

Title: **'Blue' Democrats make early morning stand in Georgetown**
 Author: By Robert Lamb news@southstrandnews.com
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'Blue' Democrats make early morning stand in Georgetown

By ROBERT LAMB

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Four newcomers to South Carolina politics fished for votes Saturday at a dawn press conference in the middle of the Pee Dee River as fishermen and crabbers tried their own luck nearby.

Calling themselves the Blue Brothers, Democratic hopefuls Arik Bjorn, Dimitri

Cherny, Thomas Dixon and Mal Hyman huddled at the western end of Georgetown's old Church Street bridge to speak as the sun rose above the tree line on the opposite shore.

Hyman, running to replace Tom Rice in the 7th Congressional District, seemed to summarize the foursome's opinion of the

sitting Congress in declaring, "Enough is enough!" But, speaking in turn, each candidate reviled his Republican opponent and told the small band of early risers gathered on the bridge why they should vote for him

See **'BLUE,'** Page 2A

'Blue' Democrats make a stand

FROM PAGE 1A

in November.

Collectively the four men espoused a typical Democratic platform, but one with nuances that appeared aimed at environmentalists and labor-union supporters. All four have been endorsed by the South Carolina AFL-CIO, and the press conference's natural setting – tidal river, marshes, wildlife – underscored their promise to confront global climate change if elected.

Bjorn, a Columbian who is challenging incumbent Joe Wilson for the 2nd Congressional District seat, declared that "a new day, a new dawn" is coming to South Carolina, and that he and his fellow Blue Brothers represent that

new beginning.

"Status Quo Joe has got to go," Bjorn said after alleging numerous Wilson "deficiencies," among them opposition to a higher minimum wage and right-to-work legislation. "We are your pro-labor candidates," he said, speaking for all four candidates.

Like his fellow candidates, Bjorn also decried "the nation's crumbling roads and bridges and dams," and vowed that if elected, "We are not gonna sit around in seersucker suits while the country falls apart around us."

Dixon, who hopes to replace Tim Scott in the U.S. Senate, said Scott has consistently voted against legislation that would benefit South Carolinians.

"He votes as if he is not answerable to those he has sworn to serve," said Dixon, a pastor and community activist in Charleston.

Gov. Nikki Haley appointed Scott to the Senate in 2013 to fill the seat vacated by Jim DeMint. Scott won in a special election in 2014 for the final two years of DeMint's second term.

Dimitri Cherny, a former truck driver who seeks to unseat former Gov. Mark Sanford in the 1st Congressional District, accused the federal government of "short-term thinking that maximizes profits for this generation by stealing from future generations."

He listed his top five priorities as healthcare, education, Social Security, veterans'

benefits, and publicly funded elections, and said he has ridden his bicycle "700 miles in 62 days" throughout the Lowcountry to attract attention to his campaign. He formerly lived in New Hampshire.

Hyman, the fourth to speak, called his campaign "Common Sense for the Common Good" and inveighed against "a Republican-controlled do-nothing Congress."

"They have not enacted a living wage, made healthcare a human right, protected senior citizens, or created enough opportunities for all our children," said Hyman, a sociology professor at Coker College.

He also called for campaign finance reform, saying, "Our politics are polluted with money."

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PROVIDED

From left, Dimitri Cherny, Thomas Dixon, Mal Hyman and Arik Bjorn at Saturday's sunrise event.



PROVIDED

From left, Arik Bjorn, Mal Hyma, Thomas Dixon and Dimitri Cherny at the Saturday sunrise event.



Title: **Haley wants MUSC board to reimburse school for expensive meals and hotel stays**
 Author: ASSOCIATED PRESS
 Size: 20.30 column inches
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Haley wants MUSC board to reimburse school for expensive meals and hotel stays

ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHARLESTON — Gov. Nikki Haley wants members of the board of the Medical University of South Carolina to reimburse the school for expensive meals and hotel stays during their board meetings.



