

148 Spare me your faux women's health legislation, please



Jan Collins

By Jan Collins

It's an election year, and that means that many South Carolina legislators think it's prudent to hedge their re-election bets by passing laws to "chip away at safe and legal abortion" in the state, as one observer put it.

Earlier this month, the S.C. Senate approved a compromise bill banning abortions at 20 weeks of pregnancy or later. (Abortion had been legal in South Carolina through 24 weeks of pregnancy, as permitted by a 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decision.)

If the bill passes House of Representatives and is signed by Gov. Nikki Haley, as supporters expect, abortion after 20 weeks would be permitted only for cases of severe fetal anomalies or to save the life of the mother. There would be no exceptions for rape or incest.

I presume that none of the men who voted for this bill has ever been pregnant as the result of rape or incest.

Ten other bills that would restrict safe and legal abortion in South Carolina were pre-filed

before the current legislative session even began. One of those bills, which would sever all ties between the state and Planned Parenthood, and also other entities that fund or perform abortions, has 34 co-sponsors. One of them is House Speaker Jay Lucas.

Anti-women's health legislation, therefore, is once again masquerading as a way to protect women's well-being. And this is why a bill introduced this session by Democratic State Representative Mia McLeod is so delicious.

McLeod's bill—which cross my heart and hope to die would protect men's health—would mandate that a man who wants a prescription for any erectile dysfunction drug such as Cialis or Viagra would have to get a notarized affidavit from at least one sexual partner that the drug is necessary, undergo a cardiac stress test, receive sexual counseling, and hang around for a 24-hour waiting period, among other measures.

What's good for the goose is absolutely, positively good for the gander, Rep. McLeod is saying. How does it feel, she

is asking South Carolina's male-dominated legislature, to have your reproductive rights put in the bulls' eye?

Fed-up female legislators in other states, including Ohio, Virginia, Illinois, Oklahoma, Georgia, Tennessee, and Kentucky, have introduced similar bills in the past few years. Rep. Stacey Newman in Missouri introduced novel legislation that would treat Missourians seeking to buy firearms the same way it treats Missourians seeking an abortion. There would, for example, be a 72-hour waiting period.

But—surprise! Since all state legislatures in this country are male-dominated, not one of these bills has become law. Especially not the amendment introduced in the Oklahoma Senate in 2012 when that legislative body was debating a "personhood" bill stipulating that life begins at the moment of conception.

As former State Senator Constance Johnson, a Democrat who introduced the amendment that would have outlawed masturbation, explained wryly: "If we're

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talking about protecting life, then let's talk about life at its very basic beginning.

Well, she does have a point.

Johnson's amendment, of course, failed. But fair warning: there is a similar "personhood" bill currently ensconced in committee in the South Carolina legislature, just pinning for an amendment similar to Johnson's to be introduced as a companion measure.

Finally, while we're on the subject of women's health, let's talk about the Cervical Cancer Prevention Act. This legislation would enable the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control to offer the cervical cancer vaccine to students enrolling in the seventh grade of any public or private school in South Carolina. It

would also provide parents and guardians with print information on the HPV vaccine.

Cervical cancer kills an average of five women each month in South Carolina. Almost all cervical cancer is caused by the HPV virus. Therefore, wouldn't any sentient being want to make the HPV vaccine available to our young people before they become sexually active?

Uh, no. Republican Senator Lee Bright of Spartanburg, who is male

and therefore can't get cervical cancer (although men and boys can contract a throat cancer caused by the HPV virus), has placed a "minority report"—in effect, a hold—on the bill, halting its progress.

If he removes his objection, according to the advocacy group Tell Them!, the legislation

would fly through the third and final reading of the bill, go back to the House where supporters are confident they have the votes to pass it, and then alight on the desk of the governor, who supports this version of the bill.

If you think Senator Bright should do the bright thing, and the right thing, and withdraw his objection to the Cervical Cancer Prevention Act, please telephone his office and tell him so. Or, you can click on this link to help you make the call: <http://p2a.co/Orn7glc>.

