

Title: **Blatant malpractice**

Author:

Size: 12.55 square inch

Charleston, SC Circulation: 110289



Blatant malpractice

Jan. 31 was truly a great day in South Carolina. From the pages of The Post and Courier we learned that Gov. Nikki Haley's health care commissioners, including former S.C. Health and Human Services Director Tony Keck, claim they inadequately understood clearly published rules about implementation options under the Affordable Care Act back in 2011.

That failure of due diligence, or of conscience, now threatens the continuation of health care coverage for tens of thousands of South Carolinians. In other words, the governor's commission is claiming an error of omission.

In even more uplifting developments, the same day's paper reports that our fearless attorney general is taking bold legal action to make doubly certain that adequate health care will not reach those tens of thousands who are now the unwitting victims of the governor's health care omission commission.

We move intrepidly into the 21st century guided by the same enlightened turn of mind that launched our glorious Civil War, which, just as the state's approach to "affordable care" does today, benefited so many in need of a helping hand in its own era.

In our political philosophy, there are human beings who deserve decent health care and therefore have it already, and then there are, you know ...

PHILIP SNEAD
North Edgewater Drive
Charleston

Title: **Will Johnson**
 Author:
 Size: 37.97 square inch
 Columbia, SC Circulation: 128564



Will Johnson

Age: 34

Occupation: Shareholder, Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd

Family: Single

Education: B.A., Wofford College; J.D., University of South Carolina School of Law; LL.M., New York University School of Law

Community and professional high-

lights: Young Professional of the Year 2014, Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce; Compleat Lawyer Silver Award, USC School of Law Alumni Association; past president of the South Carolina Bar Young Lawyers Division; board member and compliance chairman/secretary for Special Olympics South Carolina; advisory board, Honor Flight South Carolina.

In my own words: I have had great examples of community service to follow from my earliest memories. My grandfather was a World War II veteran who helped capture the island of Iwo Jima, a public school teacher, a superintendent and later mayor of Lake City. My grandmother was a longtime public school teacher herself, as was my mother. My father has epitomized public service through community leadership positions. Civic-mindedness is also

prevalent at Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd. I hope that I can live up to the examples that these mentors set.

My life changed when: I got to know Sue Maner, the senior vice president of Special Olympics, through Leadership Columbia in 2007. When she found out that I was a tennis player, she immediately tapped me to help with Special Olympics. I have never looked back. The experiences that I have gained through Special Olympics have taught me a lot about focusing on commonalities rather than differences.

You helped create a partnership to bring together the young lawyers and bankers of the community. Why is it important to build those relationships? Lawyers and bankers are inevitably involved in the projects that have a transformative effect on communities. My key focus while leading the Young Lawyers Division was on professional development. Successful professional development initiatives have multiple positive benefits. At the individual level, they allow young professionals to become more effective at what they do and to develop relationships with like-minded people in the community. More broadly, given that young

people today are highly motivated to be involved and make a difference in their communities, we have to provide these kinds of opportunities in order to avoid a migration of talent.

You work closely with Special Olympics South Carolina. Why is this cause important to you? A profound moment for me came after setting up a meeting a few years ago between Gov. Haley and Travis Luthren, a Special Olympics South Carolina staff member and gold-medal winning athlete. Travis wanted to talk to Gov. Haley about why ending the "R word" is important to him. Not only did Gov. Haley agree to meet with Travis, but I sat in her office as she listened intently to everything he had to tell her. I expected that we would be rushed out to make way for the next meeting, but Gov. Haley did not rush him in any way and treated him with the same dignity and respect that she would have shown to the CEO of a big manufacturing company looking at locating a facility in South Carolina. That meeting made a lasting impression on me in terms of what leadership looks like, and it also epitomizes what Special Olympics is all about in ensuring the dignity and importance of every individual.



