190 miles of the interstate to three lanes in each direction from the state's border with Georgia to the border with North Carolina, replacing bridges along the interstate and improving interchanges.

But it could be years before the state has enough money to pay for the widening project. The project also would have to rank high enough on Transportation Department priority lists to be fixed.

I-95 bottlenecks in South Carolina, especially during high-trafficked holiday weekends. The three-lane road in Georgia shrinks to two lanes entering the Palmetto State.

"A project of that magnitude, first of all, would be unprecedented," Transportation Department Secretary Christy Hall said at the annual meeting of the state Alliance to Fix Our Roads, a group of road contractors and consultants who want more money spent on road-building projects.

Federal money eventually could pay for part of the project.

"I do believe the Trump administration is serious about an infrastructure program," Hall said.

The Transportation Department is in the process of updating its priority list for interstate improvements.

It plans to unveil that list in the coming months, Hall said.

Rural parts of I-95 are included in the Transportation Department's \$50 million-a-year plan to make rural roads safer. That plan, unveiled last week, in-

cludes spending money to repaint pavement markings, installing rumble strips to alert drivers they are near the road's edge and widening road shoulders to give drivers time to correct if they run off the road.

However, the agency has said it needs added state or federal dollars to pay for those improvements.

The \$50 million is part of much greater sum — an extra \$943 million per year — that the Transportation Department said it needs to make the state's deteriorating roads safer, including spending \$500 million to repave crumbling highways.

Last week, House GOP leaders introduced a proposal to raise the state's 16.75-cent-a-gallon gas tax by 10 cents over five years. That increase, along with raising other driving fees, would raise roughly \$600 million a year for road repairs when enacted.

Legislators last week indicated there is appetite for a gas tax increase this year, in part because Gov. Nikki Haley is leaving office.

"When she's gone, our chances of passing common-sense legislation go up exponentially," said state House Minority Leader Todd Rutherford, D-Richland.

State Sen. Thomas McElveen, D-Sumter, said Haley has been an impediment to raising the gas tax. In 2015, Haley said she would veto any gas-tax hike that was not tied to a much larger income tax cut.

Haley resigned from office Tuesday after the U.S. Senate confirmed her to become U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.

New Gov. Henry McMaster has not said if he would veto a gas-tax increase.

Title: **McMaster takes over as Haley exits**
 Author: TIM SMITH TCSMITH@GREENVILLENEWS.COM
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McMaster takes over as Haley exits

Change comes after former governor accepts UN post

TIM SMITH

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COLUMBIA - Henry McMaster, whose bid for governor seven years ago ended with a defeat to Nikki Haley, became South Carolina's 117th governor Tuesday after Haley was confirmed as United Nations ambassador and resigned as governor.

McMaster, 69, the state's affable lieutenant governor since 2015 and a former state attorney general and U.S. attorney, took the oath of office at about 6:30 p.m. Tuesday in a second-floor Statehouse lobby packed with well wishers, including Haley, who has served as the state's top leader since 2010.

"I am humbled, honored and deeply appreciative of being granted one of the rarest opportunities to serve the people of my state," McMaster said, with Haley standing nearby.

About an hour earlier, the U.S. Senate voted overwhelmingly to confirm Haley to be the nation's representa-

tive to the United Nations and the U.N. Security Council. Earlier Tuesday the Senate's Foreign Relations Committee voted in favor of her confirmation 19-2.

Sen. Bob Corker, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, told the Senate before Haley's vote that the United Nations was at a "cross roads" and needed someone "reformed" from the United States.

"There's no question that she's not the most adept person at foreign policy," he said of Haley. "But I think where the United Nations is today, we need a real driven person who cares about our own national interest but also has the ability to break through the clutter and reform."

South Carolina's two senators, Lindsey Graham and Tim Scott, also urged colleagues to vote for her, with Scott saying Haley was the "type of visionary leader who will turn the diplo-

matic tide of the past years, and reassure our allies that the United States stands in strong support of them."

