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Haley insists S.C. can afford to cut taxes, fix its roads

BY SEANNA ADCOX
The Associated Press

COLUMBIA — Gov. Nikki Haley insists South Carolina can afford her proposal to cut income taxes by \$9 billion during the next decade without cutting spending.

The Republican governor said Friday the state can absorb that in surpluses as its economy grows. The past decade doesn't reflect that kind of growth, but she dismissed questions about what she would cut.

"There will be a lot of people who want to talk about spending and how we can't afford something. That's not who we are in South Carolina. That's not this administration," Haley told reporters after her Cabinet meeting. "There is more revenue. We can choose to squander it away and spend it, or we can give it back to the taxpayers."

State economic advisers predict her plan to cut the top in-

come tax bracket by 2 percentage points would reduce revenue by \$1.8 billion yearly once the 10-year phase-in is fully implemented. That's equivalent to 25 percent of her \$6.9 billion spending proposal for 2015-16, released last week. Her budget doesn't account for the first year of the cut's phase-in, she said, "because we just came out with the plan."

If she had, her budget couldn't pay for her own recommended spending increases, including those for the second year of her education initiative.

Haley makes her case by looking at the last few years of post-Great Recession recovery.

"You can't ignore the surpluses we've had," she said.

Tax collections have grown \$1.5 billion since 2010. But collections next fiscal year are expected to be less than \$400 million above those of 2006-07, as health care costs have climbed. Economists have said the Legislature's tax cuts of 2006 and 2007 exacerbated the budget crisis during the downturn.

South Carolina is still digging out from those deep, recession-era cuts, said Senate Minority Leader Nikki Setzler, D-West Columbia.

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HALEY

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The state is sending public colleges \$300 million less than it did in 2008. That was the last year legislators followed state law on aiding local governments. And it would take \$550 million more than Haley proposes next fiscal year to fully fund the so-called "base student cost" for K-12 education, as set by a 1977 formula, according to economic advisers.

Haley's Cabinet agencies haven't fully bounced

back either. For example, the Department of Social Services is trying to hire hundreds of additional caseworkers following bipartisan hearings during the past year on the agency's failures to protect abused and neglected children. Haley's budget includes money to do that. But the planned hires still won't restore child welfare staff to pre-recession levels.

The income-tax proposal is part of Haley's stipulation for supporting a 10-cent gas tax increase to fund road and bridge work.

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THE HERALD OF ROCK HILL

Jan. 20

REJECTED POEM GETTING FAR MORE ATTENTION NOW

The poem "One River, One Boat" requires little time to recite. We know because when U.S. Rep. Jim Clyburn read it into the congressional record Jan. 14, it took him four minutes and 10 seconds.

In addition to a reading in Congress, the poem also was recited on the floor of the S.C. Senate on Jan. 15 by state Sen. Marlon Kimpson, D-Charleston. And it was read by its author, S.C. Poet Laureate Marjory Wentworth, at the annual King Day at the Dome march on the Statehouse grounds Monday.

Where it wasn't read was at the second inauguration of Gov. Nikki Haley on Jan. 15. Wentworth was told the schedule of events that day was tight, leaving no time for a poem, not even four minutes and 10 seconds.

Haley's inaugural ceremony was 90 minutes long. The processional down the Statehouse steps consumed nearly half that time.

Officials with the governor's office said time constraints were the only reason the poem was not included in the inauguration. Wentworth said she was told that the poem was rejected before anyone involved in planning the event had read it and that the content of the poem was not an issue.

But Wentworth, who has been poet laureate since 2003, has read a poem at the last three inaugurations, including Haley's first. Those poems, she said, were about "safer" topics, "animals and nature."

"One River, One Boat," the poem she wrote for Haley's second inaugural ceremony,

touched on graver themes, including slavery and the state's struggles with the treatment of African Americans. One stanza refers to the Confederate flag flying on the Statehouse grounds, another to a judge's decision last month to throw out the conviction of a 14-year-old black boy wrongfully tried and quickly executed without an appeal for the murder of two white girls 70 years ago.

But then, the governor's office denies that the poem itself — most of which was politically neutral — was the problem. So, why not carve out five minutes to let the poet laureate do her job?

