

Title: **Fashion-backward in North Carolina**
 Author: BY KATHLEEN PARKER Columnist
 Size: 45.72 square inch
 Aiken, SC Circulation: 19635



Fashion-backward in North Carolina

BY KATHLEEN PARKER

Columnist

EASTON, Md. — It's been a long while since South Carolina could look down upon its neighbor to the North.

Thanks to North Carolina's anti-LGBT legislation (HB2), also referred to as the "bath-

room bill," the state effectively has begun redefining itself from its long-popular characterization as a "valley of humility between two mountains of conceit" (South Carolina and Virginia).

The new law, which ludicrously requires transgender people to use the restroom consistent with the sex on their birth certificates, has liberated South Carolina from its persistent place as the brunt of late-night jokes. Remarking on the law, South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley said her state doesn't have "that problem." Brava.

The law in question was hurriedly passed last month and signed by North Carolina Gov. Pat McCrory in response to what one state official called a restroom free-for-all, referring to sudden hysteria over the possibility of transgender individuals using the "wrong" restroom. How would anyone know? Will officials now post monitors at

public restrooms to check birth certificates and human bladder-evacuation portals?

This would be riotously funny if it weren't so patently discriminatory.

Many bad deeds go unpunished, but not this one. The economic fallout from the law already is being felt and the price of not doing business is

about to go up. Bruce Springsteen recently canceled a concert in Greensboro and Deutsche Bank has frozen a planned 250-job expansion in the state. But the real showdown will be this weekend when not nearly as many buyers and designers as usual will attend the biannual High Point furniture market — the largest in the nation and the state's biggest economic event.

A recent study by Duke University placed the annual economic impact of the High Point market at \$5.38 billion. The furnishings industry also generates more than 600,000 visitor days to the state each year and accounts for 37,000 jobs.

If there were a Darwin Award for states, North Carolina would win hands-down. Already the High Point Market Authority reports that hundreds or thousands of the 75,000 retailers and designers who annually attend the market won't be visiting this year because of HB2, which, come to think of it, sounds ap-

propriately like a disease.

Many of those who plan to attend have expressed deep reservations amid likely plans to go to the relatively new Las Vegas furniture market next go-round. Among these is Don Wooters, interior designer and co-owner of Easton's Dwelling and Design, who told me he feels guilt about going to North Carolina.

"I feel like a traitor going to High Point, putting capitalism before human rights," he said. "I don't feel good about that and I know it's wrong."

Wooters isn't only baffled by the bigotry of the legislation but also by whatever generates the fear behind it.

"Why do people feel they have to be afraid? It's a big sign of how uneducated America is."

Another local designer, Jamie Merida, owner of Bountiful, told me he decided to go if only to make his case to vendors that they have six months to straighten out this mess or he, too, will be off to Las Vegas next time.

Although North Carolina has been noted in recent years for its increasingly hard-right politics, it is still shocking that a state that boasts several of the nation's top colleges and universities and is home to the famed Research Triangle, could codify what is so plainly a discriminatory law. In comments Tuesday,

McCrory, feeling the pressure, softened his defense of the law but stopped short of opposing the provision on bathroom use by transsexual people.

As in all other times when bigotry raises its hideous head, better angels will prevail. Either the courts will overturn the law or the state will come to its senses, if only for economic reasons.

As to that valley of humility? In 1900, when Mary Oates Spratt Van Landingham, a cultural leader and author, first conjured the image in a speech, she was bemoaning her state's then-lesser "native literature."

"Could it be that being located between Virginia and South Carolina, our people for so long have been furnished such conspicuous illustrations of self-appreciation that they have, by contrast, learned modesty and silence?" she said. "Where there are mountains of conceit, there are apt to be valleys of humility."

Today, those mountains have good reason for self-appreciation by comparison. And North Carolina has proved itself a valley of ignorance, whose legislators and governor could use a moment of silence to consider their ill-conceived conceit.

Kathleen Parker is Pulitzer Prize winning columnist for *The Washington Post*.

