

Title: **Support Luke Rankin**

Author:

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Support Luke Rankin

To the editor,

On Facebook, Scott Pyle stated he WOULD, if elected, include pushing for a vote on the Confederate flag issue. He quickly re-posted that he had written incorrectly, and that he would NOT push for a vote.

In previous posts, he disagreed with Gov. Nikki Haley not putting the issue before the voters. He said he WOULD HAVE, but now says he WILL NOT.

This is typical political vacillation and EQUIVOCATION, exactly the kind many American voters detest and that has drawn so many to Trump.

Gov. Haley, in the aftermath of the horrible murders in Charleston, acted impetuously and hastily in dictating the flag be removed from capitol grounds in Columbia.

Haley cowered to race baiter and tax evader Al Sharpton and the NAACP, who boycotted our state for years. She erroneously assumed that removing the flag would bring healing and racial harmony. Instead, her decision fed fuel to the fires of racial animosity, leading to the disassembling of a magnificent 75-foot statue of Robert E. Lee in New Orleans, the removal of a statue of Jefferson Davis from its focal point on the campus of University of Texas, and the changing of the longstanding name Old Dixie Highway in Florida to Barack Obama Highway. Gov. Nikki Haley, Congressmen Tom Rice and Jim Clyburn, Senators Lindsey Graham and Tim Scott do not understand that you can not, and should not, attempt to hide

or alter history by putting a flag in a Confederate RELIC museum.

The truth of history remains unchanged. Confederate soldiers who died in service under the banner of this flag are, by act of Congress, American veterans and should be respected and honored as such by allowing that flag to be unfurled on our capitol grounds, an arrangement previously supported by the South Carolina chapter of the NAACP. That this flag is offensive to some is irrelevant. Many atrocities occurred under the banner of the American flag (e.g. chasing Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce across the mountains of Montana, with many dying along the way, or allowing the land and homes of the Cherokee to be stolen and their people driven across the country to Indian Territory). We still fly the American flag. Now I know where Pyle stands. He does not stand for anything. He fears Nikki's wrath. Just another politician trying to have it both ways and lacking courage to defend his convictions, if indeed he has any. His extravagant plethora of signs and his untrue charges against Luke Rankin may get him elected; if so, be willing to accept just another politician ingratiating himself with the GOP Establishment. I know Sen. Luke Rankin as a man of character and integrity. Although I do not agree with him on all issues, I recommend citizens vote for Luke. He is a good and honorable man.

Randy Bryan
Carolina Forest

Title: **Tourism tax not likely headed for referendum**
 Author: BY TOM O'DARE TOM.ODARE@MYHORRYNEWS.COM
 Size: 42.16 column inches
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Tourism tax not likely headed for referendum

MB mayor, council members want to decide future of fee

BY TOM O'DARE

TOM.ODARE@MYHORRYNEWS.COM

The first time the tourism tax was approved in Myrtle Beach nearly 10 years ago, it was the Myrtle Beach City Council that gave it a thumbs up.

And with the approval of the South Carolina General Assembly last week, the city council can again put it in

place for another 10 years when it expires in 2009.

The charge — also called the tourism development fee — is a 1 percent tax imposed in the city of Myrtle Beach on prepared foods, retail sales, accommodations and mixed liquor drinks. The tax expires in

2019 and had to be renewed by the state legislature to continue.

The TDF only affects counties that receive at least \$14 million in accommodations taxes each year.

That means the tax currently applies to only municipalities in Horry County and Myrtle Beach is the only

city using it.

After the first year the tax was in place, the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce received 80 percent of the tax revenues for out-of-market tourism programs and the city could use the remaining 20 percent for

TOURISM TAX, A8

TOURISM TAX, FROM A1

property tax rollbacks and new tourism infrastructure projects. That rollback means an 80 percent tax cut for permanent residents on their homes in the city.

When the legislature originally approved the tourism tax, it gave the affected cities two options to put in place: approve it by a supermajority of the city council or put the tax to a vote in a referendum for the city residents.

The Myrtle Beach City Council chose to make the decision itself rather than let the voters decide.