Perhaps it had something to do with Haley's well-documented efforts to gut state funding for public art organizations and programs to bring art, music, drama and dance programs to different parts of the state. Perhaps she has no use for public poetry either.

Wentworth said that former Gov. Mark Sanford's office had earmarked \$1,500 a year to pay for her travel and accommodations around the state. Haley has provided no money.

Wentworth wrote "One River, One Boat" exclusively for Haley's inauguration, which she considered one of her duties as poet laureate. We think it was shortsighted of planners not to allow the poem to be read during the ceremonies.

But if their intention was to suppress the poem, they failed miserably. It is getting far more attention now than

it would have as just another inaugural poem.

That's good. Wentworth and her poem deserve the exposure.

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Haley OK with gas tax hike, conditionally

BY SEANNA ADCOX
The Associated Press

The 16-cents-per-gallon tax has not changed since

COLUMBIA — Gov. Nikki Haley said Wednesday that she will support a gas tax increase, but only if the Legislature cuts South Carolina's income taxes and restructures the Department of Transportation.

1987. At 26 cents, the tax would still be below neighboring North Carolina and Georgia, she notes.

Haley, who every year has called for lowering personal income taxes, said her proposal still provides an overall tax decrease.

"Now, I hope everyone listened carefully to what I

Haley used her fifth-annual State of the State address to lay out her much-anticipated plan to fund road and bridge work — shockingly, by raising gas taxes, an idea she's repeatedly promised to veto.

said. This is a three-part package deal," she said. "If we do all of those things, we will have better roads and a stronger economic engine for our people. That's a win-win."

In her 40-minute speech, the Republican governor initially seemed to repeat that pledge.

The DOT has said it needs an additional \$1.5 million yearly for the next two decades just to bring roads to

"We have not gotten to where we are as a state, with our strengthening and growing economy, by raising taxes," she said.

But she offers a twist, saying she'll veto a "straight-up increase."

She then offers legislators a deal: Reduce the state's top income tax bracket from 7 percent to 5 percent over a decade, get rid of the DOT's elected commissioners, and she'll support raising the gas tax by 10 cents over three years.

good condition. The 41,000-mile system is the nation's fourth largest, funded largely by one of the nation's lowest gas taxes. Last year, Haley told legislators to invest more in infrastructure but added, "I will veto any bill that reaches my desk that raises taxes on gasoline."





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S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley, right, hugs Chief Justice Jean Toal after delivering her State of the State address to the joint session of the Legislature on Wednesday at the Statehouse in Columbia.

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148 + 125
Sumter native takes over state DJJ

BY MATT BRUCE
 matthew@theitem.com

It's been two weeks since Sylvia Murray catapulted to the foremost position of one of South Carolina's most recognizable agencies.

Gov. Nikki Haley appointed Murray as the acting director of the Department of Juvenile Justice to a deluge of flowers and fanfare earlier this month. The announcement

came during a Jan. 8 press conference in Columbia, when Murray took over her new role immediately.

Fourteen days have passed, and the rose-scented optimism has yet to fade from the newly minted di-

rector's outlook. She takes over a team of about 1,400 employees charged with providing treatment and restorative care to embattled children in South Carolina. Her title becomes official when she un-

dergoes the confirmation process later this month and the S.C. General Assembly approves Haley's nomination.

"I am humbled to be given this opportunity to continue the legacy of S.C. Department of Juvenile Justice being a national leader in juvenile justice programs and practices," Murray said via a statement issued

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PHOTO PROVIDED

Sumterite Sylvia Murray, left, is seen with Gov. Nikki Haley after Murray was named Department of Juvenile Justice acting director Jan. 8.





MURRAY

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by the agency Wednesday. "I appreciate the passion and dedication that our DJJ family demonstrates on a daily basis to serve the youth and families of this state. I look forward to working with all of you in the coming months and years as we together to take SCDJJ to the next level."

Murray rose to the ranks as one of the state's premier leaders from local nectars. The 53-year-old Gamecock City native grew up near Cane Savannah and is a product of Sumter County public schools. She graduated from Hillcrest High School in the late 1970s before taking off for nearby Columbia College, where she earned her undergraduate degree in public affairs. She later earned a master's degree in management at Webster University.

Murray began her public service career in 1995, when she became a business manager at S.C. Department of Natural Resources. After five years there, she took over as accounting manager at Department of Consumer Affairs.