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**Parker**

Title: **SCHouse alters roads bill; senatorssaybillis likely dead**
 Author: BY JEFFREY COLLINS Associated Press
 Size: 28.67 square inch
 Hilton Head Island, SC Circulation: 20015



SC House alters roads bill; senators say bill is likely dead

BY JEFFREY COLLINS

Associated Press
COLUMBIA

The South Carolina House made changes Wednesday to the roads bill that has been debated for more than a year, leading senators and the governor to say the proposal is likely dead for the year.

South Carolina roads will still likely get more money. The House has placed an extra \$400 million in its budget it sent to the Senate.

But Wednesday's amendment greatly reduces the chances of reforming how commissioners are chosen to the board that helps run the Department of Transportation. Many lawmakers have said that is a critical first step toward getting closer to the extra \$1 billion a year the road agency has said it needs to get state highways back to good condition.

The House could have agreed to the Senate road bill, which allows Gov. Nikki Haley to appoint all members of the DOT board with Senate approval. Instead, the House changed the bill to have

approval by the House and Senate.

"Government closest to the people is usually best. And there is no need to take 124 people out of the process," Rep. Gary Simrill, R-Rock Hill, said of House members.

State Sen. Larry Grooms said in South Carolina's 240 years as a state the Ethics Commission is the only body where both chambers approve members. The Republican from Charleston said senators can't just remove that kind of precedence.

"They knew before they voted that putting in a joint confirmation was going to kill it," said Senate Majority Leader Shane Massey, R-Edgefield. "Several of us told them that beforehand. They knew it and they did it

anyway. I think they've killed the bill."

Simrill, who has led the effort to pass a roads bill in the house since the fall of 2014 said that shouldn't be true. He said the House and Senate should agree to a conference committee to

hash out their differences.

Massey said that committee likely wouldn't reform DOT enough.

The House waited until after the Legislative Audit Council released its report on DOT. It found that 54 percent of the state's primary roads are now in poor condition, compared to 31 percent eight years ago. The audit also found DOT revenues aren't even keeping up with inflation.

Gov. Nikki Haley has taken to Facebook to scold and threaten House members this week. After their 113-6 vote to amend the bill Wednesday, she posted the roll call. In an earlier message, she suggested the House was creating problems for future work to get more money for roads.

"The Republican House of Representatives plans to kill two years of work and that as a result, there will be no change in their road conditions anytime soon," Haley wrote.

Simrill said that kind of rhetoric doesn't respect the legislative process.

Title: **Bathroom access for transgender people debated across South**
 Author: BY SEANNA ADCOX Associated Press
 Size: 63.24 square inch
 Hilton Head Island, SC Circulation: 20015



Bathroom access for transgender people debated across South

BY SEANNA ADCOX
 Associated Press

COLUMBIA

Louisiana's governor issued an executive order Wednesday banning discrimination in state government based on sexual orientation and gender identity, and transgender people in South Carolina told state senators that a bill requiring them to use a public bathroom corresponding to their "biological sex" puts them in danger of harassment.

The overwhelming majority of people at the Senate hearing opposed the measure, which mimics part of a North Carolina law signed last month that has brought a national backlash. No vote was taken.

In Tennessee, 60 business leaders — including the CEOs of Williams-Sonoma, Airbnb, Alcoa, T-Mobile and Dow Chemical — signed a letter asking lawmakers to kill similar legislation. The events seemed to unfold across the South almost simultaneously as the fight over LGBT rights raged on.

The South Carolina bill introduced by Sen. Lee Bright would require multistall bathrooms on public property to be designated and used "based on bi-

ological sex." It specifically includes student bathrooms, locker rooms and showers in public schools. It would also bar local governments from requiring businesses to let transgender people use the bathroom of their choice.

Bright said he's had enough of tolerance if that means "men who claim to be women" going into a bathroom with children.

"I don't believe transgender people are pedophiles," the Republican said. "I think grown adult men would use this as protection to violate women in the restroom."

Opponents said existing laws already address such crimes.

Dex Sexton, 17, of Blythewood, said people don't undress openly in women's restrooms, as stalls provide privacy. If the issue is fear of assault, he asked, then why are men who have abused little boys not forced to use a different bathroom?