GERRY MELENDEZ/GMELENDEZ@THESTATE.COM

Title: **County road-use fee must fit the big picture**
 Author:
 Size: 33.32 square inch
 Hilton Head Island, SC Circulation: 20015



OUR VIEW

County road-use fee must fit the big picture

Beaufort County needs road money, but the accumulation of proposed tax hikes needs to be clear.

A Beaufort County Council plan to increase the annual road-use fee merits careful — and slow — consideration.

A County Council subcommittee has already endorsed the idea of increasing the fee from \$10 per vehicle to \$20 to raise about \$3 million each year to pave dirt roads and maintain paved ones. The charge would show up on residents' personal property-tax bills.

If approved by the full council next month, it would mark the first time since 1993 the fee has been increased and bring it in line with what is already charged by neighboring counties.

Why are Beaufort County leaders considering the fee increase now? They say they need about \$3.2 million a year to maintain the current cycle of resurfacing paved county roads every 20 years. And they need another \$42 million to pave about 85 miles of county-

maintained dirt roads.

The average cost of paving a mile of dirt road is now about \$600,000 compared to \$340,000 in 1994.

While we certainly believe that road maintenance and improvement is important and that the fee should be increased in the near future, we're not yet convinced that 2015 is the year to ask residents to open their wallets wider.

Consider:

- County Council will be at least \$2.5 million in the hole at the start of next fiscal year. Talk of a possible tax increase has begun.

- A top priority for the state legislature this session is paying for repairs and improvements to state-owned roads and bridges. Translation: S.C. residents will have to pay more. The state needs an added \$42 billion over the next three decades to meet its infrastructure needs, state transportation officials have estimated.

- One popular idea for raising

money is increasing the state's gas tax. Even Gov. Nikki Haley — long opposed to this increase that residents would feel each time they filled up their tanks — has said she would agree to one if it is paired with a decrease in the state's income tax.

With Haley and so many lawmakers on board, we're banking on an increase.

With Beaufort County residents certain to be hit with tax increases, a fee increase, even a small one, could be overkill.

We urge County Council members to take a wait-and-see approach. They must first know the exact financial impact of any decisions reached by the General Assembly this session. And they also must see whether a county tax increase is needed.

Without these two pieces of information in hand, it's difficult to say whether a 2015 fee increase is a political flub or a timely fix.

Title: **Cut off S.C. State**
Author:
Size: 4.80 square inch
Charleston, SC Circulation: 110289



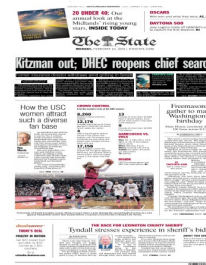
Cut off S.C. State

Gov. Nikki Haley has it right by refusing to allocate more funds to South Carolina State University. Instead, there should be a plan in place to repay the misappropriated millions already given the school.

Granted, there is a lot of history associated with S.C. State, but the school should not be exempt from paying its debt. Do the right thing for S.C. taxpayers and close the school until it can get its finances in order.

COLVIN O'DONNELL
*Lagoon Park Circle
Mount Pleasant*

Title: **Kitzman out; DHEC reopens chief search**
 Author: By SAMMY FRETWELL sfretwell@thestate.com
 Size: 66.96 square inch
 Columbia, SC Circulation: 128564



Kitzman out; DHEC reopens chief search

Former insurance director withdraws amid grilling in Senate

By SAMMY FRETWELL
 sfretwell@thestate.com

The search for a new S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control director will be reopened now that Eleanor Kitzman has chosen not to seek the position.

Kitzman withdrew her name Sunday from consideration as DHEC director, just three days after being grilled by Democratic state senators about her lack of experience and conflicting statements they said she had made.

The Senate, which was to continue hearings this week, must

confirm nominees for DHEC done in the past.

Kitzman, a Texas native, has no background in environmental and health matters. A former insurance department chief in South Carolina and Texas, she is a friend and campaign donor to Republican Gov. Nikki Haley.