It was not until 2004 that Murray made her debut at Department of Juvenile Justice, first as a business manager and then as a senior business manager. In 2013, Murray became the agency's deputy director of administrative service, working directly under former DJJ Director Margaret Barber. Haley cited Murray's wide-ranging background during her Jan. 8 introduction

to the public, calling her Barber's right hand. Barber, who was appointed in 2011, retired from the director's spot in December, ending a public service career that spanned all the way back to 1968. Barber spent much of her career in DJJ, leaving a legacy of growth and success. She and Murray worked closely together during her four-year term as director, as Murray

served essentially as her second in command.

"Sylvia is going to take this agency to another level," Barber said. "We have been so proud to get where we are right now. I want to say to everybody in South Carolina that DJJ's team has made South Carolina proud, and I know we will continue to do that with Sylvia Murray taking the lead."

Officials noted Murray's nonsense approach fueled by a high resolve and tempered by her compassion for the juveniles in the agency's care. DJJ is one of the state's cabinet agencies, responsible for providing rehabilitative and custodial care to incarcerated South Carolina children. The department is also chartered with caring for juveniles on

probation or parole or in community placement for a criminal or status offense. There are about 110 children incarcerated in the state and about 4,000 more under some type of community supervision.

Murray became the third black cabinet chief Haley has appointed among the 17 agency leadership positions since she was elected in 2010. Officials note the Agency Head Salary Commission will re-examine her initial salary of \$118,545 and reportedly propose she get a pay increase.

"This agency is all about saving the children, rehabilitating the kids and making them better citizens so that when they leave us they will be productive citizens, they will have developed skills through our job training programs, and they will leave us better than they were when they came to us," Murray said. "How we do that is by first making sure they are held accountable for their actions, helping them learn the error of their ways, ensuring they realize the severity of their crimes and offenses and then preparing them to live the rest of their lives as productive members of society."

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148 Hospital not on penalty list

By **Michaele Duke**
Staff Reporter

The federal government is cutting payments to the Medical University of South Carolina and 12 other South Carolina hospitals for their infection and complication rates. The penalties were part of a report issued in October by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. The hospital-acquired infections include central-line associated bloodstream infections, catheter-associated urinary tract infections and patient safety.

A total 721 hospitals across the United States will be penalized under the federal program. However, one local hospital not only received no penalties, it is considered the benchmark for patient safety. In 2013, the Williamsburg Regional Hospital received the Zero Harm Award from the South Carolina Hospital Association for 2013, for zero infections on Total Knee Replacements. The hospital also has had zero ventilator-assisted events.

These indicators in excellent

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Williamsburg Regional awarded for patient safety

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health care have caught the eyes of the medical field. The hospital has been asked to participate in Cohort 1 of a new collaborative focused on Ventilator Associated Events (VAE) called CUSP 4MVP (Comprehensive Unit - Based Safety Program for Mechanically Ventilated Patients). Michigan Health and Hospital Association, Keystone Center and Johns Hopkins Armstrong Institute will lead the national collaborative for Patient Safety & Quality. The organizations were leads for the national CLABSI (Central line associated blood stream infections) work South Carolina has participated in previously.

Williamsburg Regional Hospital CEO Sharon Poston attributes the success to an expert staff. "We are very fortunate to have the highly qualified professional staff who chose to work here," said Poston. "From the physicians, nurses, to the ancillary and clerical services, the staff always puts the patient first." Poston added that hand washing, as Dr. Troy Gamble "preaches" is the number one way to prevent the spread of infection. "With this focus and attention, we are happy to say we have a zero infection rate and hospital-acquired conditions are not present here. We intend to continue to be diligent in this

and all patient safety aspects of our care."

According to Lauren Sausser, reporter for *The Post and Courier*, the Medical University of South Carolina is the only Charleston-area hospital that will be penalized for these "hospital-acquired conditions" by the federal health insurance program, which provides coverage for the elderly and disabled. Palmetto Health Richland in Columbia and Kershaw Health in Camden tied for worst overall score in the state. For more information on the readmissions reduction program visit the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services at www.cms.gov.