Haley

Haley spokeswoman Chaney Adams told *The Post and Courier* of Charleston the governor has already

asked her appointee to the schools governing board, Dr. Harold Jablon, to repay more than \$20,000 he was reimbursed for the meals, wine and luxury hotel rooms.

“We asked Dr. Jablon to repay the Medical University of South Carolina, which he has agreed to do, and his colleagues should do the same,”

Adams said.

The Post and Courier reported that the MUSC board spent about \$560,000 since 2011, largely on hotel rooms and food, at their six meetings per year in Charleston.

Dr. Donald Johnson, chairman of the MUSC trustees, has ordered a review of the board’s spending.

“I have called for the immediate review of the board spending policies in order to define and align with best practices as we move forward,” Johnson said in a letter to the newspaper.

According to Johnson, the review will include two board members, university finance, compliance and legal officers, as well as two external members.

Last week, the state inspector general told *The Post and Courier* that he had begun investigating the MUSC Board of Trustee’s spending habits at the request of the State Commission on Higher Education, which oversees the state’s public colleges and universities.

Title: **Thank you on behalf of flood victims**
 Author:
 Size: 9.76 column inches
 Summerville, SC Circulation: 5929



Thank you on behalf of flood victims

To the Editor:

The Ridgeville Community Resource Center is very thankful for the grant they received in May 2016 from the One SC Flood Fund to help restore homes that were damaged dur-

ing the October 2015 flood in Dorchester, Berkeley, Charleston, Colleton and Orangeburg counties.

The One SC Fund was established in response to the massive flooding that occurred across the state of South Carolina in October 2015. On

Nov. 16, Gov. Nikki Haley announced her endorsement of the flood fund.

The One SC Fund supports nonprofit organizations providing relief and recovery assistance in the FEMA-designated emergency counties.

The role of the fund is to help bridge the funding gap in order to rebuild our state and help folks resume their lives.

*Thank you,
 Angie Lee Crum
 Director/CEO
 Ridgeville Community Resource Center, Inc.*

Title: **New law brings lower ACT scores**
 Author: ROBERT MONNIE Staff Reporter
 Size: 35.03 column inches
 Cheraw, SC Circulation: 8748



New law brings lower ACT scores

ROBERT MONNIE

Staff Reporter

In 2014, Gov. Nikki Haley signed a law directing that all high school seniors take the ACT college entrance exam, beginning with last year's senior class. As a result, last year's scores dropped significantly across the board.

In all, 20 states have made the change to require students to take the test, and all 20 states report a similar decrease in scores in their first year of required ACT college exam completion for all seniors.

Last year, 48,383 students in South Carolina's public schools took the battery of tests. The mean composite score for the four subject areas of English, math, reading and science decreased to 18.2, a decrease of more than two points. For the 2014-15 school year, when only 22,640 seniors took the exam, the mean composite score was 20.2.

With a similar score decrease, the 2015-16 ACT mean composite score for the 461 seniors of the Chester-

field County School District taking the test dropped to 17.1 from the previous year's mean composite score of 19.2 when just 161 seniors took the exam.

The 2015-16 CCSD mean scores for the separate ACT subjects areas were 15.7 for English, 17.2 for math, 17.5 for reading and 17.5 for science, all of which were below the ACT benchmarks.

As defined by the ACT "The ACT Benchmarks are scores on the ACT subject-area tests that represent the level of achievement required for students to have a 50 percent chance of obtaining a B or higher or about a 75 percent chance of obtaining a C or higher in corresponding credit-bearing first-year college courses."

These benchmark scores are 18 for English, 22 for reading, 22 for math and 23 for science.

The recommended preparatory core courses include four years of English; four years

of mathematics, including algebra I and II, geometry, trigonometry/pre-calculus and calculus; three years of social studies, including American history and government and world history; and four years of natural sciences, such as general, physical and earth science, biology, chemistry and physics.

However, what skews the data for the ACT results is that only about one-third of the testing group was enrolled and reasonably successful in the college prep curriculum.

