



Title: **Domestic violence bill on way to Haley**
 Author: By JEFFREY COLLINS Associated Press
 Size: 38.90 square inch
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Domestic violence bill on way to Haley

Legislation toughens penalties for repeat offenders in SC

By JEFFREY COLLINS

Associated Press

COLUMBIA — A bill increasing penalties in South Carolina for repeat domestic violence offenders and banning batterers from having guns is heading to the governor's desk.

The House voted 81-23 Thursday to accept a compromise bill. Twenty-one of the 23 votes against the bill came from Democrats who, once certain of its passage, felt they had the freedom to criticize the proposal for

giving too much power to prosecutors and not doing enough to provide counseling or other help outside of the legal system.

Rep. Gilda Cobb-Hunter said something had to be done to move South Carolina down in the ranks as one of the top states for domestic violence, so a bad bill was better than no bill.

"I don't want to wait around for

another 20 years," said Cobb-Hunter, R-Orangeburg.

The proposal changes the current system, which bases punishment for all but the most serious domestic

See **HALEY**, page 4A

Also at the Statehouse

■ The fate of the bill that allows concealed weapons without a permit it decided. **2A**

HALEY

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cases on the number of offenses. That allows offenders to plead guilty to lesser offenses and get numerous misdemeanor convictions.

The bill heading to Gov. Nikki Haley's desk punishes abusers based on the severity of the attack, the number of prior offenses and other factors, such as whether the victim was strangled, is pregnant, or children saw the abuse.

The compromise also pro-

vides a lifetime gun ban for the worst abusers and has an automatic three- or 10-year ban in other cases.

But the deal stripped out Minority Leader Todd Rutherford's amendment that would put what he called "risk assessors" in every jail in the state who would talk to victims and suspects, make recommendations about whether charges were necessary and guide batterers to counseling. He added a court fee to

domestic violence cases to pay for his idea.

"I want the cycle of violence to stop. And the way to do it is to make people get counseling," said Rutherford, D-Columbia.

Haley did not say Thursday whether she would sign the bill, although she has said in general she supports any efforts to make penalties tougher on batterers.

The governor has said South Carolina also must stop

being uncomfortable talking about domestic violence, collect better data, and get better police procedures to fight the crime.

Attorney General Alan Wilson praised the bill, saying it shows South Carolina is ready to crack down on domestic violence.

"There is no better way to honor those who have lost their lives to this tragic crime than passing meaningful reform that could save others," Wilson said in a statement.

Title: **VOLVO PRAISE**
Author: Associated Press
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VOLVO PRAISE

Company says infrastructure, workers key in plant decision

Associated Press

CHARLESTON — The CEO of Volvo Cars of North America said Thursday that infrastructure, a business-friendly climate and a capable workforce were reasons Volvo selected South Carolina over 60 sites nationwide for its first North American assembly plant.

“Here in Charleston and South Carolina we have found our American manufacturing home,” said Lex Kerssemakers, noting that choosing the state for the \$500 million plant comes 60 years after the manufacturer first started importing vehicles into this country.

About 100 people were on hand as Kerssemakers, Gov. Nikki Haley and other officials signed an incentive agreement bringing the plant to the state.

The state offered about \$200 million in incentives to lure the plant to a site in Berkeley County about 30 miles northwest of Charleston. As part of the package, a new interchange to serve the plant will be built on Interstate 26.

Kerssemakers noted that, since the company announced it selected South Carolina earlier this month, about 7,500 people have logged onto a website expressing interest in working at the plant. He said vehicles made in South Carolina will be sold domestically and exported through the Port of Charleston.

Groundbreaking for the plant will be this fall and the company expects the first cars to roll off the assembly line in 2018. Eventually Volvo hopes to employ

as many as 4,000 workers at the plant.

Kerssemakers said the company has not yet decided which models will be built at the new plant but the company wants to increase domestic sales. “We have a very ambitious plan to increase sales from last year’s 57,000 units to 100,000 cars and then continue to grow,” he said.

Haley said later she thinks South Carolina workers made the difference in the Volvo decision.