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IDA MARTIN, CHAIRMAN, Barbara Mishoe, State Committeeman of The Williamsburg County Republican Party met with New Jersey Governor Chris Christie on Wednesday. They were attending the Inaugural Ceremony of S.C. Governor Nikki Haley in Columbia.
PHOTO PROVIDED

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148 House Democrats make public legislative agenda

By Tyler Jones

South Carolina House Democrats announced their legislative agenda for the 2015-16 session at a press conference at the state house on Tuesday. Led by Minority Leader Representative Todd Rutherford, Democrats first stressed the need to tackle road funding this session.

"House Democrats are endorsing an 'all of the above' approach to road funding this year," said Democratic Leader Todd Rutherford (D-Richland). "The time to be picky about how we fund our roads is over. Simply put, we will not stand in the way of a gas tax increase, nor will we stand in the way of new revenue through casinos. The only thing we'll stand in the way of is kicking the can down the road. We have to plug our \$45 billion infrastructure deficit before a bridge collapses and people die."

Democrats also called on the governor and Republicans in the general assembly to withdraw their "embarrassing" appeal to the Supreme Court ruling over K-12 funding.

"For twenty years, Republicans have ignored the issue of education funding in South Carolina," said Rep. James Smith (D-Richland.) "Instead of fighting the Supreme Court ruling calling

on us to address the inequalities in school funding, let's actually roll up our sleeves and do it. We owe it to the students, parents and teachers of South Carolina."

Democrats also called on Gov. Nikki Haley to negotiate a South Carolina-centered alternative to Medicaid Expansion with the federal government to allow us to bring our federal tax dollars back to the state.

"It makes zero sense to continue to refuse to accept our own tax dollars just so Governor Haley can thumb her nose at the President," said Rep. Justin Bamberg (D-Bamberg). "Fourteen Republican Governors have now come out in support of some sort of Expansion alternative that they negotiated with the federal government. Why shouldn't we do the same?"

The other issues Democrats will focus on this session include equal pay for female state employees. South Carolina is one of just four states in the nation without an equal pay law. Rep. Leon Stavrinakis has proposed a bill that would ban gender pay discrimination among state employees. His bill was modeled after a Louisiana bill that passed an overwhelming Republican General Assembly and signed into law by conservative Republican Governor

Bobby Jindal.

House Democrats also endorsed a plan to establish a living wage in South Carolina. Currently, South Carolina is one of just five states in the country without a state-mandated minimum wage law. Rep. Gilda Cobb-Hunter's proposal would set the wage at \$10.10 per hour.

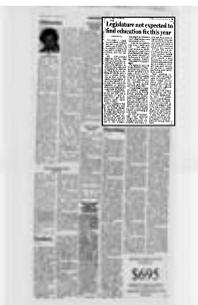
Democrats also pledged their support for ethics reform this session. Though they said any ethics reform should also include reforming the redistricting process in South Carolina. Their proposal would install an independent panel to draw district lines instead of partisan legislators. In 2014, 100 percent of all incumbent legislators were re-elected in the general election.

"District lines are purposely drawn by legislators in order to create a safer political environment for themselves and their political party," said Rep. Laurie Funderburk (D-Kershaw), the author of the bill. "Gerrymandering has created a polarized legislature that seeks to root out moderates and replace them with politicians who only have to worry about winning their primaries. Reforming our redistricting process is critical to a more functional General Assembly and regaining the trust of the voters."





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148 Legislature not expected to find education fix this year

The Associated Press

COLUMBIA — Legislators are unlikely to respond this year to the state Supreme Court's order to fix an education system that the justices say fails South Carolina's poor, rural children.

The GOP-controlled legislature and Gov. Nikki Haley have asked for a rehearing on November's decision, with legislators arguing the state's high court overstepped its authority in telling them to do anything and that the justices need to provide instruction on what to do. The justices ordered legislators and school officials to collectively fix the system but mandated no particular method for changing it and no timetable for doing so.

"They overstepped their bounds and didn't tell us something we don't already know," said Senate Majority Leader Harvey Peeler, R-Gaffney.

Haley's complaint is that the court didn't give credit for the funding changes the legislature passed in the budget last year at her recommendation. The ruling came two years after attorneys for the state and the rural districts that first sued in 1993 re-argued

their appeal of a 2005 lower court ruling that gave each side a partial victory.