Graham called her "tough and determined" but also someone who brought unity in difficult times.

"I think she'll represent us very well," he said.

See GOVERNOR, Page 5A

"Great prosperity, success and happiness will be ours, and we will serve as a beacon of inspiration for others."

GOV. HENRY MCMASTER

Governor

Continued from Page 1A

Haley, nominated by President Donald Trump for the post last November, bid the state farewell last week in her annual address to lawmakers, calling the governor's job "the greatest honor of my life."

She praised McMaster at Tuesday's short ceremony.

"There is lots of work to do but we have the right person to do it," she said. "I am very

comfortable with the fact that Governor McMaster will take over. He has a love of our state. He loves our people. And I know he will do it with a steady hand."

With his family watching, McMaster told a crowd of well-wishers that "it is a great evening in South Carolina," putting a twist on the phrase Haley made famous.

"Great prosperity, success and happiness will be ours, and we will serve as a beacon of in-

spiration for others," he said. "We will do our best and we will be our best."

Tuesday's actions came too late in the day for the state Senate to fill the lieutenant governor's post. The Senate met for little more than an hour earlier Tuesday before adjourning.

Normally, the Senate president pro tempore, currently Sen. Hugh Leatherman, becomes lieutenant governor if there is a vacancy. But Leatherman has indicated he has no desire to be-

come lieutenant governor and resigned as pro tem just before the voting on Haley's confirmation began.

Sen. Kevin Bryant, an Anderson Republican, has said he wants the lieutenant governor job, as does Sen. John Scott, a Columbia Democrat. Whoever wins in the Republican-majority chamber becomes lieutenant governor, again opening the pro tem job, which Leatherman is then expected to run for.

Leatherman con-



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firmed again Tuesday he did not want the lieutenant governor's post but otherwise kept mum about his plans.

Sen. Nikki Setzler, leader of the Senate's Democrats and one of its senior members, asked that the Senate adjourn Tuesday in honor of McMaster, who presided over the chamber as part of his duties.

Tuesday's events held some irony for McMaster, the first statewide elected official in the state to publicly back Trump. He lost to Haley in the 2010 gubernatorial primary, then ran for lieutenant governor in 2014. If McMaster chooses to run for governor in 2018, he will do so as an incumbent.

"Today is a historic day for the people of South Carolina," House Speaker Jay Lucas said in a statement. "I have no doubt U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley will serve the American people with the same compassion and diligence she has shown the citizens of South Carolina. I welcome my good friend Gov. Henry

McMaster into his new role and eagerly await working with him on pressing issues that must be addressed to move our state forward."

The Republican Governors Association also praised McMaster.

"As a veteran, law enforcement official and dedicated public servant, Henry McMaster has spent his entire career leading South Carolina forward," said RGA Chairman Scott Walker. "He has the necessary experience and leadership to hit the ground running, and will build upon Gov. Nikki Haley's successful legacy by strengthening the state's positive business climate and creating even more opportunities through pro-growth policies."

McMaster has not given any public indications of his stance on some of the state's thorniest issues, including road funding, which is again before lawmakers.

But legislators have praised him as someone they believe will be

more cooperative than his predecessor, who has not hesitated to call out lawmakers when she disagreed over issues and who once issued a report card on their performance.

Haley, the daughter of Indian immigrants, was in her second term as South Carolina's first female governor when Trump offered her the U.N. job. She backed Sen. Marco Rubio during the GOP primary instead of Trump. Rubio presided during her Senate confirmation vote Tuesday.

In her confirmation hearing last week, Haley took a hard-line stance on Russia and indicated her support for Israel.

Prior to his election as lieutenant governor, McMaster served eight years as the state's attorney general and four years as U.S. attorney for South Carolina, the top federal prosecutor in the state.