"It's protections against sexual assault that stop them, not because they can't use the men's bathroom," he said.

In Louisiana, the LGBT protection order signed by Democratic Gov. John Bel

Edwards prohibits state agencies, boards and contractors from harassment or discrimination based on race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, political affiliation, disability or age. State contracts will be required to include a similar anti-discrimination provision.

Edwards, in office since January, also terminated a religious objections executive order issued by former Republican Gov. Bobby Jindal last year. That "Marriage and Conscience" order from Jindal prohibited state agencies under the governor's control from denying licenses, benefits, contracts or tax deductions to businesses and people that take actions because of a "religious belief that marriage is or should be recognized as the union of one man and one woman."

At the South Carolina hearing, opponents said the proposal would do the opposite of its intention.

"Look at me and tell me I belong in the men's restroom," said Culpepper, who was wearing a blue, low-cut dress with red fingernails. Last year,

she settled a lawsuit against the state Department of Motor Vehicles after being told to remove her makeup for a driver's license photo. "Our community is already at risk for sexual assault and violence."

Opponents also questioned how the bill would be enforced.

"In everyday life, how do we determine whether someone we're with is male or female? We look at them. We don't inspect their genitalia," said University of South Carolina law professor Gregory Adams. "Are we going to start looking at their birth certificate?"

The bill has little chance this year. House GOP leaders have said they won't deal with the issue, and Republican Gov. Nikki Haley has called it unnecessary.

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**I DON'T BELIEVE
 TRANSGENDER
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Sen. Lee Bright

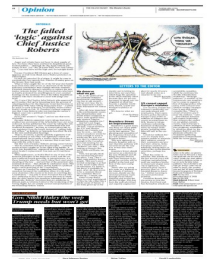
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TIM DOMINICK The State via AP

A crowd listens to testimony Wednesday during an S.C. Senate subcommittee meeting to consider a bill that would ban transgender people from choosing a bathroom.

Title: **Gov. Nikki Haley the veep Trump needs but won't get**
 Author: BY PATRICIA MURPHY CQ-Roll Call
 Size: 42.62 square inch
 Hilton Head Island, SC Circulation: 20015



OTHER VIEWPOINTS

Gov. Nikki Haley the veep Trump needs but won't get

BY PATRICIA MURPHY
 CQ-Roll Call

Donald Trump has proclaimed himself the king of the deal, so let's see him make this one — getting Gov. Nikki Haley to be his running mate.

It might be the only move he could make between now and the Republican convention that could move delegates from #NeverTrump to #MaybeTrump and ease his path to the nomination in the face of a party apparatus that just doesn't seem to want him to win.

Getting Haley to agree to join a Trump ticket would probably be the highest hurdle for Trump to clear. The South Carolina governor first endorsed Sen. Marco Rubio for president, but when that didn't work out, she said she'd vote for Ted Cruz instead.

Haley has spoken out repeatedly against the sort of prejudice she says Trump cultivates and joked to the Gridiron dinner this year that even though she got to give the GOP response to the State of the Union, "I won't really feel like I've arrived until Donald Trump has asked to see my birth certificate."

So Haley's no fan of the man, but as Trump said in his book "The Art of the

Deal," "If you're going to be thinking anyway, you might as well think big."

Assuming Trump is thinking anyway, and I leave that open for debate, let's run through the many reasons Haley is the only person who could right the SS Trump.

Haley's potential as Trump's vice president has nothing to do with the fact that she is a young, conservative, minority woman who is the daughter of immigrants, which would seem to neutralize some of the damage he's done to himself with young people, conservatives, minorities, women and immigrants. But veep choices based solely on "broadening the ticket" usually do the opposite. Just ask John McCain.

Instead of just checking boxes, Haley has become the kind of leader that some people expected Trump to be before he went insane — business friendly, out of the box, willing to stand up to entrenched political interests and capable of real leadership.

During Haley's time in office, South Carolina's unemployment rate has fallen from 11 percent to 5.5 percent. While Trump talks about upending

NAFTA and ending free trade, South Carolina has worked to backfill the jobs lost through NAFTA by wooing companies like Munich-based BMW to build more and more of their products there. The plant in Greer, S.C., which opened in 1994, has grown to become BMW's largest in the world and just exported its 2 millionth SUV overseas.