“We have proven time and time again we build things and we build them well,” she said. “Our workforce builds it with pride, loyalty and work ethic and I think at the end of the day the people of South Carolina won this deal for us.”

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ASSOCIATED PRESS

Les Kerssemakers, the CEO of Volvo North America, signs an incentive agreement with the state of South Carolina as Gov. Nikki Haley looks on Thursday in Charleston.

Title: **Georgetown needs Haley's attention**

Author:

Size: 38.44 square inch

Georgetown, SC Circulation: 11000



Georgetown needs Haley's attention

It's been two weeks since the devastating announcement that nearly 250 workers will lose their jobs with the closing of the Georgetown steel mill, and, unfortunately, we are not hearing enough out of Columbia.

Gov. Nikki Haley has made job and industry recruitment a hallmark of her administration. She and other state officials have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars selling the Palmetto State to business leaders, politicians and governments not only in the United States but also across the globe.

And that's all fine and good. You've got to spend money, as the old saying goes, to make money.

It's become routine for the governor's office to issue a press release anytime a business seeks to invest, reinvest or expand in South Carolina, and that's the governor's right.

It's hard to say if Haley and her administration can truly be credited with positive business growth in South Carolina, but to the victor goes the spoils. A governor or a president may not directly alter the economic climate, but he or she does get the credit – and, yes, the blame

– from the public.

And lots of good things have been happening for South Carolina. Unemployment is falling, and businesses are investing in the state.

And that's what has made the governor's absence so noticeable since ArcelorMittal's surprise announcement May 14 that it would shutter its Georgetown steel mill – and with it all those good-paying jobs.

Haley's office made no public announcement about the loss of jobs and a major industry. Several days after ArcelorMittal's announcement and still with no word from Haley, the Georgetown

Times reached out to the governor's office. The following day, Haley's press secretary, Chaney Adams, issued a far-too-generic statement that read, in part, "Gov. Haley ... won't stop fighting until every family in Georgetown County has the opportunity to achieve their hopes and dreams."

Adams also noted that the governor's "highest priority has been recruiting jobs" and even touted the recent announcement that Volvo would be bringing 4,000 jobs to the Lowcountry.

Small comfort, though, to the Georgetown workers

who, by the end of the third quarter, will find themselves without a job.

Haley and her team have every right to tout good economic news, but they also have the obligation to be there when the news isn't so good – and, in Georgetown's case, potentially devastating. It would have behooved Gov. Haley to not let her press secretary speak for her.

In fact, it would have made quite the impression had Haley made her way to Georgetown to assure workers and citizens that she's more than words in a press release.

The loss of nearly 250 jobs may not compare to the 4,000 jobs Volvo will bring to Berkeley County, but, for our local steel mill workers, an encouraging word from the state's top politician – and, yes, job recruiter – would go far.

The perception Haley and her team hope to impart is that of the governor working tirelessly to bring jobs to South Carolina. Erasing the sting of losing the steel mill and bringing new, high-paying jobs to Georgetown would help prove that Haley is more than words. She could cement her legacy as a governor who not only talks the talk but also walks the walk, as well.

Title: **Haley: Spend extra \$400M on tax cuts, debt or roads**
 Author: By Jeffrey Collins Associated Press
 Size: 54.56 square inch
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Haley: Spend extra \$400M on tax cuts, debt or roads

By JEFFREY COLLINS

Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — South Carolina lawmakers and the governor are heading toward a showdown in the final two weeks of the General Assembly's session over how to spend an extra \$400 million.

Republican Gov. Nikki Haley weighed in Tuesday, saying that while she didn't have specific instructions, they better spend the money on tax breaks, state debt payments, or fixes to roads and bridges.

"If they did any of those three things, that's a great use of taxpayer dollars," Haley said at a news conference surrounded by about 25 Republican lawmakers.

Haley wouldn't give details, but the infusion of about \$400 million could doom any proposal to raise the state's gas tax this year.

"This is \$400 million. If roads are that urgent, wouldn't that be the immediate need?" Haley said. "You'd say do that, and that takes all the tax in-

creases off the table."