As attorney general, McMaster cracked down on internet predators and extended the State Grand Jury's jurisdiction to securities

crimes after the collapse of Carolina Investors and Home Gold in Pickens, convicting

those responsible, and also extended the panel's jurisdiction to environmental crimes and gang crimes.

He also organized and led the states in the constitutional challenge to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

The first U.S. attorney appointed by President Ronald Reagan, McMaster led an investigation into international drug smuggling dubbed "Operation Jackpot" that produced more than 100 convictions.

In 2012, Haley appointed McMaster and former Attorney General Travis Medlock to lead a bi-partisan commission to reform ethics laws.

McMaster was elected chairman of the state Republican Party in 1993 and was re-elected three times, also serving on the Republican National Committee until 2002.

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MIC SMITH//AP

Henry McMaster is sworn in Tuesday as governor of South Carolina during a ceremony at the Statehouse in Columbia. McMaster became governor after Nikki Haley resigned when she was confirmed as ambassador to the United Nations.

Title: **Senate leader resigns to avoid becoming lieutenant governor**
 Author: BY CASSIE COPE ccope@thestate.com
 Size: 41.85 column inches
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LEGISLATURE

Senate leader resigns to avoid becoming lieutenant governor

BY CASSIE COPE

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S.C. Senate President Pro Tempore Hugh Leatherman resigned Tuesday in order to avoid becoming the state's lieutenant governor.

The state's most powerful politician, Leatherman – who chairs the Senate's powerful budget-writing Finance Committee – said in November he was not interested in becoming lieutenant governor, an essentially powerless position.

The question of who would be South Carolina's lieutenant governor became urgent Tuesday when Gov. Nikki Haley was confirmed by the U.S. Senate as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.

Haley then resigned, elevating Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster, R-Richland, to the post of governor. That move vacated the lieutenant governor's post.

Last week, however, the S.C. Supreme Court ruled the Senate president pro tempore would replace McMaster as lieutenant

governor.

"The state Supreme Court clarified any questions on the line of succession, and as I've stated before, I have no desire to seek statewide office and I will remain in the Senate," Leatherman said in a statement Tuesday evening.

Senators are expected Wednesday to elect state Sen. Kevin Bryant, R-Anderson, to ascend to the lieutenant governor's office.

Once Bryant becomes the state's second-in-command, Leatherman likely will regain the post of Senate leader in a vote of the full Senate.

However, state Sen. Harvey Peeler, R-Cherokee, plans to challenge Leatherman, R-Florence, for the top Senate post.

Peeler, a former Senate majority leader, said he was pushed to run by senators upset by Leatherman's refusal to ascend to lieutenant governor, part

of the Senate president's job description.

Asked whether he thinks he has the votes, Peeler replied: "We'll see. I'm working."

Republicans hold the majority of seats in the 46-member Senate. However, those GOP senators split into competing factions. The competing GOP factions allow Senate Democrats to ally with one Republican group to elect the Senate leader, most recently Leatherman.

However, opposition to Leatherman has been increasing. In December, nine senators – all Republicans – voted against re-electing him Senate leader.

Leatherman first was elected Senate president pro tempore in 2014 after then-Lt. Gov. Glenn McConnell, R-Charleston, resigned to become the president of the College of Charleston.

At the time, then-Presi-

dent Pro Tempore John Courson, R-Richland, resigned to avoid becoming lieutenant governor.

After Courson stepped down, senators elected then-Sen. Yancey McGill as Senate president pro tempore and he ascended to become lieutenant governor.

*Avery Wilks contributed.
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The (Columbia) State file photo

Hugh Leatherman said he was not interested in becoming lieutenant governor, an essentially powerless position.

Title: **McMastersworn in as S.C. governor after Haley resigns**
 Author: BY JAMIESELF jself@thestate.com
 Size: 106.02 column inches
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McMaster sworn in as S.C. governor after Haley resigns

BY JAMIE SELF

jself@thestate.com

Exit Gov. Nikki Haley. Enter Gov. Henry McMaster.