Trump likes to talk a lot about being strong, even though he mostly shows his strength by mean-tweeting critics after midnight.

On more than one occasion, Haley has shown strength and the path of more resistance in her conservative state. After the shootings at Mother Emanuel Church in Charleston, Haley moved immediately to take down the Confederate flag that flew in front of the state Capitol. Many before Haley had tried and failed, but she and others knew that moment of horror could be the time to finally move South Carolina forward in a meaningful way.

Keeping with the theme of moving forward, Haley also took a pass last week on dealing with a transgender bathroom bill like

the one in North Carolina that ensnared that state's governor in controversy the week before. Instead of wading into the bathroom debate, Haley just said she didn't think the bill was necessary. End of story.

But the main reason Trump should get Haley to run on a ticket with him is the good judgment she has shown by making it clear she never would. Like Groucho Marx, who said he didn't want to join any club that would have him as a member, the only people who could credibly help Trump at this point are the ones who have seen the holes in his candidacy and have had the political courage to say exactly what they are.

It's hard to think what Trump could offer Haley, or anyone credible, to get her to join a ticket with him. Maybe she could to all the work behind the scenes while he takes all the credit? I know many Republicans who would sleep better at night if that was a deal Trump could manage to strike.

Roll Call columnist Patricia Murphy covers national politics for the Daily Beast. Follow her @IPatriciaMurphy

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 Author: By JEFFREY COLLINS Associated Press
 Size: 32.55 square inch
 Greenwood, SC Circulation: 16494



■ STATE

House alters roads bill Senators say bill is likely dead

By JEFFREY COLLINS

Associated Press

COLUMBIA — The South Carolina House made changes Wednesday to the roads bill that has been debated for more than a year, leading senators and the governor to say the proposal is likely dead for the year.

South Carolina roads will still likely get more money. The House has placed an extra \$400 million in its budget it sent to the Senate.

But Wednesday's amendment greatly reduces the chances of reforming how commissioners are chosen to the board that helps run the Department of Transportation. Many lawmakers have said that is a critical first step toward getting closer to the extra \$1 billion a year the road agency has said it needs to get state highways back to

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See **ROADS**, page 4A

ROADS

Continued from 1B

"Government closest to the people is usually best. And there is no need to take 124 people out of the process," Rep. Gary Simrill, R-Rock Hill, said of House members.

State Sen. Larry Grooms said in South Carolina's 240 years as a state the Ethics Commission is the only body where both chambers approve members. The Republican from Charleston said senators can't just remove that kind of precedence.

"They knew before they voted that putting in a joint confirmation was going to kill it," said Senate Majority Leader Shane Massey, R-Edgefield. "Several of us told them that beforehand. They knew it and they did it anyway. I think they've killed the bill."

Simrill, who has led the effort to pass a roads bill in the house since the fall of 2014 said that

shouldn't be true. He said the House and Senate should agree to a conference committee to hash out their differences.

Massey said that committee likely wouldn't reform DOT enough.

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"The Republican House of Representatives plans to kill two years of work and that as a result, there will be no change in their road conditions anytime soon," Haley wrote.

Simrill said that kind of rhetoric doesn't respect the legislative process. He points out the House passed a more comprehensive road bill that included a gas tax increase nearly one year ago and the proposal sat in the Senate for 11 months.

The House also removed a Senate proposal to move \$400 million each year from the general budget fund and put to roads.

"At worst it is unconstitutional, and at best it is bad public policy," said Simrill, pointing out the state has failed to fund similar promises to education and local governments.

Title: **S.C. learns wrong lesson from N.C. bill**
 Author: By The Herald Editorial Board
 Size: 40.45 square inch
 Rock Hill, SC Circulation: 34688



OUR VIEW

S.C. learns wrong lesson from N.C. bill

By The Herald Editorial Board

South Carolina should steer clear of the controversy over so-called “bathroom bills.” But tell that to S.C. state lawmakers.