The governor invited two of the Legislature's more conservative members to speak at her news conference. One was Sen. Tom Davis, the Beaufort Republican who is filibustering a bill to spend some of the extra money this week, saying South Carolina has enough extra money to fund roads without a tax increase.

The other was Rep. Tommy Stringer, who said that if the state spends most of the extra money on roads this year, it gives lawmakers more time to come up with a long-term plan on road funding.

"\$400 million buys us a lot of time," Stringer, R-Landrum, said.

The extra money comes through economic growth and additional tax revenue. The Board of Economic Advisers will meet Friday to confirm whether the \$400 million es-

timate by Haley and others is on the mark.

House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Brian White plans to introduce a bill this week so the entire House and Senate would have a chance to weigh in on how to spend the money instead of just a conference committee of six legislators. That will likely require a special session after the Legislature adjourns June 4.

Several House and Senate leaders weren't standing behind Haley at her lunchtime news conference. They haven't made clear how they want to see the additional money spent.

Other Republican lawmakers who weren't with Haley are watching the money fight cautiously. Sen. Larry Grooms, who has pushed for extra highway funding and accountability in the Department of Transportation for years, said he doesn't mind using the extra money to pay for roads just for this year as long as something is done in 2016 — when all members

of the House and Senate are up for re-election — to find a regular stream of money.

"I'm disappointed that there is a growing number of legis-

lators that think a short-term solution is a long-term fix," Grooms, R-Charleston, said.

But Haley said the extra money is a long-term fix. She said she believes the economists who say South Carolina's revenues will keep growing impressively, so the state can expect revenues to keep growing.

"The economists are saying it is not going to slow down soon. That's a great problem to have," Haley said.

White, in announcing his new spending bill last week, pointed out that if the state sees \$400 million in additional revenues, it would bring the state's tax collections back to the levels before the Great Recession for the first time since the economic downturn started seven years ago.

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South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley surrounds herself with Republican lawmakers as she talks about what she would like to do with \$400 million in extra revenue the state is expected to get at a news conference on Tuesday, May 26, 2015, in Columbia, S.C. Haley said the Legislature needs to give a tax cut, pay off debt or fix the state's roads and bridges with the extra revenue. (AP Photo/Jeffrey Collins)

Title: **Speak up: our roads need fixing**

Author:

Size: 12.4 square inch

Myrtle Beach, SC Circulation: 61238



Speak up: our roads need fixing

Re: May 18 letter by S.C. Sen. Greg Hembree, "Hembree: S.C. Senate Republicans propose road funding-tax cut plan."

I read with great interest Sen. Hembree's opinion about the roads funding tax-cut plan. The roads in

our state are among the worst I've traveled in recent years.

Since moving here 16-years ago, I've replaced four windshields - because other vehicles have thrown rocks from our crumbling roadways.

I've encountered damage to my cars because I've hit potholes. The first time it cost me \$600 to repair the front hub and suspension. The second time, it cost \$200 for a re-alignment.

I am horrified that Gov. Nikki Haley threatens to veto any road plan not her own, and her plan fails to generate sufficient funds to address our needs. We cannot afford not to fix our roads.

The longer we wait, the more it will cost. Write all your legislators, town council members and Gov. Haley.

Remember, the squeaky wheel gets the grease. We all need to raise our voices and be heard.

There is power in numbers, and the more people who express their concerns, the better.

PETER EISENBERG
Pawleys Island

Title: **Senators begin roads debate with days left**
 Author: By CASSIE COPE ccope@thestate.com
 Size: 42.00 square inch
 Columbia, SC Circulation: 128564



SC LEGISLATURE

Senators begin roads debate with days left

With 3 points of view and session's end near, passage seems unlikely

By CASSIE COPE
ccope@thestate.com

State senators began debating a proposal to repair the state's crumbling roads Wednesday with only four working days left in the legislative session.

However, passage of a proposal this year in the Senate – where at least three factions have uncompromising positions – gets less likely with each day that passes.

Republicans, divided between mainstream party members and members

of the libertarian-leaning William Wallace Caucus, and Democrats – the Senate's minority party – all want different outcomes.