South Carolina's lieutenant governor became its governor Tuesday, within an hour of Haley being confirmed as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations and resigning from her job as the state's chief executive.

After the U.S. Senate voted 96-4 to confirm Haley's appointment by President Donald Trump, McMaster and Haley appeared at the State House with S.C. Supreme Court Chief Justice Don Beatty in a ceremonial transfer of power.

McMaster, 69, thanked Haley for her contribution to the state and said he is "humbled, honored and deeply appreciative of being granted one of the rarest opportunities to serve the people of my state, my home and that of my forefathers."

"Great prosperity, success and happiness will be ours, and we will serve as a beacon of inspiration for others," McMaster added, not taking questions from reporters.

A Columbia Republican elect-

ed lieutenant governor in 2014, McMaster took the oath of office Tuesday despite not being required to do so. Under the state Constitution, the lieutenant governor automatically becomes governor when a vacancy occurs in the state's highest office.

McMaster said little Tuesday about his plans as governor.

The leaders of state agencies that form the governor's Cabinet — all appointed by fellow Republican Haley — are staying on board in the new administration, McMaster's office confirmed Tuesday. That includes Commerce Department Secretary Bobby Hitt, credited, with

Haley, with attracting thousands of new jobs to the state.

Also, McMaster and wife Peggy plan to move into the Governor's Mansion as soon as possible. The pair live in a home on Senate Street, near the University of South Carolina campus.

S.C. GOP Chairman Matt Moore congratulated Haley and McMaster.

Haley "has led our state through so many difficult days

with grace and humility," Moore said, crediting Haley with improving the state's economy. "We will miss Gov. Haley's strong, principled leadership, but we'll also miss her compassion, kindness and love for our state."

"Gov. McMaster is a lifelong Republican, former state GOP chairman and true public servant who loves South Carolina with all of his heart. I know he will continue our state's legacy of great Republican governors,"

Moore said.

McMaster's tenure in the governor's office could prove historic.

The former two-term state attorney general will finish the final two years of Haley's term and is expected to run for the office in 2018. If McMaster wins two consecutive terms, he could serve almost 10 years, making him the state's longest serving governor.

HALEY OFF TO NEW JOB

Haley's new job will move her to New York City where she will

SEE MCMASTER, 7A

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GREAT PROSPERITY, SUCCESS AND HAPPINESS WILL BE OURS, AND WE WILL SERVE AS A BEACON OF INSPIRATION FOR OTHERS.

South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster

➔ MORE INSIDE

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- Trump budget pick S.C. Rep Mick Mulvaney speaks to Congress, **7A**

FROM PAGE 1A

MCMASTER

get a pay raise to her \$106,078-a-year salary as governor. She also

will get an apartment in Manhattan at the swanky Waldorf Astoria hotel,

which houses the official residence of the U.S. ambassador.

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Her six years as governor were marked by a sometimes combative relationship with members of the GOP-controlled Legislature, giving legislators letter grades and calling them out publicly for not voting for her

agenda.

But Haley also leaves the governor's office with a national reputation, credited for her leadership in removing the Confederate flag from the State House grounds after the racially motivated slaying of nine African-American Charleston churchgoers,

and leading the state's recovery from a flood and hurricane.

Haley's tenure in South Carolina politics may not be over, observers say.

Haley could come back to South Carolina to run for the U.S. Senate, Winthrop University political scientist Scott Huffman

said.

Before "handing the reins" to McMaster, she said she would be away for a while, adding, "I will always have one eye on South Carolina."

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South Carolina Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster is sworn in as governor on Tuesday after Gov. Nikki Haley resigned to take an appointment as United Nations ambassador.

Title: **Haley's good showing**
 Author:
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Haley's good showing

While many Trump Cabinet nominees faced openly hostile questioning this week, South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley won bipartisan applause when the Senate Foreign Relations Committee held a hearing Wednesday on her nomination to be United States ambassador to the United Nations. And with good reason.