North Carolina recently passed a law, HB2, signed by Gov. Pat McCrory, that limits attempts by cities and other jurisdictions from providing legal protections for LGBT individuals, including measures that would have allowed transgender people to choose the public restroom of their choice.

The backlash from critics, including some of the state’s largest employers, was swift and unequivocal. Last week, for example, PayPal scrapped plans to build a new Charlotte operations center, a move that will cost the city at least 400 jobs, as a protest to the new law.

Largely as a result of this pressure, McCrory now has reconsidered and is seeking to walk back parts of HB2.

Meanwhile, in Georgia, under similar pressure from major corporations that do business in the state, Gov. Nathan Deal announced March 28 that he would veto a bill that would have curtailed the rights of Georgia’s LGBT community. Deal, reading the writing on the wall,

realized that the unnecessary bill could have jeopardized relations with some of the biggest employers in his state, ranging from Coca Cola to a burgeoning film industry.

So, with that in mind, what message did South Carolina legislators take away from these two responses? Well, one, state Sen. Lee Bright, R-Spartanburg, decided to introduce a bill just like North Carolina’s.

Among other things, the bill he introduced last week would limit access to public restrooms in government buildings and schools based on “biological sex,” and would prohibit local governments from passing non-discrimination rules that would let transgender individuals to use the restroom of their choice.

So far, other legislators and state leaders, including Gov. Nikki Haley, don’t seem too concerned about the issue for a couple of reasons. For one, the Legislature is too busy with other priorities to deal with Bright’s bill. But lawmakers also feel free to ignore the brouhaha because they are confident the state already has a law on the books that effectively allows residents to discriminate against the

LGBT community.

The state’s so-called Religious Freedom Act, passed in 1999, is designed to protect those “whose exercise of religion is substantially burdened by the state.” Store owners, for example, who would like to deny access to their public restrooms to transgender customers could claim a religious exemption from state and local public laws unless the can show a “compelling state interest” in the law being enforced.

“When we look at our situation, we’re not hearing of anybody’s religious freedoms that are being violated,” Haley told reporters last week.

But we might be hearing more about the civil rights of LGBT individuals being violated by the Religious Freedom Act. The law flies in the face of a number of nondiscrimination ordinances adopted by cities and counties around the state that protect access to “public accommodations,” on the basis of “sexual orientation” and “gender identity or expression.”

That would seem to include transgender individuals’ use of public restrooms.

Besides being potentially unconstitutional, bills such as HB2 are simply impracti-

cal. Who will enforce the rules? Will toilet police require people to produce birth certificates proving their sexual identity at before they can relieve themselves?

Harriet Hancock, a Columbia lawyer who has been active in efforts to prevent LGBT discrimination, noted in a recent interview with the Charlotte Observer that “some of these (trans) women are some of the most voluptuous, sexiest women you’ll ever see. And you want them to use the men’s bathroom?”

That’s an interesting question. Which would be more disconcerting to customers, requiring a transgender woman to use the men’s restroom or allowing her to choose?

These bathroom bills address a nonexistent problem. They are little more than a license for people to discriminate against members of the LGBT community and ignore longstanding law regarding public accommodations.

North Carolina’s law is unnecessary, unenforceable, harmful to commerce in the state, unfair and, basically, ridiculous. Why would South Carolina want to emulate that?

Title: **Restroom access for transgender people debated in Statehouse**
 Author: BY SEANNA ADCOX Associated Press
 Size: 53.32 square inch
 Rock Hill, SC Circulation: 34688



S.C. SENATE

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BY SEANNA ADCOX

Associated Press

COLUMBIA

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The overwhelming majority of people at the Senate hearing opposed the measure, which mimics part of a North Carolina law signed last month that has brought a national backlash. No vote was taken.

The South Carolina bill introduced by Sen. Lee Bright would require multistall restrooms on public property to be designated and used "based on biological sex." It specifically includes student restrooms, locker rooms and showers in public schools. It also would bar local

governments from requiring businesses to let transgender people use the bathroom of their choice.

Bright said he's had enough of tolerance if that means "men who claim to be women" going into a restroom with children.