Some Republicans have proposed increasing the state's gas tax by 12 cents a gallon over three years and cutting the state's income tax, now capped at 7 percent, by 1 percentage point over five years.

But some Democrats oppose the income tax cut. They argue low-income

and retired South Carolinians, who do not make enough to pay income taxes, will have to pay higher gas taxes but will not get any benefit from the income tax cut, which would save the wealthiest South Carolinians \$60,000 a year.

Meanwhile, libertarian-leaning senators oppose any tax increase.

A three-day filibuster by libertarian state Sen. Tom Davis, R-Beaufort, took a detour Wednesday, when

Senate Majority Leader Harvey Peeler, R-Cherokee, maneuvered so senators could pass a proposal to ban abortions at 20 weeks and begin the roads debate.

"My constituents want something done to improve their roads and bridges," Peeler said in a statement. "The business community wants something done with their

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ROADS

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roads and bridges. ... I have listened, and I am doing everything I can to lead the Senate to a thorough debate of all of our options."

However, Davis could continue his filibuster Thursday, running the clock out on the session before the Senate can send a roads plan back to

the House, which passed a proposal in April.

Lawmakers indicated Wednesday they will return to Columbia next month to handle unfinished business.

The session is scheduled to end June 4. But lawmakers have yet to pass a state budget.

The S.C. House voted Wednesday for lawmakers

to return to Columbia June 16-18.

During that three-day period, lawmakers would be able to take up the budget, budget-related bills and bills that have passed both the House and Senate. Lawmakers also could take up budget vetoes by Gov. Nikki Haley.

The House proposal also leaves the door open in case legislators do not

pass a budget by July 1, the start of the state's fiscal year. If that happens, lawmakers could pass a resolution to fund state government at current levels until a budget passes.

The proposal for legislators to return to Columbia requires approval by the Senate.

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S.C. POLITICS

Bill that bans abortion past 19 weeks returns to House

The fate of a bill banning abortion past 19 weeks in South Carolina is returning to the House.

The Senate gave a second approval Wednesday to its compromise, sending the amended bill back to the House. That compromise added exceptions for cases of rape, incest and severe fetal anomalies, which are generally detected around the 20th week.

The version the House passed in February has exceptions only to save the mother's life or to protect her from severe injury.

If the House accepts the Senate's additions, the bill will head to Gov. **Nikki Haley's** desk. If it doesn't, the bill almost certainly won't pass this year.

State Sen. **Lee Bright**, R-Spartanburg, promises to continue his fight against rape and incest exceptions if the bill returns to the Senate with those included.



Bright



Haley

Haley urges senators to pass Uber bill

Gov. **Nikki Haley** urged senators Wednesday to pass a bill that would allow Uber to continue operating in South Carolina past this summer.

South Carolina risks losing Uber's ride-sharing services entirely if the Legislature doesn't act, Haley said in a letter to senators, in which she lauded Uber as an "innovative, cutting-edge" company.

"We cannot allow this to happen to us. Uber's departure from South Carolina will be a step backwards for our state, depriving our citizens of safe, reliable transportation and hundreds of jobs," Haley wrote in the letter, provided to The Associated Press.

In January, the Public Service Commission issued a cease-and-desist order stopping the app-based service, then offered in Charleston, Myrtle Beach, Columbia and Greenville. Following criticism from Haley and legislators of both parties, the commission reversed course two weeks later and granted a temporary license through June 30, with the expectation legislators would deal with the issue.

A bill that allows Uber's continued existence passed the House in March. Senators gave tentative approval last week but postponed all debate on proposed amendments. The bill's advancement requires a second approval by the Senate.

Christie, Huckabee returning to S.C.

New Jersey Gov. **Chris Christie**, who is weighing a 2016 GOP presidential bid, will make his first appearance in South Carolina in five months at a Columbia meet-and-greet to be held next week by a college friend.

Christie will attend the Tuesday event, hosted by attorney **Leighton Lord**, at the Nexsen Pruet office, according to a copy of an invitation obtained by The State. The Garden State boss attended a meet-and-greet in the same law office in January.