"I think what we have to do is drill down to the subset of students who have taken the suggested prerequisite courses and then analyze how they perform," said CCSD Superintendent Dr. Harrison Goodwin. "If students of Chesterfield County School District take and are successful in a course of study that is suggested for college bound students, then they are well prepared for education in most four-year degree settings."

Title: **The power of two**
 Author:
 Size: 48.98 column inches
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OUR VIEW

The power of two

The term “legislative state” gets thrown around a lot by people trying to describe the power structure for South Carolina’s government. It’s supposed to make the state’s gross imbalance of power seem like a reasonable alternative – a “legislative state,” as opposed to an “executive state,” sounds like a legitimate thing. Another problem with the term, however, is that it implies the *entire* legislature runs the state. In fact, a better argument can be made that a small group of legislative leaders run it. Consider the recent controversy over the expansion of Coastal Carolina’s stadium.

First, some context. Coastal Carolina University decided to move from the Big South to the Sun Belt Conference. In order to make this switch, university officials needed to increase the size of the school’s stadium and wanted to issue bonds to cover the construction cost.

The Commission on Higher Education (CHE) first had to approve the bond request, but the agency denied it – four times – citing insufficient funding to cover the bond debt and a board members own experience with the unforeseen costs of switching conferences. Normally that would be the end of the story. But thanks to that small group of powerful legislators in Columbia, Coastal Carolina will get its stadium expansion. At the very end of the budget process, legislators slipped in two provisos (laws that expire at the end of the fiscal year) that allowed Coastal Carolina to circumvent the CHE’s decision. The provisos were sponsored by Ways and Means Chairman Brian White (R-Anderson). In the Conference Committee for the budget, Senate Finance chairman Hugh Leatherman (R-Florence) agreed to the House provisos. They were included in the final budget.

(Why Leatherman and White went out of their way to assist Coastal Carolina in this way is unclear – the school is not located in either lawmaker’s district. It’s worth noting that CCU has spent \$15,000 on lobbying in 2016.) Gov. Nikki Haley vetoed the provisos, noting in her veto message that Coastal Carolina “deployed an aggressive lobbying effort to bypass CHE’s statutory responsibility to review and consider higher education capital projects, resulting in this proviso.” She went on: “The project, primarily funded by tuition-backed debt, nearly doubled in cost since its original proposal last fall.”

The governor’s vetoes were overwhelmingly overridden in the House. In the Senate, one proviso was sustained – meaning the Senate agreed with the governor’s veto. But ten minutes later, Senate leaders, evidently unhappy with the result, moved to reconsider – a parliamentary maneuver allowing the chamber to take up a veto again even though members already sustained it. Both White and Leatherman voted to override the vetoes in their respective chambers. The next step for Coastal Carolina was to go before the Joint Bond Review Committee (JBRC), a body made up entirely of legislators. The chairman and vice chairman of the JBRC are none other than Sen. Leatherman and Rep. White, respectively. The committee approved the bond proposal. After it was approved by the JBRC, the State Fiscal Accountability Authority (SFAA) voted this week 3 to 2 to allow the project to move forward. Leatherman and White are on that five-member board, too; they accounted for two of the three “aye” votes.

In the end, White and Leatherman voted on the proposal no fewer than seven times. Four for White and three for Leatherman – and this doesn’t include White’s own amendment that introduced the two provisos. The governor, meanwhile – who, unlike White and Leatherman, is elected by the entire state, not merely by a single legislative district – only got to act on the measure twice: first with a veto, second with a vote on the SFAA. In both cases, she was outgunned by two legislative leaders. Maybe the best term isn’t “legislative state” after all. Maybe we should refer to South Carolina an “oligarchic state.”

Consider Leatherman. The Florence lawmaker has at least 46 boards and commission seats he either serves on or can appoint to. On some boards he appoints more than one member – for example the powerful Judicial Merit Selection Committee, which nominates judicial candidates to the legislature for election. A few years ago when the legislature passed and the governor signed a government restructuring bill that supposedly “abolished” the Budget and Control Board, lawmakers and other politicians cheered the “historic” victory for accountability. Judging by the CCU stadium controversy, however, the end results of the new restructuring law were (a) that the Budget and Control Board has a new name – it’s the SFAA now – and (b) that the oligarchy remains firmly in place. But if you’re a small university wanting to fund a stadium expansion, an oligarchy is just what you may need.