"I don't believe transgender people are pedophiles," the Republican said. "I think grown adult men would use this as protection to violate women in the restroom."

U.S. Attorney Bill Nettles, who was invited to the hearing to discuss instances in South Carolina of transgender people verbally or physically assaulting someone, had a simple answer: "I can find none."

He declined to give any position on the bill, but when asked whether current laws protect people from being victimized, he

said, "the state of South Carolina has laws to address assault and battery."

Dex Sexton, 17, of Blythewood, said people don't undress openly in women's restrooms, as stalls provide privacy. If the issue is fear of assault, he asked, then why are men who have abused little boys not forced to use a different restroom?

"It's protections against sexual assault that stop them, not because they can't use the men's bathroom," he said.

The bill's opponents said the proposal would do the opposite of its purported intention.

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after being told to remove her makeup for a driver's license photo. "Our community is already at risk for sexual assault and violence."

Culpepper was among nine transgender people who stood in a show of support. Opponents also questioned how the bill would be enforced.

"In everyday life, how do we determine whether someone we're with is male or female? We look at them. We don't inspect their genitalia," said University of South Carolina law professor Gregory Adams. "Are we going to start looking at their birth certificate?"

The bill has little chance this year. House GOP leaders have said they won't deal with the issue and Republican Gov. Nikki Haley has called it unnecessary.

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TIM DOMINICK AP

A crowd listens to testimony during a Senate subcommittee hearing to consider the bill that would ban transgender people from choosing the restroom they use.

Title: **Changes in House could doom Senate's road plan**
 Author: TIM SMITH TCSMITH@GREENVILLENEWS.COM
 Size: 66.96 square inch
 Greenville, SC Circulation: 113473



Changes in House could doom Senate's road plan

TIM SMITH

TCSMITH@GREENVILLENEWS.COM

COLUMBIA - The House is refusing to go along with the Senate's road plan, despite a warning by Gov. Nikki Haley that changing what the Senate did would doom any chance of a roads bill this year.

The House voted 113-6 Wednesday afternoon to amend the Senate plan by sending the issue of road funding to the budget and requiring that the governor's appointment of highway commissioners and a transportation secretary be approved by a joint assembly of House and Senate lawmakers.

The bill also removes the state Department of Transportation chief internal auditor from the control of the DOT board and places it under the state auditor, following recommendations by last week's Legislative Audit Council report.

The changes put the House on a collision course with the Senate, which labored for three

years before passing a plan last month that would provide \$400 million a year for roads out of the General Fund, allow the governor to appoint highway commissioners and require any decisions on projects by the State Transportation Infrastructure Bank be approved by the highway commission.

Senators in previous years have scoffed at the idea of any joint confirmation process for state officials such as highway commissioners, arguing only the Senate should have that power.

"They abandoned their plan and then decided to throw poison on our plan," Senate Transportation Committee Chairman Larry Grooms explained to the Senate. "The House of Representatives believes the Senate should abandon 240 years of law and precedent over Senate confirmation. I don't think they

really believe we're going to do that. Which leaves only one conclusion. They do not want a roads bill passed this year."

Haley reached the same conclusion Tuesday after the House GOP Caucus agreed to move forward with its plan to change what the Senate did.

"Since the Senate passed a roads bill weeks ago, the House has known they either work with the Senate, pass real, good reform, or the bill dies," she said in a statement. "Today we learned House leadership has chosen to pass an amendment they know has zero chance of becoming law. That's a terrible shame, and every South Carolinian should know that tomorrow, the Republican House of Representatives plans to kill two years of work and that as a

See PLAN, Page 5A

Plan

Continued from Page 3A

result, there will be no change in their road conditions anytime soon."

The House action could mean whatever money is available for roads this year will be negotiated in the budget process. The House has already passed a budget that includes \$415 million for road work. The Senate is at the beginning of its budget process.

House Speaker Jay Lucas had criticized the Senate road-funding plan as "irresponsible" to address the state's long-term road needs with a sustainable source of revenue. The original House plan applied a sales tax to gas and raised the cap on the sales tax for vehicles.