Haley recommended Kitzman to the eight-member DHEC board. The board did not seek any other applications for the post, unlike what the panel has

In a letter Sunday to DHEC board chairman Allen Amsler, Kitzman said she was reminded in church that running the agency was not "about me; there is a bigger, more important picture to consider."

Amsler said the board would begin a new search.

Kitzman's one-page letter said she knows from "recent personal

SEE KITZMAN PAGE A7



THESTATE.COM

Previous stories on Eleanor Kitzman's nomination; with this story at thestate.com.

Kitzman
KITZMAN
 FROM PAGE A1

experience how this scenario plays out."

Her letter did not elaborate on what she meant by that, but Kitzman said "my only purpose in becoming director was to serve the board, the agency, its employees and stakeholders, and the citizens of South Carolina, none of which will benefit from a protracted confirmation process, regardless of the outcome."

"There are many ways to serve, and I will continue to do so in order to pay forward the amazing gifts that God has bestowed upon me."

DHEC is one of the County: Richland

state's largest agencies. Its duties are broad, ranging from regulating hospital expansions to checking water quality and issuing pollution discharge permits.

Kitzman, 58, was questioned for hours Thursday during the first day of her confirmation hearings. Sen. Darrell Jackson, D-Richland, was among those asking about what he said were conflicting statements to the committee he serves on. Her attendance at a Texas fundraiser for Haley sparked questions.

During the hearing, packed with lobbyists and interest group representatives, Kitzman also said she had defaulted on a student

loan that she since has paid off and paid a \$250 late penalty related to a professional license. Kitzman also said she had been sued for outstanding debt tied to her 2010 campaign for lieutenant governor, paying \$50,000 to settle lawsuits.

Reached Sunday night, Democratic Sens. Brad Hutto of Orangeburg and Joel Lourie of Columbia applauded Kitzman's decision to withdraw. Both said she might not have been confirmed by the Senate Medical Affairs Committee.

They urged the DHEC board to conduct a thorough search for the director's position, as it did when the board chose

Catherine Templeton from among 250 candidates three years ago. Templeton quit in early January and Kitzman was nominated within four days of that decision without any other applications being sought.

"Ms. Kitzman made the right decision," Lourie said Sunday night. "It is unfortunate that the governor and the board of DHEC have done the citizens of South Carolina a great disservice with this nomination. The way the process unfolded was an insult to the employees of the agency and the people of the state."

Lourie and Hutto said Kitzman would have faced

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more intense questions this week. Hearings were to have continued Tuesday in Columbia. Both said last week's first round of questions was only the beginning of what was likely to be a lengthy grilling.

"I thought the questions (this) week were going to be twice as intense as the questions last week," Hutto said. "This was not going well for her."

"The questioning pointed out the fact that she has had no background in this subject matter. If she'd have been nominated for an insurance position, she'd have had no problems."

Haley's office issued a

statement Sunday night saying that Kitman's withdrawal "is a loss to South Carolina, and will be a gain to whatever organization picks her up." Haley's statement said she recommended Kitman as she had other directors for state agencies. She called Kitman "an intelligent, hardworking person" who would have helped DHEC.

The agency's board, which chose Kitman, is appointed by Haley. Some senators and environmental groups said the board should have made the decision after a thorough process.

Amsler issued a state-

ment Sunday saying the board will "immediately convene to begin the process of identifying the replacement nominee." He called Kitman's withdrawal an "unfortunate occurrence" for South Carolina.

The Conservation Voters of South Carolina, which has been critical of Kitman as the nominee, said more than 1,000 people signed a petition asking that the Senate insist that a "qualified director" with management experience be sought.

"With the withdrawal of Eleanor Kitman, the DHEC board has the op-

portunity to conduct the sort of thorough search that is necessary for our state's public health and environmental agency," the group said in a release Sunday night. "DHEC has a large and complex mission and touches the lives of all South Carolinians. DHEC enforces the laws that maintain the safety of our drinking water, prevent our children from being exposed to asbestos, and keep hazardous waste out of our lakes. Too much is at stake: If the DHEC leader fails, lives are on the line."