Despite his extended break from South Carolina, Christie ranks seventh in recent Palmetto State presidential polls.

Christie will not be the only Republican presidential primary prospect visiting Columbia on Tuesday.

Former Arkansas Gov. **Mike Huckabee**, who came

close to winning the S.C. GOP presidential primary in 2008, will meet Tuesday with the S.C. House Republican Caucus.

The Columbia visit will be Huckabee's second in two weeks. He greeted voters at a restaurant last Thursday.

Graham in Israel ahead of likely presidential bid

U.S. Sen. **Lindsey Graham** says allowing the United Nations to decide the Israeli-Palestinian peace process is a "mistake."

The S.C. Republican, a foreign policy hawk and critic of President Barack Obama's handling of the Middle East, was visiting Israel on Wednesday ahead of an expected announcement on a run for the 2016 Republican presidential nomination.

Following remarks by Israeli Prime Minister **Benjamin Netanyahu** before March elections that he would not allow the establishment of a Palestinian state, Obama has said he would reassess U.S. policy toward Israel. That means the U.N. Security Council could be a potential place to act on the conflict. France also has said it would take a resolution on the conflict to the council.

Visits to Israel are



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common for U.S.
presidential hopefuls.
— *Andrew Shain,*
Associated Press



Title: **Rutherford delays domestic violence vote, seeks more debate**
 Author: BY JEREMY BORDEN jborden@postandcourier.com
 Size: 19.99 square inch
 Charleston, SC Circulation: 110289

Rutherford delays domestic violence vote, seeks more debate

BY JEREMY BORDEN

jborden@postandcourier.com

COLUMBIA — A leading Democrat denounced a domestic violence reform bill on Wednesday, delaying an expected vote and calling the bill “theater” if it is pushed through without a specific proposal to speed up treatment for batterers.

Rep. Todd Rutherford said the reform bill had been gutted after the Senate stripped an amendment he backed to provide immediate psychological assessments for batterers and victims after someone is charged.

The Senate approved the rest of the carefully-constructed House-Senate domestic violence compromise Tuesday, but it needs final approval from the House to move forward.

House GOP leaders had hoped to take up the Senate changes and vote for a final time Wednesday, but Rutherford used a procedural move to delay the vote for a day.

Republican leaders plan to agree with the Senate’s changes

and move the bill to Gov. Nikki Haley, said Rep. Shannon Erickson, R-Beaufort, who has played a key role in the domestic violence measure. Erickson said she does not believe Rutherford has the votes to block the measure further.

The bill toughens criminal penalties and mandates anti-violence education for children, which are key steps for addressing South Carolina’s domestic violence problem, supporters say.

Rutherford’s measure would

provide risk assessors at jails who would speak to victims and make recommendations

about whether an arrest charge is warranted. They would also guide batterers to treatment programs immediately after they are charged. The measure includes a new fine on all criminal charges that would amount to \$4 million to pay for the counselors statewide, Rutherford said.

Title: **Haley: Let's keep Uber**
 Author: Associated Press
 Size: 72.23 square inch
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Haley: Let's keep Uber

Governor pushes bill that would allow ride service to keep operating

Associated Press

COLUMBIA — Gov. Nikki Haley urged senators Wednesday to pass a bill that would allow Uber to continue operating in South Carolina past this summer.

South Carolina risks losing Uber's ride-sharing services entirely if the General Assembly doesn't act, Haley said in a letter to senators, which lauded Uber as an "innovative, cutting-edge" company.

"We cannot allow this to happen to us. Uber's departure from South Carolina will be a step backwards for our state, depriving our citizens of safe, reliable transportation and hundreds of jobs," Haley wrote in the letter, provided to The Associated Press.

In January, the S.C. Public Service Commission issued a cease-and-desist order stopping the app-based service offered then in Charles-

ton, Myrtle Beach, Columbia and Greenville.