"The legislative process exists so that the General Assembly can work to-

gether to move South Carolina forward, not provide opportunities for political grandstanding," he said afterward in a statement. "The House's amendment preserves qualifications and requirements for Highway Commissioners, solidifies the transparency of the State Infrastructure Bank, and removes irresponsible budgeting practices that threaten the stability of our economy."

Lucas noted that most of the Senate had requested the LAC audit, yet passed their plan days before the LAC report was issued. That report shaped House members' views of what any roads bill should contain, some House members said.

"The House could not in good faith pass the Senate amendment because it falls short of true reform," Lucas said.

The Senate on Wednesday gave second reading to a bill to permanently allow the governor to appoint the state transportation secretary.

House members on Wednesday debated the Senate plan and the House proposal to change it, led by Rep. Gary Simrill, a Rock Hill Republican who chaired a panel that drafted the original House plan.

House members criticized the Senate plan.

"My position is we need money but we can't get money because of that body over there," said Rep. Todd Rutherford, leader of House Democrats. "This bill fixes nothing."

Rutherford said the Senate plan offers the House a "bad choice."

"You are going to tell them today we voted for something to change the gov-



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ernance," he said. "Did you fix our roads? You could not lie to them and say yes because we didn't. And that is the position they have put us in."

Rep. Jonathon Hill, an Anderson County Republican, said the problem with the Senate plan is not the money, it is the governance. He proposed that the highway commission be abolished.

Hill also criticized Haley on the roads issue. He said he once heard her talk of abolishing the DOT board and against any increase in the gas tax. He said she was silent on her plan to fix the state's roads until after her re-election, when she told lawmakers she would support a 10-cent increase in the gas tax but only if they cut income taxes and changed the way highway commission-

ers were appointed.

"Gov. Haley, in Anderson that's what we call being a hypocrite," he told the House. "You're still not demanding real reform. You haven't demanded that. You're willing to settle for this."

Hill later proposed an amendment that would abolish the DOT board, create a single project list and sunset the Infrastructure Bank. It was tabled on a 101-16 vote.

Rep. Richard Quinn, a former House majority leader, said he wanted the House to go along with the Senate plan but since it would not, he proposed abolishing the commission and giving the governor the power to appoint the secretary. His proposal was tabled 94-18.

The Senate now has the choice of ac-

cepting what the House has done or rejecting it, setting up a conference committee of House and Senate members that must try and work out differences.

Quinn said he saw little chance of success.

"I don't think the Senate is going to adopt any change we make," he said. "If it goes to conference, it's going to sit there forever."

Lucas said he welcomed the opportunity of "blending" a bill from both chambers.

"At the end of the day, South Carolinians want progress on this issue and repairing our crumbling infrastructure starts with SCDOT reform," he said.

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 Author: BY JEFFREY COLLINS Associated Press
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 Beaufort, SC Circulation: 11269



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South Carolina roads will still likely get more money. The House has placed an extra \$400 million in its budget it sent to the Senate.

But Wednesday's amendment greatly reduces the chances of reforming how commissioners are chosen to the board that helps run the Department of Transportation. Many lawmakers have said that is a critical first step toward getting closer to the extra \$1 billion a year the road agency has said it needs to get state highways back to good condition.

The House could have agreed to the Senate road bill, which allows Gov. Nikki Haley to appoint all members of the DOT board with Senate approval. Instead, the House changed the bill to have

approval by the House and Senate.

"Government closest to the people is usually best. And there is no need to take 124 people out of the process," Rep. Gary Simrill, R-Rock Hill, said of House members.

State Sen. Larry Grooms said in South Carolina's 240 years as a state the Ethics Commission is the only body where both chambers approve members. The Republican from Charleston said senators can't just remove that kind of precedence.

"They knew before they voted that putting in a joint confirmation was going to kill it," said Senate Majority Leader Shane Massey, R-Edgefield.

"Several of us told them that beforehand. They knew it and they did it anyway. I think they've killed the bill."

Simrill, who has led the effort to pass a roads bill in the house since the fall of 2014 said that shouldn't be true. He said the House and Senate should agree to a conference committee to

hash out their differences.

Massey said that committee likely wouldn't reform DOT enough.