Staff writer Andrew Shain contributed to this story.

Title: **DHEC nominee Kitzman bows out**

Author: BY MELISSA BOUGHTON and JEREMY BORDEN mboughton@postandcourier.com; jborden@postandcourier.com

Size: 43.71 square inch

Charleston, SC Circulation: 110289



DHEC nominee Kitzman bows out

Faced scrutiny about
experience, Haley ties

BY MELISSA BOUGHTON
and JEREMY BORDEN
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COLUMBIA — The nominee to lead South Carolina's Department of Health and Environmental Control suddenly stepped aside Sunday, days after the short-lived appointment faced tough questions from a Senate panel.

Eleanor Kitzman said in a letter to DHEC Chairman Allen Amsler on Sunday that she would withdraw her name "in light of recent events," according to a DHEC news release.

"While it is not my nature or history to retreat when confronted with difficulty, I know from recent personal experience how this scenario plays out," Kitzman wrote. "There are many ways to serve, and I will continue to do so in order to pay forward the amazing gifts that God has bestowed upon me."

Former Texas Gov. Rick Perry, who had written a recommendation for her, had appointed Kitzman state insurance commissioner in 2011. Two years later, the Texas Senate refused to confirm her over concerns that she

failed to protect consumers, according to a Dallas Morning News report.

Amsler said in a statement that Kitzman's withdrawal was "an unfortunate occurrence for DHEC and South Carolina. ... The Board will immediately convene to begin the process of identifying the replacement nominee."

Kitzman ran in the Republican primary for lieutenant governor in 2010 and has held previous posts in South Carolina government, including under Gov. Nikki Haley and former Gov. Mark Sanford.

She is also a longtime friend and fundraiser for Haley — a subject of frequent questioning in the Senate's initial confirmation hearing last week. Those hearings were expected to resume this week, and Democrats on the committee had promised more questions about how Kitzman got the job and concerns about a 2011 fundraiser Kitzman attended for the governor in Texas.

Sen. Brad Hutto, D-Orangeburg, said lawmakers also planned to ask about Kitzman's short, monthslong

Please see **DHEC**, Page A6

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DHEC nominee backs out

DHEC, from A1

tenure as director of the Budget and Control Board and lack of medical or health expertise. DHEC is a sprawling agency with a wide range of oversight over health and environmental issues.

"It was all the little things that were going to add up to show that, but for the fact she was a friend of the governor, she wasn't qualified," said Hutto, a member of the Medical Affairs panel tasked with screening Kitzman. "There wasn't anything about her background that suggested she could do this job."

DHEC's search process was criticized from the beginning. Kitzman was the only applicant considered after being recommended by Haley, a DHEC spokeswoman has said. A DHEC spokeswoman did not return requests for comment late Sunday.

Commenting Sunday about Kitzman's action, Haley said, "Her withdrawal from consideration is a loss to South Carolina, and will be a gain to whatever organization picks her up."

Ann Timberlake, executive director of the environmental group Conservation Voters of

South Carolina, said in a statement that the DHEC board should conduct a "transparent and public search." Timberlake added: "With the withdrawal of Eleanor Kitzman, the DHEC Board has the opportunity to conduct the sort of thorough search that is necessary for our state's public health and environmental agency."

Sen. Chip Campsen, R-Charleston, a leading voice on environmental issues, said despite some problems raised with Kitzman's nomination, he was prepared to vote for her. He said he may have changed his mind if new, more troubling information had come to light before the vote.

"Some of (the issues raised) caused me pause, some of them don't," Campsen said. "But I give a great deal of deference to the governor. This is the governor's prerogative. The DHEC board made this call. It's a pretty high threshold for me not to confirm a nominee."

Hutto said that DHEC should be focused on finding a qualified nominee. "Let's find somebody that fits running that agency," he said.

Reach **Melissa Boughton** at 937-5594.