When the General Assembly passed the renewal legislation this session, it left the same requirements in that were in the original law to put the tax in place.

Gov. Nikki Haley vetoed the bill saying she felt implementing any tax should only

be decided by the people, not by city councils.

Last week, the General Assembly overwhelmingly overrode Haley's veto, much to the delight of local elected officials and chamber president Brad Dean.

Dean said the fee came at a time when the economy was not doing well and Myrtle Beach needed an extra boost to keep up with other tourist destinations.

"The revenue from the fee has been instrumental in propelling us to top positions for visitors each year and continuing it will help bring us closer to our goal of 20 million visitors to the Grand Strand each year," he said.

Myrtle Beach Mayor John Rhodes said he favors enacting the TDF again by supermajority of the council rather

than putting it to a referendum.

Rhodes said many of the people who live here now weren't here when the fee first went into place and don't know it's the reason for their lower taxes.

"We'd have to educate everyone on the merits of the fee before the vote," he said. "I'd rather have the guarantee of the council voting on it than risk it not passing in a referendum."

Rhodes added that just because the city is doing well with bringing in more visitors, it can't let up now and the TDF is a big factor in keeping the city's name out there.

Councilman Michael Chestnut concurred with Rhodes in leaning toward having the council make the decision on the fee again.

"The voters elected me to

be their voice to make such decisions," Chestnut said. "I look at it that the voters have already made their decision on this matter."

State Rep. Alan Clemmons, R-Myrtle Beach, was a co-sponsor of the bill to renew the TDF.

He said he was pleased that both sides of the General Assembly overwhelmingly agreed to go against the governor.

"Once everyone in Columbia realized this was just as much about tax relief, then they whole-heartedly agreed with it," Clemmons said.

Rhodes said there's no immediate timeline for the council to take up the TDF, as long as it's done before it expires.

Title: **Governor becomes central figure of Senate 33 race**
 Author: BY TOM O'DARE TOM.ODARE@MYHORRYNEWS.COM
 Size: 50.53 column inches
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Governor becomes central figure of Senate 33 race

BY TOM O'DARE

TOM.ODARE@MYHORRYNEWS.COM

The intensity of the race for the state District 33 Senate seat between incumbent Luke Rankin and challenger Scott Pyle picked up Friday with Gov. Nikki Haley being the key figure.

Rankin and Pyle are squaring off in the June 14 Republican primary.

Haley addressed a large group of supporters for Pyle at a Carolina Forest restaurant, saying she was throwing her support behind Pyle because he is a bigger proponent of Republican values than Rankin.

"If you want to vote for a Republican, vote for Scott," she said. "If you want to vote for a Democrat, vote for Luke. He used to be a Democrat and he still votes the same way."

The governor said Rankin has challenged her on issues such as ethics reform and rejecting Common Core education standards.

"Luke is the chairman of the

Senate Ethics Committee and he's fought our efforts for ethics reform," Haley added.

Taking a jab at Rankin's 24-year tenure in Columbia, Haley said she supported Pyle's stand on term limits.

Pyle said in addition to the proposals mentioned by Haley, he will work to bring money back to Horry County for congested roads such as Highway 501.

"I will be accessible to everyone in this district and promise to serve with a personal touch with the people of District 33 always in mind," he added.

Just a few minutes after Pyle's lunchtime gathering, Rankin held a press conference nearby to announce that Horry County Council Chairman Mark Lazarus will be the chairman for his Senate campaign.

Rankin and Lazarus were joined by state Representa-

tives Alan Clemmons, Kevin Hardee and Jeff Johnson.

Lazarus said he's known Rankin for years and is humble and honored to lead his campaign efforts.

"And I'm profoundly disappointed by the attacks on Luke from our governor," he added. "The governor is mad at Luke because she can't control him."

Clemmons said he wasn't scheduled to address the press conference but had to address his concerns that Haley's Political Action Committee is spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to unseat elected Republicans.

"The governor went to New York to raise thousands of dollars to unseat elected Horry County officials," he said. "I don't want New York-based PACs to be the rule of the day in Horry County."

Rankin used the occasion to counter Haley's accusa-

tions.