Phillip Cease is director of research at the South Carolina Policy Council.

Title: **Finding pride in our workforce**

Author:

Size: 38.28 column inches

Marion, SC Circulation: 3842



Finding pride in our workforce

Across South Carolina, community leaders are getting the job done in getting our workers ready for work.

They have earned the designation as being a work-ready community.

In fact, South Carolina was the first state to become fully certified as a work ready, according to a July press release from the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce, or DEW. The work ready certification is part of a national, voluntary initiative by ACT, a leader educational assessment and workforce development that is known for its college admission testing.

"We couldn't be more excited to announce that South Carolina is the first state in the nation to have every county become certified work ready," Gov. Nikki Haley said the DEW press release.

"Team South Carolina's is paying off – we have seen our state become one of the most competitive environments for business development in the world, and we're just getting



started."

ACT, which has been around more than 50 years, says its Certified Work Ready Communities program is "improving the skills and work readiness of the workforce while giving area businesses an efficient, reliable way to identify skilled job candidates," the organization states.

"With our commitment to the Work Ready initiative and the continued development of a skilled workforce, it is not surprising that employment numbers have been at historic highs over the last year, and companies continue to expand and choose South Carolina as the place to do business," stated Cheryl M. Stanton, DEW's executive director.

South Carolina's work ready initiative "provides a framework to strengthen economic development using a community-based approach, grounded

in certifying counties as work ready," states the DEW press release.

DEW states the effort will help existing businesses thrive while creating a climate for new investment by:

- » Improving high school graduation rates
- » Helping existing companies grow and add new jobs
- » Attracting new business and investment
- » Providing a competitive advantage over other areas
- » Improving the focus on local business climate
- » Strengthening regional and cross-sector ties

The work ready initiative "empowers counties and states with actionable data and specific workforce goals that drive economic growth," DEW states.

Traditionally, when companies advertised for new employees, they may have used "help wanted" or "now hiring" signs. Now, communities are seeking to lure companies by signaling they have the skilled workers to meet business needs.

Getting our folk ready for and employed in good jobs should be our Job No. 1.

Title: Honda to invest \$45 million in expansion, plans to add 250 jobs at Timmonsville plant
 Author: BY JOE PERRY Jperry@florencenews.com
 Size: 56.26 column inches
 Marion, SC Circulation: 3842



Honda to invest \$45 million in expansion, plans to add 250 jobs at Timmonsville plant

BY JOE PERRY

Jperry@florencenews.com

TIMMONSVILLE — Honda of South Carolina announced Thursday that it is making a \$45 million investment with an 115,000-square-foot-expansion that will bring 250 new jobs.

Growing to meet demand for Honda's side-by-side vehicles produced exclusively in its South Carolina plant required a focus on creating a more flexible and efficient production facility, said Gary Mabrey, president of Honda of South Carolina Mfg. Inc.

"The step-by-step growth of our operations in South Carolina is really a testament to our outstanding associates and the great products they create for our customers every day," he said. Company officials said that prior to Thursday's announcement, Honda had invested \$93 million and added 150 new jobs in South Carolina over the past five years related to side-by-side production alone. Honda of South Carolina is the exclusive global producer of Honda Pioneer side-by-sides, including the 500, 700 and 1000 series models. The expansion focuses on the paint, weld, final assembly and material service areas as the company looked to improve manufacturing

efficiency, parts flow and logistics.

"Our associates are very proud of the ATV and SxS products we make at Honda of South Carolina. This investment and plant expansion reaffirms our commitment to our customers, the state of South Carolina, and our local communities," Mabrey said in the announcement.

State Senate President Pro Tempore Hugh K. Leatherman Sr. hailed it as "outstanding news" for Florence County and South Carolina.