Kitzman

Title: **Loss of federal money small part of SC road funding woes**
 Author: By JEFFREY COLLINS The Associated Press
 Size: 44.48 square inch
 Hilton Head Island, SC Circulation: 20015



Loss of federal money small part of SC road funding woes

By JEFFREY COLLINS

The Associated Press

COLUMBIA — The amount of money South Carolina gets from the federal government for roads has dropped since 2008, but that is only a small part of the funding problems for a crumbling highway system.

Figures compiled by The Associated Press show the total amount of money the state has received from the Federal Highway Trust Fund dropped by nearly \$43 million, or more than 6 percent, during the five-year period ending in 2013, the latest year for which numbers

were available.

Lawmakers trying to figure out how to get more money toward roads said that is still a significant amount — enough to maybe add an extra lane to 15 or 20 miles of interstate or repave

a lot of secondary roads.

But there were bigger problems.

ROAD

Continued from 1A

slow down if congestion increases while the condition of the highways decreases.

“South Carolina has enjoyed unprecedented growth. We just haven’t kept up with the infrastructure,” said Rock Hill Republican Rep. Gary Simrill, who was put in charge of the House’s efforts to improve highway funding.

The House is grappling with two ideas. Simrill was in charge of a committee that met for months in 2014, coming up with a proposal to lower the gas tax, which is paid by retail-

Road funding has never matched the state’s growth with a gas tax that remained unchanged for nearly 30 years while road construction prices have

risen considerably and vehicles are burning a lot less fuel.

The management of the Department of Transportation has come under fire too for relying on political pressure instead of objective rankings to decide

what gets built and repaved and what doesn’t.

South Carolina was the tenth-fastest growing state in population over the past decade, and road spending went up 28 percent in that time. But 32 other states increased road funding at higher rates from 2003 to 2013.

Lawmakers have promised to do something to get more money to roads this session as business leaders have

increased pressure by warning South Carolina’s economic growth could

Please see **ROAD on 7A**

PROPOSALS FOR S.C. ROADS

- **GOVERNOR:** Gov. Nikki Haley’s plan would raise the state gas tax by 10 cents.
- **HOUSE:** The plan would lower the gas tax, which is paid by retailers, while raising the sales tax on fuel, which is paid by wholesalers when they buy in bulk.
- **SENATE:** The Senate isn’t set on one solution. Senators have filed several bills with solutions ranging from tolling Interstate 95 at the bridge over Lake Marion to borrowing money to charging only out-of-state residents with a higher gas tax.

ers, while raising the sales tax on fuel, which is paid by wholesalers when they buy in bulk. That combined with other revenue would raise an additional \$400 million for roads.

A proposal by Gov. Nikki Haley would raise the state’s gas tax by 10 cents.

But she has said she will only support it if lawmakers pass a reduction in state income tax rates over 10 years that would roughly match the gas tax increase.

Both Simrill’s and Haley’s

proposals have been introduced in the House, and Simrill hopes the House can get back to talking about them by the end of the month.

Meanwhile, the Senate may have different ideas. While the governor and House have focused on the \$400 million that DOT Director Janet Oakley says is enough to keep roads in their current condition, some senators think that’s not enough.

The DOT has said it would take \$1.5 billion extra a year to get the all the state’s roads to good condition by 2040.

“Does this Senate want to put a Band-Aid on it, or fix the problem?” asked Sen. Ray Cleary, R-Murrells Inlet, who has lead his chamber’s efforts to solve the problem.

Earlier this month, Cleary held a Senate committee’s first hearings on what to do about roads.

There are a number of different bills in the Senate with solutions ranging from tolling Interstate 95 at the bridge over Lake Marion to borrowing money to expand interstates to figuring out a way to raise the gas tax, but only charge out-of-state residents.



Haley

Title: **Kitzman withdraws as DHEC director nom**
Author: Associated Press
Size: 10.38 square inch
Greenwood, SC Circulation: 16494



■ GOVERNMENT

Kitzman withdraws as DHEC director nom

Associated Press

COLUMBIA — A long-time friend of Gov. Nikki Haley has decided to withdraw as nominee for director of South Carolina's public health and environmental control agency.