"To say we have issues in rural areas, I totally agree with. ... They didn't account for what we already started to do," Haley said of the additional \$180 million put toward education in the first year of her multi-year education initiative. "That needs to be acknowledged."

The legislature approved similar increases to education the previous two years. Yet state spending on K-12 public schools is just this year back to the spending levels of 2007-08, before the Great Recession-era cuts, according to data from the state Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office.

Last year's biggest change was adding a "weighting" for poverty in the funding formula, providing more to educate poor students. Haley's backing got Republicans on board with an idea advocated for years by Democrats and education advocates. The budget also put more toward reading coaches and technology in rural schools.

The court did acknowledge many piecemeal changes since 1993, including more money, new programs and various re-

form laws. But in discounting lawmakers' contention the case was moot, the justices noted state money is still distributed to districts based on laws passed in 1977 and 1984. The justices found the state's fractured education funding system denies opportunities to students in poor, rural districts. Issues cited include inadequate busing and an inability to attract and keep good teachers. But the justices stressed that funding alone will not fix the problem.

Those underlying formulas, which the justices called an outdated, fractured funding scheme, remain intact. And the legislature hasn't followed the 1977 law's suggested increases since 2008.

Rep. Gilda Cobb-Hunter, D-Orangeburg, said she's "extremely disappointed" the state's GOP leaders want to continue arguing.

Haley insists the rehearing request won't hold up action. Her budget proposal this year includes creating a teacher recruitment program for rural schools that will be fully funded in 10 years. The delay is because she pays for her plan by phasing out teacher stipends for national certification.

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Shortage of women in politics

Numbers still low in South Carolina, the Pee Dee

BY GAVIN JACKSON
Morning News
gjackson@florencenews.com

FLORENCE — When Nikki Haley took office in 2011 as South Carolina's first female governor, there were only 14 women in the General Assembly of 170 members, and the state, where 51.3 percent of residents are women, ranked last in the nation for female representation in the legislature,

"I am not unaware that four years ago, when I spoke for the first time as governor, there was some skepticism," Haley said in her second-

term inauguration address Jan. 15. "It was not unfounded. I was young. I was unknown. I was different."



Haley

Haley, 43, told the Morning News last week that she has capitalized on her differences, but doesn't want people to see her for her gender, age or ethnicity. She said that women need to reconsider getting into politics, that their liabilities can be their biggest assets.

"There have been all these stories about why politics is hard for wom-

en. At the end of the day, it's not," Haley said. "It's not any harder than it is for anyone else. It's a process that puts you out there and opens you up for criticisms, but it's a process that's extremely rewarding.

"It allows you to move the ball and get things done for the people that you live with and serve, and that's what we're trying to do."

Since she took office, nine more women have boosted the ranks in Columbia: One in the Senate and eight in the House as of the start of the session Jan. 13, pushing the

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Women

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state into its highest percentage of female representation to date, but still in 47th place.

"They just expect a lot of themselves, whereas a man may decide immediately what he wants, but I think women second-guess themselves; I think that's the nature of who we are," Haley said. "But what we want women to know is just to trust your gut. All the reasons people tell you shouldn't do it are all the reasons you should."

Alissa Warters, political science professor at Francis Marion University, agrees with Haley's perspective and says the most powerful explanation of why women don't run is that they aren't asked. When they do decide to run, Warters says, women have the same success rate as men at the polls.

'Numbers still suck'

Statistics compiled by the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University show that in 1995, 12.4 percent of the South Carolina legislature was female, ranking it 43rd for female state representation. The state moved to the bottom five states in 1997 before hitting last place in 2003 — where it remained for a decade.

Then in November 2012, eight women were elected, including the Senate's lone female member, Katrina

Shealy — a substantial gain for women in the Statehouse, but one that only budged the Palmetto State up a peg to second to last in the country in 2013.

That's because the top 10 states in 2003 ranged from 36.7 percent to 28.6 percent female representation and the bottom 10 states were 16.2 percent to 9.4 percent in their statehouses, unlike in 2013, when the top 10 ranged from 41.1 percent to 29.6 percent and bottom from 17 percent to 11.8 percent.

Jump to 2015 and female representation continues to increase at the top (Colorado, 42 percent) and even at the bottom (Louisiana, 12.5 percent).

