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Subject: E-Oped - Restructuring Will Move South Carolina into 21st Century

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Attached please find the following opinion editorial written by Gov. Mark Sanford and Senate President Pro Tempore Glenn F. McConnell and published in this morning's Charleston Post and Courier, Greenville News and (Columbia) State newspapers. Please feel free to use it for broadcast and/or publication purposes.

NOTE: The Governor will testify this afternoon before the Senate Judiciary Committee at 3:00 p.m. The Committee, which is considering restructuring legislation supported by the governor and introduced by Sen. McConnell, meets in the Senate Gressette Building on the State House Grounds in Columbia. Both the public and members of the media are welcome to attend.

Text of original oped follows ...

Restructuring Will Move South Carolina into 21st Century

By Gov. Mark Sanford & Sen. Glenn F. McConnell

The last time South Carolinians had a voice in the structure of their government the year was 1895. Our state was home to 1 million people and innovations like the airplane, automobile, radio, television and Internet were years away. The farm was our state's business model * with revolutions of industry, globalization and technology still on the horizon.

Today, South Carolina is home to 4 million people * and the horizon of 1895 has changed literally beyond recognition. Simply put, a century's worth of innovations and technological advancements have created a world framers of our state's 1895 Constitution could have scarcely imagined * let alone predicted.

Our government structure * virtually unchanged these past 110 years * may have worked in 1895, but the challenges of today, and more importantly, the unforeseen challenges our children and grandchildren will face in the 21st Century and beyond, require us to act now if we are to succeed in a rapidly-changing world.

Becoming more competitive as a state in creating jobs and small businesses means government must become more efficient, more effective and more accountable to the taxpayer. Our outdated system * in which South Carolina currently spends 130% of the national average on state government * must be reorganized to run like a business focused on its customers, not its own interests.

Central to this reorganization are the restructuring proposals currently pending before the state Senate. Representing our vision for the future of state government, they give the executive branch tools to administer the laws debated and decided by the General Assembly. This enables the executive branch to better respond to day-to-day taxpayer needs * ultimately leading to greater accountability. Rather than "shifting" power to the executive, they enhance the General Assembly's constitutionally-mandated role of defining and overseeing agency missions. They also outline a new agency structure where government services are provided in alignment with customer needs * meaning expanded efficiency and real savings.

We have often learned the hard way in South Carolina that a system accountable to everyone is accountable to no one. We elect governors to manage the executive branch, but their management is diluted because of the unusually high number of Constitutional officers we elect. As a result, our system ends up with less accountability, not more. For example, just over a year ago we had a governor of one political party and belief system and a lieutenant governor of another. Rather than working as a team to produce results for the taxpayers, they served as checks within the executive branch * not checks between executive, legislative and judicial branches like those our founding fathers intended.

Our current structure with its overlapping bureaucracy often loses sight of government's ultimate objective * giving taxpayers what they need quickly and cost-effectively. Many who enter our health care system, for example, often end up feeling like the cure is worse than the problem. Forcing someone with three different health issues to go to three different agencies, undergo three different exams and get three different prescriptions doesn't make sense. Similarly, three different environmental agencies duplicating each other's efforts isn't a good use of limited resources.

On the other hand, the new DMV is a perfect case study for restructuring. By making DMV a Cabinet agency accountable to the governor, what was once the poster child for inefficient government is now a model for positive change. South Carolinians who spent hours in line waiting for service a year ago now spend fifteen minutes * which means more

productive time at work or, better yet, time at home with their families. Impressively, DMV was able to accomplish this after requesting a budget cut of 17% and returning a surplus of \$4 million to the state.

In presenting our vision there are those who will argue against its changes * who will try to prevent voters from voicing their thoughts on this critical question. We cannot afford to fall back on temporary politics and the protection of present political institutions * we must instead chart a new course for our state that focuses not on the powers that be, but on the power of the people to decide the future of their government. That question is bigger than the Governor's Office, the General Assembly or any Constitutional office * it is a question each one of us as individual South Carolinians has a right to answer by casting our vote.

With that in mind, we believe it is critical for you to get involved and make your voice heard. In addition to writing, calling or e-mailing your Senator and Representative in the General Assembly with your thoughts on restructuring, it's also worth talking to your friends and neighbors as well. Additionally, we would like to invite all South Carolinians to attend the full Senate Judiciary Committee meeting in the Senate Gressette Building today at 3:00 p.m. in Columbia. By getting involved, you can help us engage the process of moving state government into the 21st Century.

Mark Sanford is governor of South Carolina. Glenn F. McConnell is President Pro Tempore of the South Carolina Senate.

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