The Department of Health and Environmental Control issued a news release on Sunday saying that Eleanor Kitman had informed them she was dropping from consideration for the post.

The department also

released a letter dated Sunday that Kitman wrote to the chairman of DHEC's board saying she was backing out. The letter wasn't very specific about why she was withdrawing.

DHEC board chairman Allen Amsler issued a statement saying the reversal was "an unfortunate occurrence."

Haley issued a statement saying that Kitman's withdrawal was a loss for the state but will be a gain for another future employer.

Title: **Upper Savannah is 1st Work Ready region in state**
 Author: By COLIN RIDDLE criddle@indexjournal.com
 Size: 48.05 square inch
 Greenwood, SC Circulation: 16494



Upper Savannah is 1st Work Ready region in state

By COLIN RIDDLE

criddle@indexjournal.com

It's been a popular announcement during the last few months with each member of the Upper Savannah Council of Governments being certified as a Work Ready Community — Greenwood, Abbeville, McCormick, Saluda, Laurens, Edgefield and Newberry.

Now, the Upper Savannah region has become the first region in the state to be entirely Work Ready certified, promoting regionalism and a dedicated workforce.

The ACT Certified Work Ready Communities initiative is a tool used to measure the quality and capability of a county's workforce through national certifications, workforce testing and job profiling.

Gov. Nikki Haley volunteered South Carolina to be one of the first states to participate and serve as a pilot state for the initiative, which can be used by county and municipal organizations and individuals.

"The recognition of a company outside of the United States would see that this state is prepared and gives us a heads-up compared to other states," Sandra Johnson, workforce development administrator for the Upper Savannah Council of Governments, said.

READY

Continued from 1A

our local educators to prepare students for the workforce," LaBorde said.

According to Johnson, McCormick County was the first in the region to receive the certification and second in the state, which served as the driving force for the surrounding counties to become

Johnson added that the efforts of the region as a whole will promote regionalism and attract more attention from prospective businesses.

With already so much cooperation in place throughout the region, the certifications were a natural progression with each county benefiting from the growth of another, according to Johnson.

"The one thing that was most exciting about this process was there were so many people involved throughout the region. It was such a team effort to get certified," she said.

The process is essentially a percentage game — meet the required number of participants and meet the right scores. Businesses and individuals from the workforce participate. The workforce includes existing workers, emerging workers from high schools and colleges, and transitioning workers.

"The Work Ready certification means that our community is diligent in trying to enhance the skills

of our workers," Angelle LaBorde, president and chief executive officer for the Greenwood Chamber of Commerce, said, adding the process helps businesses with retention rates, identifying the right employees and enhancing business productivity.

Individuals are encouraged to earn a National Career Readiness Certificate through three ACT WorkKeys tests, which include applied mathematics, locating information and reading for information. The tests are designed to measure real world skills that employers believe are critical to job success and include test questions that are based on situations in the everyday work world.

Employers on the other end can use job analysis to determine which skills are required for a job and the level of each skill needed to perform the job successfully. This helps determine the standards for how an applicant must score on particular WorkKeys skills assessments.

"Being a Work Ready Certified Community helps job seekers understand what skills employers are looking for, and at the same time it helps

See **READY**, page 4A

Work Ready.

"It's going to help us with growth," McCormick County

Council Chairman Charles Jennings said. "All this is going to help entice some business and investment in McCormick County, because we've taken the first steps."

Jennings also served on the Work Ready committee steer-

ing the county's certification efforts. The chairman said these first steps will help move forward economic development in attracting businesses, seeking grants and developing industrial properties.

Johnson said she wants to see all area high schools require the WorkKeys testing, which will put students ahead of the game and provide them

with a national certificate that can be used on college applications and job resumes.

The job continues for the counties as well. Each year, the county is required to certify.