He said despite what Haley is telling everyone, he did vote against Common Core and he's actually supported a stronger ethics reform package than what she proposed.

Rankin said the governor is out of touch with the people, especially those in Horry County.

"She didn't support our farmers and she overrode the tourism development fee that provides tax relief for the residents of Myrtle Beach," he said.

As to her calling him a Democrat, Rankin shrugged and said, "Consider the source. She's entitled to her opinion, not to the facts."

Rankin said his top priority for the next session of the General Assembly would be "roads, roads, roads. We haven't had the infusion of money for our roads like we need."



PHOTOS BY TOM O'DARE | THE CHRONICLE

Gov. Nikki Haley endorsed Scott Pyle in the District 33 senate race.

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Author: BY TOM O'DARE TOM.ODARE@MYHORRYNEWS.COM
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Incumbent state Sen. Luke Rankin stands with supporter Mark Lazarus.

Title: **Governor signs road-funding bill**
 Author: BY SEANNA ADCOX Associated Press
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LEGISLATURE

Governor signs road-funding bill

BY SEANNA ADCOX

Associated Press
 COLUMBIA

Gov. Nikki Haley reluctantly signed legislation Wednesday that will let the state borrow \$2.2 billion to jump-start improvements to South Carolina's deteriorating roads, saying she did so only because its so-called reforms are better than nothing.

The Republican governor said the law provides a step forward in highway funding and marginal improvements to the Department of Transportation's governance.

"To claim this law as anything close to a victory,

to represent it in any way as a true solution to our infrastructure problems" would be deceiving the public, she said in a letter to legislative leaders she sent along with the signed law.

The bill allowing for \$2.2 billion in borrowing over 10 years for infrastructure is funded with \$200 million annually in existing fees and vehicle sales taxes. Department of Transportation Secretary Christy Hall has said that frees up other money the agency can use to replace bridges and pave roads, allowing more than \$4 billion worth

of total work.

Haley criticized the behind-the-scenes negotiations of the compromise approved in the legislative session's final days.

Senators passed their plan late May 31, hours after House Speaker Jay Lucas took the podium to blast senators for their inaction and Haley for not demanding a vote. The House gave final approval a day later.

Lucas said Wednesday the governor may have gotten better reform if she'd engaged in the final

SEE ROADS, 4A

ROADS

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negotiations as he requested.

"The House never suggested that these DOT reform measures were perfect, and we stand by our commitment to finding a long-term, sustainable funding stream to permanently fix our roads," said Lucas, R-Hartsville.

Senate President Pro Tem Hugh Leatherman has repeatedly called his borrowing proposal a step in addressing the state's

crumbling highways — not a fix.

The DOT has said it needs an additional \$1.5 billion annually over several decades to bring the nation's fourth-largest highway system to good condition.

Haley's insistence for years that she would veto anything increasing the state's 16-cents-per-gallon gas tax stymied previous highway-funding efforts.

Last year, the session ended with a filibuster by

senators who oppose increasing gas taxes unchanged since 1987. Like Haley, they insisted on first restructuring the transportation agency to give the governor's office more oversight before sending it more money.

Sen. Tom Davis, who filibustered last year but liked the borrowing proposal that didn't raise taxes, said he voted against the compromise because it managed to make a bad system worse.

Title: **Gov. Nikki Haley signs bill borrowing \$2.2B for roads**
 Author: BY SEANNA ADCOX Associated Press
 Size: 48.82 column inches
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Gov. Nikki Haley signs bill borrowing \$2.2B for roads

BY SEANNA ADCOX

Associated Press

COLUMBIA — Gov. Nikki Haley reluctantly signed legislation Wednesday that will let the state borrow \$2.2 billion to jump-start improvements to South Carolina's deteriorating roads, saying she did so only because its so-called reforms are better than nothing.

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The DOT has said it needs an additional \$1.5 billion annually over several decades to bring the nation's fourth-largest highway system to good condition.

"I appreciate the governor's

signature and understand her frustration," said House Assistant Majority Leader Gary Simrill, R-Rock Hill, who has led the House's road-funding efforts since fall 2014.