"We applaud Honda of South Carolina for their continued product line and workforce growth - both boldly underline that Florence County is at the forefront of economic growth," Leatherman said. Congratulations Honda of South Carolina."

Florence County Council Chairman Roger Poston said the investment "is a testament to Florence County's economic vitality and strong workforce."

"Honda of South Carolina's expansion announcement is great news. Quality, associates, and customer satisfaction is what Honda is all about," said Frank J. "Buddy" Brand, Florence County Economic Development Partnership chairman. "We congratu-

late everyone involved and look forward to Honda's continued success in Florence County."

Gov. Nikki Haley called Honda a "fantastic partner

for nearly two decades," and characterized news of the expansion as "another huge win for team South Carolina."

World-class manufacturing firms continue to thrive in South Carolina, said Bobby Hitt, S.C. secretary of commerce, and bring new jobs to all corners of the state. He offered congratulations and said he looks forward to the company's continued success in Florence County.

In mid-December of last year, S.C. Ports Authority president and CEO Jim Newsome was accompanied by Sen. Leatherman and USC Moore School of Business research economist Joseph Von Nessen, who authored a study that found the state's ports account for an economic impact of more than \$6 billion in the Pee Dee. The study was unveiled at Honda of South Carolina to underscore the bond between manufacturing and exports to jobs in the area.

On Thursday, Newsome said, "Honda is a valued corporate citizen and

customer of the port, using our Charleston facilities for both import and export goods. SCPA congratulates them on the expansion of their business and looks forward to serving their growing cargo needs."

In 2017, Honda will shift assembly consolidation of small and medium-dis-

placement engines from Honda of South Carolina to its Kumamoto factory in Japan, which produces large-displacement engines. The move is designed to free up space at the Timmonsville plant for expanded side-by-side production as workers engaged with powertrain assembly operations will gain new responsibilities within the plant. The Timmonsville plant is one of Honda's 19 major manufacturing facilities in North America. Honda of South Carolina is the sole production facility for Honda ATVs and side-by-side vehicles in the region. The company said it has produced more than three million products since the doors opened in 1998 with about 200 employees.

That initial \$30 million investment with a 200,000-square-foot plant has evolved into a 630,150-square-foot facility that represents \$344 million invested.

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Author: BY JOE PERRY Jperry@florencenews.com
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Florence County Economic Development Partnership executive director Joe W. King said his office will continue to follow the same plan it has for quite some time: take care of existing business and industry while working continually to bring new jobs and companies to the area. "Honda is a name known around the world," he said. "We've had good news with expansions this year and we'll continue to work for more."

Title: **Honda to invest \$45M in expansion, add 250 jobs**
 Author: BY JOE PERRY Morning News Jperry@florencenews.com
 Size: 86.18 column inches
 Lake City, SC Circulation: 1747



Honda to invest \$45M in expansion, add 250 jobs

BY JOE PERRY

Morning News

Jperry@florencenews.com

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View of Honda of South Carolina, the manufacturing facility in Timmonsville on Thursday.

MEGAN MAY/MORNING NEWS

Title: ACT scores drop in SC, across Pee Dee
Author: BY MELISSA ROLLINS Morning News mrollins@florencenews.com
Size: 47.58 column inches
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ACT scores drop in SC, across Pee Dee

BY MELISSA ROLLINS

Morning News
mrollins@florencenews.com

FLORENCE—Across the state, ACT scores dropped in 2016 and the school districts in the Pee Dee were no exception. Only one local school had a gain: Mayo High School for Math, Science and Technology.

In 2014, Act 200 was signed into law by Gov. Nikki Haley. This new law requires that all students, whether they plan to go to college or not, take the ACT (American College Test) their junior year to gauge their readiness for college. With it being a mandated test, the number of students in each high school and district taking the test jumped dramatically.

In two districts in Florence County, Lake City and Johnsonville, the number of students went from double digits to triple digits. Florence School District One had an increase of 506 students testing; Darling-

ton County School District increased by 286 students. The state mean composite score dropped from 20.4 to 18.5. The national average is 20.8.