"We can't just sit and rest on our laurels. We are required to take the steps to maintain our Work Ready Certification," Johnson said.

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Author: By COLIN RIDDLE criddle@indexjournal.com
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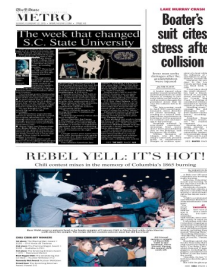
**NIKKI
HALEY**

Title: **The week that changed S.C. State University**

Author:

Size: 97.80 square inch

Columbia, SC Circulation: 128564



The week that changed S.C. State University

State lawmakers sent a message to S.C. State University last week: Radical change is coming.

With proposals backed by powerful legislators, the state's only historically black public college likely will lose its trustees – and then its president – in coming months.

Why? Those leaders did not get the school out of a deepening financial crisis.

The legislative proposals would have S.C. State fall under control of temporary leaders, expected to turn

around the Orangeburg college's finances before lawmakers elect new trustees.

Two turning points Wednesday contributed to the imminent overhaul of the 119-year-old college.

■ A news report that S.C. State's deficit had grown by \$4 million since July – to \$17 million. Part of that increase came from an additional \$1 million in unpaid bills.

No one thought S.C. State would dig out of its debt overnight.

But lawmakers expected the school to keep its deficit in check by making spending cuts. Not enough cuts were made and not

enough answers concerning the school's finances were provided, lawmakers said.

■ House Ways and Means chairman **Brian White**, R-Anderson, received an opinion from the S.C. attorney general saying lawmakers likely would win a court challenge if they voted to oust the college's trustees.

That gave lawmakers confidence to move ahead with proposals to remove S.C. State trustees.

House budget writers went first Wednesday, followed the next day by a bill sponsored by the state's most powerful politician, Senate President Pro Tempore **Hugh Leatherman**, R-Florence.

Consider just how fast faith in S.C. State's leadership has been lost: Leatherman moved to sack the school's board less than three months after engineering a \$12 million infusion for the university.

Why the change of heart? Leatherman cited the school's still-growing deficit.

"That's certainly going in the wrong direction," Leatherman said Friday.

Additional powerful voices also have weighed in.

House Speaker **Jay Lucas**, R-Darlington, and University of South Carolina president **Harris Pastides**, a member of legislative-appointed committee examining S.C. State, both said removing the school's trustees is the right move.

Change seems even more inevitable after lawmakers who graduated from S.C. State and African-American legislators said they had enough.

Four African-American lawmakers – including a top Democrat, state Rep. Gilda Cobb-Hunter of Orangeburg – backed the House budget amendment to oust S.C. State's trustees.

Leatherman's bill to oust the school's trustees was co-sponsored by state Sen. John Matthews, a Orangeburg Democrat who graduated from S.C. State.

U.S. Rep. **Jim Clyburn**, a Columbia Democrat who is one of school's most prominent alums, also called last week for the removal of the school's trustees – most of whom he called "jokes."

Influential backers of punting S.C. State's trustees think any interim board should fire president **Thomas Elzey**.

Elzey pledged last week to keep his focus on rebuilding the school. Meanwhile, S.C. State trustees chairman **William Small** said the university's board has been "unfairly disparaged."

"I am convinced that this situation could have and should have been handled in a much more professional and substantially less damaging manner," Small said, critiquing the actions

SEE **THE BUZZ** PAGE **A10**

THE BUZZ

FROM PAGE **A3**

of legislators. "My hope and prayer is that the histrionics will cease and that better judgment and reason will somehow find a place at the table."

S.C. State supporters –

more than 1,000 of whom attended a State House rally Monday – can take solace in the fact that the college will remain open.

A House budget proposal to close S.C. State for two years died last week.

But the proposal, pushed by House Republicans including Rep. **Phillip Lowe** of Florence,

achieved its goal of sparking debate on changing the university's leadership.