Then there sits South Carolina at 13.5 percent,

pushed up with the addition of one more female legislator, Rep. Mary Tinkler, D-Charleston, who won, unopposed even though former Speaker Bobby Harrell's name was on the November ballot weeks after an ethics scandal removed him from office.

"One is the culture of South Carolina and the South," Warters said. "That plays into it some, and that has begun to modify itself some because there is a very paternalistic culture. When you look at the states that have the least women in legislatures, they tend to be Southeastern states."

The Center for American Women and Politics' recent findings, in a report titled "Women in state leg-

islatures in 2015; numbers still suck," show that five of the bottom 10 states were in the South and only one, Maryland, was in the top 10 with 31.9 percent.

Florence openings

A month after winning his fifth term, former Rep. Kris Crawford, R-Florence, abruptly resigned, and names swirled around including former challenger Sheila Gallagher, who had lost in a primary runoff for the Democratic nomination for state superintendent of education, and former 12th Circuit Solicitor Republican candidate Rose Mary Parham, who said she was not interested.

In the end, Florence voters will chose Feb. 24 from three white Republican men in their early 30s who run their own businesses, and one of whom has a wife and three young children.

Former District 8 Florence County Councilwoman Jennie O'Bryan (2002-06) was disappointed a woman didn't file, saying she "really wanted to run," but the sudden opening conflicted with prior commitments.

"It takes a lot of support to run for office," O'Bryan said. "It's not an easy thing to go out and ask for financial support and the support to get elected. So that's one of the issues with it."

She was the second woman to serve on the council, following Shirley Corbett, who served from 1985-91.

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Pee Dee differences

Chesterfield, Darlington, Marion and Williamsburg counties all have at least one county councilwoman. Even Marlboro County, home to the only female minority population in the Pee Dee, has two.

In fact, Marlboro County has the only female state representative in the Pee Dee delegation.

Former Marlboro Rep. Elizabeth Munnerlyn defeated two men in the 2010 Democratic primary for the open House 54 seat. Last year, Munnerlyn decided not to run again, and Democratic Rep. Pat Henegan won the seat unopposed.

Henegan, 66, said her experiences as a woman, a mother and a career in education as a teacher and assistant superintendent of Marlboro County Schools give her, like many women, different views from her male counterparts at the table. She was just named second vice chairman of the House Interstate Cooperation Committee and is on the House Medical, Military, Public and Municipal Affairs Committee.

"As far as economic issues go, one thing I will never, ever forget is that I believe in equal pay for everyone, whether you're a man or woman," Henegan said. "And now with domestic violence, that's one of the big issues I'm definitely going to support and anything dealing with family health or needs of women I'm going to support — because I'm a mama. I have two children, and I believe we have to face these issues."

Former state Rep. Denny

neuson, of Darlington, represented House Dis-

trict 56 from 1984 to 2013. Residency issues plagued her attempted run for the House 53 seat in 2014.

Florence hasn't had any female representation on the state level since Florence native Maggie Wallace Glover served in the House from 1989-92 before being elected to the state Senate in 1992 as the first black female senator. She served until Sen. Kent Williams defeated her in 2004.

Florence and Dillon counties are the only ones in the Pee Dee without a woman on their county councils.

Florence's history

In 1953, after an unsuccessful attempt in 1951, Maye Stevenson became the first woman in Florence elected to the City Council, leading a field of seven candidates competing for two seats.

It is apparent from news articles of the time that Stevenson didn't let her gender hold her down. She helped abolish Florence's Civil Services Commission in 1955, helped oust City Manager D.C. Barbot in May 1956 and led a motion in October of that year, which passed, to fire the city's 14-year Police Chief Julian Price "immediately for unsatisfactory service."

"Mayhap it's just a woman's incurable curiosity, or perhaps she is extending

her sense of responsibility to include the realm of good government," reporter Sally Ann Rogers wrote in the Florence Morning News in 1954. "Whatever it is, Florence women are showing a growing inter-

est in politics and public affairs."

For Stevenson, it was about equal taxation and representation.

"I believe in the emancipation of women," Stevenson told Rogers. "As a businesswoman, I pay every kind of property tax the men pay, and I think I have a right to say how my tax money is spent."