She got a warm reception in part because of her personal charisma and her impressive record as governor. But her frank, thoughtful answers to the committee's questions indicated she would be a strong advocate for this nation, and would not hesitate to disagree with the expressed views of President-elect Donald Trump, who proposed her for the job soon after his election in November.

As Emma Dumain reported in The Post and Courier yesterday, Gov. Haley took issue

with Mr. Trump's characterizations that the United Nations is ineffective and that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization is outdated. Russia, she said, "can't be trusted." And she challenged the advisability of a national registry for Muslims.

As U.N. ambassador, Mrs. Haley will be a member of Mr. Trump's National Security Council and an active participant in framing, as well as defending, U.S. foreign policy.

In a revealing comment about her approach to her new responsibilities, she said the new president's national security team — which will also include the secretaries of state and defense, the nation's top military officer, the attorney general and the president's national security adviser — will have to "educate, inform him of what we know, inform him of strategies."

— *Post & Courier*
 Charleston

Title: **How to hold a governor accountable for education**
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CINDI ROSS SCOPPE • ASSOCIATE EDITOR • THE STATE

How to hold a governor accountable for education

SENATORS listened respectfully Thursday as the head of the S.C. Education Association told them that the idea of letting the governor appoint the director of the state Education Department was “a distraction.”

Then the other teacher in the room, freshman Sen. Mike Fanning, explained in a way the lawyers in the room really couldn't, at least not with

the same credibility, why the notion of political accountability was anything but a distraction.

“As a history teacher,” he said, “the most frustrating thing to me was that everyone running for governor was pro-public education, and then when they became governor, there was no way as a teacher to hold them responsible, because their response was, ‘I can't do anything about that.’” Education superintendents, meantime, would tell teachers the lack of progress wasn't *their* fault because, for instance, the governor rejected their budget requests.

What teachers need, Mr. Fanning said, is the ability to say to candidates for governor, “if you say you're pro-public education, when we elect you, we expect you to do something about it.”

And so it was that the two Republicans and the one Democrat on the subcommittee approved the resolution to bring South Carolina into line with the 38 states where the chief educa-

tion official is a professional rather than a politician.

That vote for S.137, to ask voters in 2018 to amend the state constitution to have the governor appoint the superintendent, came an hour after a bipartisan *House* subcommittee unanimously approved an identical measure, H.3146, along with H.3036, which sets requirements for gubernatorially appointed superintendents (our *elected* superintendent simply must be at least 18 years old and a registered voter). Another bipartisan Senate subcommittee had unanimously approved a qualifications bill, S.27, the day before.

I don't mean by this to suggest that we are just a few perfunctory votes away from one of the most significant reforms to our antiquated governmental structure ... ever. As we've seen too many times, bills can sail through subcommittees and die in full committee. They can sail through full committee and, at least in the Senate, die on the calendar without a moment's debate, let alone a vote. All that's required is for a single senator to say, you know, I don't like that bill, and for his colleagues not to insist on giving the bill one of a precious few priority debate slots.

But last week's votes were a good start to a year when — despite a promised push for the change by Education Superintendent Molly Spearman and Gov. Nikki Haley (pre-U.N. nomination) — I wasn't holding my breath for any significant reforms to the government that was designed centuries ago with one goal above all others: to

keep power away from any governor.

Mr. Fanning did a very nice job explaining the importance of being able to hold someone accountable for the progress — or lack thereof — in our schools. Beyond that, as Ms. Spearman and Ms. Haley explained to legislators in November, electing a superintendent independently of the governor can prevent us “moving the state forward with a common vision for education priorities” and result in “incompatible positions (and) a lack of coordination.” Which is something we've seen more often than not in the 30 years I've been watching governors and education superintendents who were, more often than not, incompatible even when they came from the same political party.