When faced with the prospect of that effort dying, "do you wait and tell the people of South Carolina that no, there will be no roads fix over the next 12 months, or that this is incremental progress?" he said. "You have a shot in the arm to dilapidated roads."

Haley's insistence for years that she would veto anything increasing the state's 16-cents-per-gallon gas tax stymied previous highway-funding efforts. After winning re-election, Haley said she could support an increase under certain conditions.

Gov. Haley re-signs anti-abortion law

COLUMBIA (AP) — Gov. Nikki Haley is ceremoniously signing a law that bans most abortions in South Carolina at 20 weeks beyond fertilization.

Supporters celebrated the law Wednesday at a Christian school in Greenville County that caters to children with disabilities. The

law took effect with the governor's signature two weeks ago.

The ban's only exceptions are if the mother's life is in jeopardy or a doctor determines the fetus cannot survive outside the womb. Its definition of "fetal anomaly" makes it il-

legal to abort a fetus with a severe disability if the child could live. Such anomalies are generally detected around 20 weeks.

Supporters cite the disputed claim that a fetus can feel pain at 20 weeks. Opponents said later-term abortions usually happen with wanted pregnancies that go horribly wrong.

Haley signs loan forgiveness for S.C. State

COLUMBIA (AP) — South Carolina State University is officially free of \$12 million in state loans, but it must repay a separate, \$6 million loan over the next 16 years.

Gov. Nikki Haley signed the terms into law Tuesday without fanfare.

The law forgives \$8 million next year, then \$2 million each in the following two years, provided S.C. State's finances keep improving. The university must make year-

ly payments of \$355,000 on the other loan. State officials approved both loans in 2014.

Lawmakers think erasing the debt will

help the state's only public historically black university keep its accreditation.

S.C. State's accrediting agency will decide the college's fate later this month. Following years of probation, its accreditation will either be restored or pulled. That would force the 120-year-old college in Orangeburg to close.



ONLINE

For an extended version of this story, go to aikenstandard.com

Title: **Officials still want plutonium out of S.C.**
 Author: BY THOMAS GARDINER tgardiner@aikenstandard.com
 Size: 47.43 column inches
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Officials still want plutonium out of S.C.

BY THOMAS GARDINER

tgardiner@aikenstandard.com

As unloaded nuclear carriers left Charleston on Monday, leaving behind about 331 kilograms of plutonium at Savannah River Site, South Carolina leaders had a message for the U.S. Department of Energy – this state is not a nuclear dumping ground.

Gov. Nikki Haley said Tuesday, “Today’s news is another reminder that the Department of Energy has not lived up to its promises, and we will not back down: South Carolina will not be a permanent dumping ground for nuclear waste.”

Haley penned a letter to U.S. Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz on March 23, the day after plutonium was reported on board the nuclear carriers

Pacific Heron and Pacific Egret leaving Japan. In the letter, Haley explained that the Energy Department’s decision to accept the shipment put South Carolina at risk of becoming a permanent nuclear dumping ground.

She wrote, “It is imperative to the safety of our citizens and our environment that South Carolina not allow this to happen.”

Haley ended the letter by asking Moniz to stop the shipment or re-route it. This week’s accep-

tance of the shipment from Japan shows the Energy Department did not comply.

Within days of that letter, a record of decision was

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PLUTONIUM

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issued by the Energy Department concerning 13.1 metric tons of “surplus” plutonium the department has been trying to deal with.

According to that decision, 6 metric tons is expected to be processed at Savannah River Site in preparation for long-term disposal at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant near Carlsbad, New Mexico.

Another state leader, U.S. Rep. Joe Wilson, R-S.C., focused on the plutonium pathway out of South Carolina.

“As the only member of Congress who has worked at the Savannah Riv-

er Site, I support the mission of SRS. I appreciate that there is a clear plan for the disposition of the material so South Carolina is not a dumping ground for nuclear waste,” he said.

According to Wilson’s communications director, Leacy Burke, the missions at SRS in the Second Congressional District of South Carolina have always been a priority for Wilson.

The record of decision announcing that pathway out of the state excluded about 7.1 metric tons of plutonium also stored at the site.