The House waited until after the Legislative Audit Council released its report on DOT. It found that 54 percent of the state's primary roads are now in poor condition, compared to 31 percent eight years ago. The audit also found DOT revenues aren't even keeping up with inflation.

Gov. Nikki Haley has taken to Facebook to scold and threaten House members this week. After their 113-6 vote to amend the bill Wednesday, she posted the roll call. In an earlier message, she suggested the House was creating problems for future work to get more money for roads.

"The Republican House of Representatives plans to kill two years of work and that as a result, there will be no change in their road conditions anytime soon," Haley wrote.

Simrill said that kind of rhetoric doesn't respect the legislative process.

Title: **Bathroom access for transgender people debated across South**
 Author: BY SEANNA ADCOX Associated Press
 Size: 63.24 square inch
 Beaufort, SC Circulation: 11269



Bathroom access for transgender people debated across South

BY SEANNA ADCOX

Associated Press
 COLUMBIA

Louisiana's governor issued an executive order Wednesday banning discrimination in state government based on sexual orientation and gender identity, and transgender people in South Carolina told state senators that a bill requiring them to use a public bathroom corresponding to their "biological sex" puts them in danger of harassment.

The overwhelming majority of people at the Senate hearing opposed the measure, which mimics part of a North Carolina law signed last month that has brought a national backlash. No vote was taken.

In Tennessee, 60 business leaders — including the CEOs of Williams-Sonoma, Airbnb, Alcoa, T-Mobile and Dow Chemical — signed a letter asking lawmakers to kill similar legislation. The events seemed to unfold across the South almost simultaneously as the fight over LGBT rights raged on.

The South Carolina bill introduced by Sen. Lee Bright would require multistall bathrooms on public property to be designated and used "based on bi-

ological sex." It specifically includes student bathrooms, locker rooms and showers in public schools. It would also bar local governments from requiring businesses to let transgender people use the bathroom of their choice.

Bright said he's had enough of tolerance if that means "men who claim to be women" going into a bathroom with children.

"I don't believe transgender people are pedophiles," the Republican said. "I think grown adult men would use this as protection to violate women in the restroom."

Opponents said existing laws already address such crimes.

Dex Sexton, 17, of Blythewood, said people don't undress openly in women's restrooms, as stalls provide privacy. If the issue is fear of assault, he asked, then why are men who have abused little boys not forced to use a different bathroom?

"It's protections against sexual assault that stop them, not because they can't use the men's bathroom," he said.

In Louisiana, the LGBT protection order signed by Democratic Gov. John Bel

Edwards prohibits state agencies, boards and contractors from harassment or discrimination based on race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, political affiliation, disability or age. State contracts will be required to include a similar anti-discrimination provision.

Edwards, in office since January, also terminated a religious objections executive order issued by former Republican Gov. Bobby Jindal last year. That "Marriage and Conscience" order from Jindal

prohibited state agencies under the governor's control from denying licenses, benefits, contracts or tax deductions to businesses and people that take actions because of a "religious belief that marriage is or should be recognized as the union of one man and one woman."

At the South Carolina hearing, opponents said the proposal would do the opposite of its intention.

"Look at me and tell me I belong in the men's restroom," said Culpepper, who was wearing a blue, low-cut dress with red fingernails. Last year,

she settled a lawsuit against the state Department of Motor Vehicles after being told to remove her makeup for a driver's license photo. "Our community is already at risk for sexual assault and violence."

Opponents also questioned how the bill would be enforced.

"In everyday life, how do we determine whether someone we're with is male or female? We look at them. We don't inspect their genitalia," said University of South Carolina law professor Gregory Adams. "Are we going to start looking at their birth certificate?"

The bill has little chance this year. House GOP leaders have said they won't deal with the issue, and Republican Gov. Nikki Haley has called it unnecessary.

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**I DON'T BELIEVE
 TRANSGENDER
 PEOPLE ARE
 PEDOPHILES.**

Sen. Lee Bright

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TIM DOMINICK The State via AP

A crowd listens to testimony Wednesday during an S.C. Senate subcommittee meeting to consider a bill that would ban transgender people from choosing a bathroom.