Florence One's score was 17.6; Hannah-Pamlico's was 14.9. Lake City's score was 16.3 while Timmonsville's was 14.1 and Johnsonville's was 17.7.

Randy Koon, Florence One assistant superintendent of instruction, said the new scores were disheartening.

"We are disappointed that there was a drop," Koon said. "I think that the primary reason for that drop is that we tested nearly twice as many students as we did last year."

Koon said that the increase in test takers could change the composition of the results.

"The test, last year, was

required; all students had to take it," Koon said. "We had a lot of students who took it who really had no interest in being successful on the test, I'm afraid. I think that may have played a part in the drop in test scores. It was statewide, too, so you see a drop in scores statewide."

The test results can give some direction for instruction, he said.

"I think it does give us a picture of some areas where we need to improve," Koon said.

According to a press release from Florence District Three, ACT chief executive officer Marten Roorda said that in this particular situation, a decrease in scores is typical.

"Research clearly shows that scores initially decrease when states adopt the ACT for all students, but access and opportuni-

ties increase," Roorda said.

According to a press release from Florence Three, Lake City, changes are being made to the school day and the instruction to help make students better prepared for furthering their education.

Lake City High School's administration "has made intentional changes to the school day that should result in increased student achievement," the press release said. "English and mathematics teachers embed test preparation components in their curriculum. Since English was the lowest tested area, juniors will receive a full year of English instruction as opposed to only a semester."

Zachary Zhao, currently a senior in Florence One's International Baccalaureate Program (IB) at Wilson High School, made a perfect 36 on the ACT.

Table with ACT scores for Florence County (FSD1-FSD5) and Darlington County Overall for 2015 and 2016.

Title: **McMaster is doping to be in' next South Carolina gov's race**
 Author: BY MEG KINNARD the Associated Press
 Size: 26.66 column inches
 Ridgeland, SC Circulation: 1950



McMaster is 'hoping to be in' next South Carolina gov's race

BY MEG KINNARD
 The Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. — South Carolina Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster all but announced he's running for governor again in two years, saying Aug. 25 that he's "hoping to be in" the 2018 race.

McMaster's comments during a Facebook live broadcast with state GOP Chairman Matt Moore were the closest that the longtime Republican official has come to announcing his candidacy.

"I'd love to do it," McMaster said. "It's too early to announce anything. But I hope I'm going to be able to do it. ... I'm hoping to be in that race."

Filing for the governor's race doesn't open until early 2018. And by not committing to running, McMaster — the first elected official to officially endorse Donald Trump's candidacy — keeps himself open to possibly serving in a presidential administration, should Trump win in November.

McMaster, 69, is a former state attorney general, U.S. Attorney and state GOP chairman. Finishing third in a four-way Republican primary in the 2010 governor's race, he went on to back the eventual winner, Nikki Haley, who tapped him to head up her transition team, as well as an ethics committee she created to recommend reforms.



McMaster

Haley was re-elected in 2014, and McMaster was elected separately to serve as her lieutenant governor. Going forward, starting in 2018, governor and lieutenant governor will be elected on the same ticket in South Carolina.

McMaster and Haley have worked together on a variety of issues but have clashed publicly over the presidential race. Haley initially backed Marco Rubio before saying she preferred Ted Cruz over Trump. Ultimately, she said she'll back the party's nominee.

McMaster, on the other hand, threw his support behind the billionaire businessman at a rally before South Carolina's first-in-the-South primary, surprising many when he didn't back a more establishment candidate. McMaster gave one of two speeches formally seconding Trump's nomination, saying at the convention last month that Trump was what the country needed to succeed.

"He is a man of uncommon strength, uncommon determination, accomplishment and vision," McMaster said of Trump. "He may be the only man perfectly equipped to win the ferocious battle ahead."

Many other Republicans have already been mentioned as potential candidates for South Carolina's 2018 governor's race, including Attorney General Alan Wilson and former Department of Health and Environmental Control director Catherine Templeton. State Rep. Tommy Pope, R-York, has already said he intends to run.