That material is subject to a non-proliferation agreement with Russia and is set to be processed through the Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication facil-

ity, or MOX, should construction be completed. With MOX funding in legislative limbo, it is unclear if that will happen.

The Department of Energy has threatened to scrap the MOX project in favor of the so-called dilute-and-dispose method, which also would send the processed materials to WIPP.

U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., called the National Nuclear Security Administration’s plan to mothball the project “lousy.”

The *Aiken Standard* requested a response to the plutonium shipment’s arrival from Graham’s office, but hadn’t received a statement by press time.

The MOX facility has been called

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Author: BY THOMAS GARDINER tgardiner@aikenstandard.com
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years past deadline and billions over budget, and it spawned an ongoing lawsuit between South Carolina and the Department of Energy. That lawsuit began when the MOX project remained unfinished after deadline and

the department failed to remove the required 1 metric ton of plutonium from the state by Jan. 1, 2016.

Haley's office said it will not back down from the lawsuit and that the plutonium currently slated to be processed and sent to New Mexico has no

impact on the MOX project. A hearing for the suit is scheduled for June 30.

Thomas Gardiner is the SRS beat reporter for the *Aiken Standard*. Follow him on Twitter @TGardiner_AS.



Haley



Wilson

Title: **How the Senate sold tis a fraudulent reform**

Author:

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CINDI ROSS SCOPPE
ASSOCIATE EDITOR
THE STATE

How the Senate sold us a fraudulent reform

IF YOUR BOSS can't fire you, she's not your boss. If on top of that, a group of outsiders can secretly prevent her from hiring who she wants to hire, then I'm not sure she's *anybody's* boss.

Such is the non-boss position Gov. Nikki Haley will find herself in if she signs what the Legislature passed last week in the name of "reform" of the parochial commission that runs the state Transportation Department.

Does anyone really believe this is what reformers have been fighting for all session, and the previous session, and some of us for years before that?

This arrangement — which was hatched in the Senate on Tuesday night and on the way to the governor's desk less than 24 hours later — is probably the worst of all the awful governance plans that were floated over the past two years, as senators attempted to look like they were giving the governor control of the commission without actually giving her control.

Rep. Jonathan Hill — who rarely says anything that makes sense and has become so annoying that he can't even get nine of his 123 colleagues to join his requests for recorded votes on his motions — summed up the situation correctly Wednesday when he observed that this arrangement puts everybody in

charge. Which means nobody's in charge. Still.

Currently, the governor appoints one commissioner, and small groups of legislators pick the other seven. S.1258 does allow the governor to appoint all eight commissioners. But those seven small groups of legislators — each group composed of the

legislators who live in a given congressional district — will have veto power over her appointments. Worse, they can exercise their veto under cover of darkness: If they don't vote to approve within 45 days, the bill says, "the appointee is deemed to have been disapproved." Appointees who are not disapproved still have to get through a joint legislative screening committee and then be confirmed by the Senate.

Sen. Tom Davis, who is urging the governor to veto the bill, warns that this will quickly degenerate into a magistrate-like situation: By law, the governor appoints magistrates. But since the local senators must confirm the appointment, what really happens is that those senators tell the governor who to nominate, she does that, and they confirm that person.

Even as crazy as this Transportation Commission arrangement is, it might still be workable if the governor could remove her appointees. But to do that, she has to get approval from that same small group of legislators

who approved the appointment to start with. Which takes us back to that first principle of employment: Your boss isn't your boss if she can't fire you.

Rep. Gary Simrill, who has worked for two years to get us reform and more funding, told the House on Wednesday that with just one day left in the regular session and powerful senators unlikely to approve any reform after the June 14 primaries, this was the best negotiators could drag out of the Senate. It was this or nothing, he said, and while a lot of House members might have been fine with no reform, they weren't willing to go home without a road funding

plan — even one everybody acknowledged was inadequate.

Senate Republican Leader Shane Massey, one of the leading proponents of real reform, actually sponsored that awful amendment. He defends it as a step forward because the governor "gets to initiate the selection" of commissioners, and it reduces the power of the State Transportation Infrastructure Bank. But like Mr. Simrill, Mr. Massey told me that this was the best arrangement he could get the votes to pass.