Some 55 years later, in 2008, Florence City Councilwoman Octavia Williams-Blake became the second woman as well as the first black, at-large council member elected in the city. While concerned about spending, Williams-Blake, 42, seeks to continue to improve Florence.

"It wasn't a mentality shift (on the council); I was just trying to bring another voice to the table," Williams-Blake said. "As we continue to plan for Florence, there needs to be a voice at table that represents women, mothers, young professionals and young people in general."

Teresa Myers Ervin was elected to the council two years later.

Florence School District 1 board member Pat Gibson-Hye Moore failed to unseat Councilman Ed Robinson in the District 2 Democratic primary.

'It's because women don't run'

So far, the only women elected to represent South Carolina in Washington have been related to deceased congressmen.

Clara McMillan served the remainder of her late husband Thomas' term in 1939-40.

Former U.S. Rep. Liz Johnston Patter-



The April 15, 1953, edition of the Florence Morning News reports Maye Stevenson's victory in a primary election for the city council. Stevenson was the first woman elected to the council.

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son, daughter of former Gov. and U.S. Sen. Olin D. Johnston, represented District 4 in the S.C. Senate from 1980-86 when she was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives for the 4th Congressional District. She served three terms.

In 2012, Gloria Bromell Tinubu became the Democratic nominee for the newly created 7th Congressional District, which encompasses much of the Pee Dee and Grand Strand. She lost to current U.S. Rep. Tom Rice and again last year.

She was one of two women on the ballot for the House; both lost. Karen Smith was defeated by Rep. Jim Clyburn in the primary.

Nancy Mace, and five other candidates, lost to Sen. Lindsey Graham in the Republican primary.

Democrat Joyce Dickerson and American Party candidate Jill Bossi lost to

Republican Sen. Tim Scott in November as well.

Seven women and six men ran for the superintendent of education position that Republican Molly Spearman eventually won, becoming the state's second female superintendent seven years after Inez Tennenbaum.

Democrat Ginny Deerin staged an unsuccessful attempt to defeat Republican Secretary of State Mark Hammond.

Spearman joins other top state women leaders, including Haley and the first female state Supreme Court chief justice, Jean H. Toal. Four of Haley's 15 Cabinet agency directors are women.

"I will always say we want the best person in office; whether that be man or woman, whether that be a minority or not, whether it be someone young or old," Haley said. "You just want lots of options for the public to choose from."

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Haley's anti-union bullying out of order

Imagine if Gov. Nikki Haley played the lead role in a new sequel movie based on Adam Sandler's "The Waterboy." At some point, Haley might ask Mama Boucher, "Mama, when did unions cause safe workplaces, get rid of child labor and push through the minimum wage?"

Her mama would quickly respond, "That's nonsense. I invented safe workplaces. Ain't nuthin' wrong with child labor, and the minimum wage is a Communist conspiracy. Betty Boucher — unions are the devil."

In real life, if you don't think Haley is South Carolina's "Water-girl!" for big business, just look at how Wednesday's State of the State address blasted unions with needless, raging venom.

"The successes of Boeing in South Carolina, and more so, the successes of the nonunion workers who populate its ranks, are a threat to the IAM (International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers)," Haley said. "Like bullies do, the union bosses will try to cover up those truths and crush those threats."

Folks, the only bully in the Statehouse chamber Wednesday night was Nikki Haley. Not a real contender in the 2016 presidential race, she must just have needed to create some kind of false bogeyman to feel warm and cuddly about herself.

Why? Because there's one clear and simple prescription for businesses that doesn't want unions to organize in their workplaces: Treat workers fairly and pay them what they deserve. Pay attention to workers and listen, and unions probably won't be a threat. But those that become tyrants and don't appreciate their workers might face the union music at some point.

While Haley didn't need to pound on unions to get across a message of South Carolina's robust economy, there was a surprising development in her annual address to the state: Raising the gas tax is no longer the third rail of political death.

Haley proposed raising the gas-user fee by 10 cents per gallon. But that wasn't enough for the governor. She tied it to a cut to the state personal income tax — just the



Andy Brack
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kind of political fiddling that makes economists pull out their hair.

Tying the tax increase to an income-tax cut, a plan similar to one being floated by GOP state Sen. Larry Grooms of Charleston, is dangerous, because it ignores basic economic principles.