"You tell Mr. Lowe if that was his intention," Clyburn said, "he succeeded greatly."

HOW TO SPEND \$6.9 BILLION

State representatives'

Title: **The week that changed S.C. State University**

Author:

Size: 97.80 square inch

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priorities were on display when the House Ways and Means committee approved a \$6.9 billion general fund budget last week for the state's fiscal year that starts July 1.

While a final spending plan is a long way from reaching Gov. **Nikki Haley's** desk, here's a snapshot of what House budget-writers approved and sent to the House floor:

- Adding 44 parole agents and 120 Department of Social Services staffers, including child-welfare employees.
- Increasing the state dollars that schools get by \$100 per student to \$2,220 on average – a \$94 million earmark.
- Allocating nearly \$250,000 for overtime costs for state officers who patrol the Atlantic Beach Bikefest, which has seen calls for increased security after three were killed and seven wounded in multiple shootings during the event last May.

Additionally, if the state closes its books in June without a deficit, the Department of Commerce would receive \$17.6 million for its fund to close economic-development deals, while the Department of Education would

get \$30 million for new school buses.

Several local projects – critics call the items “pork” – made the cut with House budget writers.

They approved: \$25,000 for the Newberry Opera House; \$150,000 for the Palmetto Conservation Foundation; and \$200,000 for the Columbia Museum of Art.

2016 IN S.C.: THE FOUR HORSEMEN?

A quartet of prospective White House candidates are coming to the South's first presidential primary state this week:

- S.C. Attorney General **Alan Wilson** is holding a fundraiser Friday for former Republican Gov. **Mike Huckabee** of Arkansas at the Nelson Mullins law office in Columbia, according to an invitation obtained by The Buzz. Tickets and sponsorships range from \$100 to \$3,500. Huckabee, the second-place finisher in the 2008 S.C. GOP presidential primary, visited Greenville and Rock Hill as part of a book tour last month.
- Former Maryland Gov. **Martin O'Malley** will join Democratic National Committee chairwoman **Debbie Wasserman-**

Schultz, a U.S. House member from Florida, at the S.C. Democratic Party's Spratt Issues Conference on Saturday in Myrtle Beach. O'Malley, who has made several trips to South Carolina, spoke at the same party conference in 2013.

- Former U.S. Sen. **Rick Santorum** of Pennsylvania and real estate mogul **Donald Trump** will address The Citadel Republican Society's Patriot Dinner in Charleston on Sunday. It will be Trump's second coastal visit in a month, after attending the recent S.C. Tea Party Convention in Myrtle Beach. Santorum has two sons who attend The Citadel.

BUZZ BITES

- **S.C. in 2016:** U.S. Sen. **Lindsey Graham**, who is testing the waters for a GOP presidential run, returns to Iowa March 7, where he will join 10 other Republican White House hopefuls at the Iowa Agriculture Summit. The Seneca Republican made his first trip to Iowa as a presidential prospect last week. Graham has said he will decide by May whether he will launch a 2016 bid.
- **Veep does his Strom**

imitation: Speaking at a Columbia steel plant Wednesday, Vice President **Joe Biden** said he cut his political teeth on the Palmetto State, having sat in the U.S. Senate near Democratic U.S. Sen.

Fritz Hollings and Republican U.S. Sen. **Strom Thurmond**.

Thurmond would ask him to visit South Carolina, Biden said. Doing his best Thurmond imitation, Biden said the legendary senator would ask him, “Joe, you mind goin’ to Clemson fo’ ma institute?”

“What the hell heck was I going to say?” Biden said Wednesday. “No, I don’t mind.”

■ **Sen. – or was that Rep. – Benjamin?** Biden may have confused Columbia Mayor **Steve Benjamin** with someone else during his Columbia appearance. The vice president turned to the mayor and said, “Steve, I don’t know why you’d move from the Legislature to the mayor. The mayor’s a real job, man. That’s a real job.”

One problem, Mr. Vice President: Mayor is the only elected office that Benjamin has held.

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