It seems extraordinary that we could end up here after the Senate voted, less than three months ago, to let the governor appoint all the commissioners, without all these constraints, and remove

Title: **How the Senate sold tis a fraudulent reform**

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them for any cause or no cause.

But many senators — possibly a majority — never wanted reform. They voted for it in March betting that the House would insist on changes to the bill, which would give them a chance to come back and sabotage the reform. It was a good bet, improved by the inclusion of a plan to steal \$400 million a year from the state's general fund to pay for roads.

Sure enough, the House rejected the Senate's March bill and sent it to a conference committee, from which it never emerged. Short of accepting that unacceptable funding plan, there's probably nothing the

House could have done differently. It was simply outmaneuvered by a master player.

The Senate has always been the place where reforms go to die. Usually senators kill bills by refusing to let them be debated. But some bills are too big to be ignored. In that case, the procedure is to hollow out the bill, leaving the shell intact, and then vote for the hollowed-out remains. That's what senators did here.

The upshot is that we don't have significant reform, we don't have a permanent funding source for roads, and we have a plan that forces the Legislature to steal \$200 million a year from

general state needs unless or until the Legislature creates a new funding source for roads.

The good news is that House and Senate leaders have made it clear they consider the funding in this bill a temporary fix, until they can raise the gas tax, and House leaders tell me they will use the gas tax as leverage to fix the flaws in the Senate's governance model. I don't doubt their commitment, although I do worry about their ability to avoid getting out-manuevered by the Senate. Again.

Ms. Scoppe can be reached at cscoppe@thestate.com or at (803) 771-8571.

“

WHEN THE REFORM IS TOO BIG TO BE IGNORED, THE PROCEDURE IS TO HOLLOW OUT THE BILL, LEAVING THE SHELL INTACT, AND THEN VOTE FOR THE HOLLOWED-OUT REMAINS. THAT'S WHAT THE SENATE DID.





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Bamberg, SC
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Bamberg author releases hardback edition of incredible, inspiring memoir

Author Dr. Michael C. Watson announces the nationwide hardback release of his book, "The Cloud Chaser: A Physician's Early Adventures," where he deftly illustrates his childhood during the Great Depression, military life as a Marine and medical training, including a very personal view of the polio epidemic.

The old South bursts to life in this series of adventures by one of the Palmetto state's most celebrated physicians. From farming peaches in his family's Ridge Spring orchards, surviving the Great Depression, becoming a U.S. Marine deployed in the bloody Pacific Theater to the agonizing and

often hilarious recollections of being educated and trained as a physician, Watson's life resonates with stories about family, friends, career decisions, school and job demands.

"The Cloud Chaser" is not only rich with facts, but is also warm with human bonds, leaving the reader inspired, contemplative and feeling more connected with less fortunate members of society.

Published by Tate Publishing and Enterprises, the book is available through bookstores nationwide; from the publisher at www.tatepublishing.com/bookstore, or by visiting barnesandnoble.com or

amazon.com.

Watson is a nationally honored visionary and is one of the Palmetto state's most celebrated physicians. He has been an advocate for the rural poor, a beloved physician and an avid church leader. Watson's community efforts are lauded in, among other books, South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley's "Can't is Not an Option." His stories are priceless, and his accomplishments are numerous.

For more information, you can reach out to Michelle Whitman, publicist, by sending her an e-mail at michelle@keymgc.com.



Jasper County
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Ridgeland, SC
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65216



148 + 234 Senate overrides veto; \$40M in help heading to S. Carolina farmers

BY JEFFREY COLLINS

The Associated Press

COLUMBIA — About \$40 million in state aid will soon be heading to South Carolina farmers after the Senate delivered its own sharp rebuke to Gov. Nikki Haley last Wednesday by overriding her veto of a farm aid bill.

The Senate's 39-3 vote came a day after the House voted 112-2 to reject the governor's veto. A two-thirds vote was all that was needed.

The vote came after more loud complaints about the governor delivered by lawmakers, who frequently get poked by Haley. Nearly two dozen lawmakers, many of them fellow Republicans, took the governor to task over two days. Legislators said she broke a promise she made during previous, smaller disasters, to have the farmers' backs.