First, dropping the income-tax rate when the state needs at least \$1 billion per year to fix crumbling infrastructure would narrow South Carolina's tax base. In other words, if you get less money from income taxes, you are going to be more reliant on other streams of revenue.

Therefore, the state would be forced to rely more on sales taxes, which are considered more volatile because they're closely tied to the overall economy. In turn, that means that budgeting is more difficult because revenue is less stable. In the long run when the economy is in recession, there will be lots of cuts to things like health care and education — because of





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all of the volatility.

Second is the issue of tax fairness. Because of the way South Carolina's income-tax structure is organized, 40 percent of people in the state don't pay income taxes. And because the tax brackets haven't been fully modernized, most people who pay income taxes pay in the top bracket. Translated, this means that any income tax cut would go disproportionately to rich people, while most South Carolinians would only pay more in taxes at the pump. Again, the middle class would bear the brunt of this so-called reform.

In fact, state Sen. Brad Hutto, D-Orangeburg, says Haley's gas-tax plan is essentially a political bait-and-switch. Yes, it would raise \$3 billion in gas taxes for roads over the next 10 years. But it would also cut \$8.5 billion in income taxes from coffers in the same time span.

State lawmakers don't need to fall again for such a simple solution: Remember the abysmal tax swap from a few years back that hurt schools and businesses by cutting personal property taxes and raising sales taxes? If we do the same kind of swap with gas and income taxes, we'll just be gutting the government that we have left.

Andy Brack is editor and publisher of Statehouse Report. He can be reached at brack@statehousereport.com.



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Haley insists SC can afford to cut taxes \$1.8B yearly

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The Associated Press

COLUMBIA — Gov. Nikki Haley insists South Carolina can afford her proposal to cut income taxes by \$9 billion over the next decade without cutting spending.

The Republican governor said Friday the state can absorb that in surpluses as its economy grows. The past decade doesn't reflect that kind of growth, but Haley dismissed questions about what she would cut.

"There will be a lot of people who want to talk about spending and how we can't afford something. That's not who we are in South Carolina. That's not this administration," Haley told reporters after her cabinet meeting. "There is more revenue. We can choose to squander it away and spend it, or we can give it back to the taxpayers."

State economic advisers predict her plan

to cut the top income tax bracket by 2 percentage points would reduce revenue by \$1.8 billion yearly once the 10-year phase-in is fully implemented. That's equivalent to 25 percent of her \$6.9 billion spending proposal for 2015-16, released last week. Her budget doesn't account for the first year of the cut's phase-in, she said, "because we just came out with the plan."

If she had, her budget couldn't pay for her

own recommended spending increases, including those for the second year of her education initiative.

Haley makes her case by looking at the last few years of post-Great Recession recovery.

"You can't ignore the surpluses we've had," she said.

Tax collections have grown \$1.5 billion since 2010. But collections next fiscal year are expected to be less than \$400 million

above those of 2006-07, as health care costs have climbed. Economists have said the legislature's tax cuts of 2006 and 2007 exacerbated the budget crisis during the downturn.

South Carolina is still digging out from those deep, recession-era cuts, said Senate Minority Leader Nikki Setzler, D-West Columbia.

The state is sending public colleges \$300 million less than it did in 2008. That was the last year legislators followed state law on aiding local governments. And it would take \$550 million more than Haley proposes next fiscal year to fully fund the so-called "base student cost" for K-12 education, as set by a 1977 formula, according to economic advisers.

Haley's cabinet agencies haven't fully

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bounced back either. For example, the Department of Social Services is trying to hire hundreds of additional caseworkers following bipartisan hearings over the past year on the agency's failures to protect abused and neglected children. Haley's budget includes money to do that. But the planned hires still won't restore child welfare staff to pre-recession levels.

The income-tax proposal is part of Haley's stipulation for supporting a 10-cent gas tax increase to fund road and bridge work.

That piece of her plan, when coupled with her budget proposal to divert \$61 million from the state sales tax on vehicles, would generate roughly \$400 million yearly for the Department of Transportation once fully implemented in three years. Critics say that still doesn't come close to meeting the additional \$1.5 billion yearly over two decades the agency says it needs to bring roads to good condition.

Coming up with a solution for road funding will take a huge, bipartisan effort, Setzler said, and Haley's stipulations "just make it much more difficult to pass anything."