Following criticism from Haley and legislators of both parties, the commission reversed course two weeks later and granted a temporary license through June 30, with the expectation that legislators would deal with the issue. A bill

Please see **UBER**, Page B3

Haley urges senators to pass Uber measure

UBER from Page B1

that allows Uber's continued existence passed the House in March. Senators gave tentative approval last week but postponed all debate on proposed amendments. The bill's

advancement requires a second approval by the Senate.

Only four days remain in the regular legislative session.

Uber allows users to request a ride through a smartphone app, which connects them to an available driver. All transactions are done electronically

through the app and no cash is exchanged.

Haley said South Carolina needs to join the 20 other states that have passed legislation allowing ride sharing.

Last week, Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback signed a compro-

mise on regulations that Uber says will allow it to stay in the state, days after lawmakers approved the measure.

San Francisco-based Uber began offering rides in the Palmetto State about a year ago.

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FILE/AP

Gov. Nikki Haley says South Carolina needs to join the 20 other states that have passed laws allowing ride-sharing services offered by Uber and other companies.



FILE/AP

Uber uses a mobile smart-phone application to connect its freelance drivers with riders.

Title: **Tougher law on CDV can save S.C. lives**
 Author: BY GWENDOLYN L. REED
 Size: 38.59 square inch
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Tougher law on CDV can save S.C. lives

BY GWENDOLYN L. REED

My younger sister, Ebony Spann Parson, was shot and killed by her estranged boyfriend on Sept. 14, 2013, at a bingo parlor in Conway when she was only 28 years old.

Just 10 days before Ebony's murder, her estranged boyfriend was arrested and charged with aggravated domestic violence for severely beating her.

But after he was released on bond, he took a gun to the bingo parlor my sister loved to visit and killed her before he killed himself.

He said if he couldn't have her, we couldn't have her, either.

This horrible crime did not come out of nowhere. The warning signs were there.

Before he was charged with aggravated domestic violence, Ebony's killer had an existing criminal record and was previously convicted of misdemeanor domestic violence — part of a pattern of escalating abuse that I've since learned is all too common, especially in South Carolina.

But under current state law, his prior domestic violence conviction did not bar him from possessing firearms.

So when the police arrested him again in the days before my sister's

murder, they were missing a crucial tool that could have helped to keep guns out of the hands of Ebony's killer.

Ebony's story is just one of an untold number of heartbreakingly similar stories that may have had a different ending had convicted abusers not had easy access to guns.

Our state demonstrates the deadly connection between firearms and domestic abuse more than most other states.

Between 2007 and 2011, women in South Carolina were twice as likely to be shot and killed by their intimate partners as the average American woman.

Even more alarmingly, that rate is rising. And Horry County — where my sister lived and died far too early — has the disgraceful distinction of leading South Carolina in the total number of domestic violence homicides.

There are many contributing factors to our state's well-documented and shocking rate of domestic violence homicides, and there's no single solution that will completely stop this lethal pattern of abuse.

But our legislators now have the opportunity to take action and save lives across the state by passing a strong domestic violence bill that will help keep guns out of the hands of convicted domestic abusers, like my sister's murderer.

For the first time, South Carolina has experienced unprecedented sup-

port to pass a life-saving domestic violence bill among our legislators and from voters across the state. Now both chambers of the South Carolina General Assembly have passed their versions of the domestic violence bill, and it's up to leadership to reach a compromise.

Our elected leaders must act quickly to finally close this deadly gap by agreeing on a bill that would ensure that convicted domestic abusers, and abusers under active restraining orders, are prohibited from possessing guns.

And we're running out of time: The legislative session will soon close for the year.

Now is the time. We cannot keep waiting until the violence has turned deadly like it did for Ebony.

Together we can honor her life by doing everything possible to prevent the next tragedy. I urge our legislators to live up to their promises and take meaningful action to reduce domestic violence in our state by sending the strongest domestic violence bill possible to Gov. Nikki Haley's desk.

Countless mothers, daughters and sisters throughout South Carolina are still in need, and we finally have a real chance to save them.

Gwendolyn L. Reed, since the murder of her sister, has worked to raise awareness about domestic violence. She currently lives in Myrtle Beach.

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