Some, including Sen. Shane Martin, often side with Haley. But the Republican from Pauline said it was disturbing that Haley would back tens of millions of dollars in incentives for out-of-state companies such as Boeing and Volvo to build plants and reject aid for farmers who grow food, raise children and buy supplies in South Carolina.

"The hypocrisy kills me," Martin said. "I'm going to be proudly overriding the veto."

Farmers lost nearly \$400 million in last October's floods, when 24 inches of rain fell in some areas in 12 hours. The water took months to recede, preventing the planting of additional crops, and came after a drought destroyed some other crops during the summer. The back-to-back disasters,

combined with low prices for crops, had some farmers saying they were teetering on going under.

In her veto message May 16, Haley said it wasn't fair for farmers to get help that wasn't available to all small businesses. She said farmers have crop insurance and federal aid to cover their losses. And she called the bill a bailout, which lawmakers said was a loaded word to make it seem like farmers were moochers.

"It's not a bailout. It's a lifeline. And it is sinful we have not done better by them," said Sen. Luke Rankin, R-Myrtle Beach.

The law allows farmers in disaster-declared counties to apply for grants of up to \$100,000 each, covering no more than 20 percent of their total loss. Agriculture Secretary Hugh Weathers said a board to award the grants could be picked by the end of the month.

Farmers were at the Statehouse two days in a row and cheered as the Senate voted was announced.

Sen. Tom Davis voted against the bill. "I don't think government exists to take money out of some people's pockets and put it in other people's pockets, no matter how egregious the circumstances," the Beaufort Republican said.

Haley issued a statement with a more conciliatory tone after the May 17 House vote. She said there were no winners in the massive flood and she would continue to work to make sure everyone in South Carolina is helped during the flood recovery.

The governor's office did not immediately comment the May 18 vote.

The Holly Hill
Observer
Holly Hill, SC
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64839



148 Online help available for survivors of domestic violence

Gov. Nikki Haley began the Statewide Domestic Violence Summit last week by announcing a new website aimed at providing information and resources to domestic violence survivors, loved ones, and offenders as well as to professional groups in the workplace. The Summit ended with the governor announcing Safe Place County Certifications as a challenge to counties to lead local efforts against domestic violence.

"When you go to this website, not only does it ask you what town and zip code you live in, it also gives you all of the resources available to you within your community," Governor Haley said. "But it goes a step further - it tells someone who is being abused what they can do to get help, it tells someone who thinks they know someone who's being abused how to go about approaching the situation, and it tells someone who is an offender what they can do to get the help they need."

The website features a 24-hour crisis hotline, a statewide directory of resources searchable

by location, safety checklists and tips for victims and loved ones, and an exit button for victim safety. Citizens are also encouraged by the website to learn the phrase, "Share. Care. Be There," as a three-step process for how loved ones should approach a friend or family member suspected to be a victim of domestic violence. SafePlaceSC.sc.gov is a result of the work done by the S.C. Domestic Violence Task Force to provide South Carolinians with a single resource for domestic violence information.

"When we talk about 'Share. Care. Be There,' that really comes down to a couple of things," Governor Haley said. "If you know of someone or suspect that someone is being abused, share your concerns with them. Care, but don't judge. We can't judge someone who is being abused because they already feel badly about themselves and our job is to lift them up, and get them help. And finally, it's just to be there because this is a patient situation."

The Safe Place County Certification Challenge includes

four components for counties to achieve by the end of 2016 to be certified as a Safe Place County for domestic violence awareness:

1. Sheriffs must pledge to implement the Law Enforcement Toolkit Year One Initiatives, which was completed by all 46 Sheriffs as of April 2016;

2. Solicitors must hold a meeting of the Community Domestic Violence Coordinating Council and organize the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committee;

3. Counties must adopt a human resources policy for domestic violence, modeled after the policy the governor implemented in her cabinet agencies earlier this year; and

4. Counties must partner with local nonprofits to hold a community awareness event for domestic violence.

The county initiative is a result of recommendations proposed by the S.C. Domestic Violence Task Force to unite the entire state against domestic violence, beginning at the local level.