“What a fragmented approach does more than anything else is that it protects the status quo,” said Sen. Shane Massey, who chaired Thursday's Senate subcommittee meeting, “because if everybody's disagreeing, there's not going to be a whole lot done to change anything.” Having the education superintendent and governor on the same page all the time — not just during rare political alignments like we've had the past two years — puts more pressure on the Legislature, he said, to “move on some stuff.” Which we need.

Ms. Spearman recognized during her 2014 campaign that South Carolina was missing out on the most talented candidates because they weren't willing to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars, take a year away from their professions and go through

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the rigors of campaigning in order to run for the job.

But for all the logic and practicality from supporters, opponents of this change have a powerful weapon of their own: hyperbole.

“Our concern,” Education Association President Bernadette Hampton told Mr. Massey’s subcommittee, “is that we lose our right as citizens of this state, as taxpayers of this state,

to have any say It’s like we’re moving to a dictatorship.”

She noted that the Education Association’s research had revealed that both North Carolina and Georgia elect their superintendents. She could have added, had she been so inclined, that California does as well, along with its left-coast near-neighbor Washington state and a dwindling handful of other mostly Western states.

Which means we must be off to the Gulag in the vast majority of the states, since either the (elected) governor appoints the education superintendent or the superintendent is selected by the state board of education — which is appointed by the (elected) governor.

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TRUMP EXECUTIVE ORDER

Foreign aid halted for abortion counseling

BY SOMINI SENGUPTA

New York Times

UNITED NATIONS

President Donald Trump reinstated a policy Monday that originated in the Reagan era, prohibiting the use of U.S. foreign aid to health providers abroad who discuss abortion as a family planning option.

U.S. law already prohibits the use of U.S. taxpayer dollars for abortion services anywhere, including in countries where abortion is legal. But this order, known by critics as the global gag rule, freezes U.S. funding to health care providers in poor countries if they include abortion counseling or if they advocate the right to seek abortion in their countries.

Coming as one of Trump's first orders, it was likely to please the anti-abortion lobby at home. But critics say it also symbolizes the new administration's defiance of the women's reproductive rights movement, an important force in the weekend protest marches in Washington and other cities that followed Trump's inauguration.

As for the order's practical effects, health policy experts say restrictions on abortion services in the past have not led to a decline in abortion rates in countries that receive U.S. funding for reproductive health services, and

they warn that those restrictions only heighten the chances of illegal, often unsafe, abortions.

The United States is the largest bilateral donor of reproductive health services abroad, according to the United Nations Foundation, which advocates greater support from the United States for the world body.

In recent decades, abortion rates have declined sharply in the richest countries, including the United States, where the rate has fallen to its lowest since the Supreme Court legalized abortion in 1973, according to the Guttmacher Institute, a research group that supports women's right to have an abortion. It has remained steady in the developing world since the early 1990s.

The impact of the order is likely to be felt beyond abortion services, which cannot be carried out with any federal funding, under a 1973 law known as the Helms Amendment and named after former North Carolina Sen. Jesse Helms. Critics say the order would hinder the ability of women in poor countries to access reproductive health services, including family planning, by severing U.S. funding to health clinics that offer a variety of services, including

abortion counseling.

A study of 20 sub-Saharan African countries by Stanford University researchers, for instance, found that in countries that relied heavily on U.S. funding for reproductive health services, abortion rates rose when the Reagan-era policy was in place.

The World Health Organization says 225 million women in the developing world would like to delay childbearing but are not using contraception for a variety of reasons, including a lack of access.

"President Trump's reinstatement of the global gag rule ignores decades of research, instead favoring ideological politics over women and families," Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H., said Monday. "We know that when family planning services and contraceptives are easily accessible, there are fewer unplanned pregnancies, maternal deaths and abortions."

Trump's pick for ambassador to the United Nations, South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley, made clear in her confirmation hearing last week that she opposed abortion, even as she said she backed support for contraceptive services in U.S. foreign aid programs.