Jan Collins is a Columbia-based freelance writer, editor, and journalist. A former Nieman Fellow at Harvard University, she is the co-author of Next Steps: A Practical Guide to Planning for the Best Half of Your Life (Quill Driver Books, 2009).

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148 Governor signs bill creating Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committee

Contributed by SC Government

On March 15, Governor Nikki Haley signed into law H.4666, a bill that establishes a Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committee in each of the 16 Solicitor Circuits.

Legislation formalizing a fatality review process for domestic violence was recommendation 19 of the Governor's Domestic Violence Task Force's Report from August 2015. South Carolina was just one of nine states that did not have a domestic fatality review team.

Under the new law, Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committees will identify and review deaths linked to domestic violence and make recommendations to the State Domestic Violence Advisory, which was created by the 2015 Domestic Violence Reform Bill. Committees will be made up of local domestic violence advocates, law enforcement professionals, medical professionals, and others with expertise in investigating domestic violence cases.

"I want to thank everybody who was a part of this," said Governor Haley. "This is the beginning of what is going to be South Carolina reforming herself to say that survivors matter, victims matter, and that domestic abuse is part of the past, and not part of the future of South Carolina."

Members of the Governor's Domestic Violence Task Force, Senate Judiciary Chairman Larry Martin, Speaker Pro Tempore Tommy Pope celebrated today's bill signing with the governor during a ceremony at the Statehouse.

"I am greatly encouraged by the passage of the domestic violence fatality review bill in South Carolina," said Dr. Neil Websdale, director of the National Domestic Violence Fatality Review Initiative. "Setting up a network of review teams will help create and/or enhance coordinated community responses to domestic violence, thus building better protections for victims and encouraging greater offender accountability."

"I want to commend everybody standing here today and everyone up in the chambers who are responsible for this bill," said Chairman Martin. "This is but another step in the process, and the governor's tremendous leadership and the task force, in providing this information back to us is one of the key things that we needed to do in order to make a definitive determination as to why some of these fatalities occur."



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¹⁴⁸ New Food Stamp Rules Takes Food From The Hungry

By Barney Blakeney

A new rule that will require recipients of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, or food stamps) to work at least 80 hours a month or lose their benefits is being met with some uncertainty. Some beneficiaries say they still are unclear about the requirements and others say the requirements are just more bureaucratic manipulation in an effort to reduce benefits to those who need them.

One recipient recently said she has continuously worked since becoming a teen mother and has relied on food stamps to help feed her four children. Working as a domestic worker and in

housekeeping, she consistently has worked to provide for her children, she said, and doubts the new rules will affect her. But

for many other young mothers

who may not be as motivated, the new rules could wreak havoc on families, she believes.

Starting April 1 the S.C. Department of Social Services,

which administers the food stamp program in South Carolina, will require able-bodied adults between 18 and 50 who are receiving the benefits to prove they are working at least part time.

Some recipients say the requirement will hurt many who work 'under the table' for cash that isn't reported, but along with the food stamp benefits enable them to pay rent, utilities and provide some non-essentials for their families.

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FOOD STAMPS...

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Federal cuts and other reforms already have imposed greater challenges on the program's recipients. In 2013, Gov. Nikki Haley and DHEC Director Lillian Koller requested a waiver from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to remove

certain foods from the list of eligible foods that can be purchased through the SNAP program.

The South Carolina Legislative Black Caucus successfully challenged the initiative. While there likely is some abuse in the

program, said Hollywood Rep. Robert Brown, there are other programs where the abuse is much more costly.

In Charleston County some 26,000 households representing about 52,000 people participate in the food stamp program monthly. Across the state about 60,000 recipients are expected to be affected by the new requirement. It is unclear how many recipients in Charleston County will be affected.

Wednesday, March 10, 2010

Martin to seek re-election to State Senate District 2

PICKENS — State Senator Larry A. Martin (R-Pickens) has announced he intends to file for re-election to the S.C. Senate District 2 seat on Friday.

Martin, the first non-attorney to serve as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, was first elected to the state Senate in 1992 and previously served in the South Carolina House of Representatives.

"It has been a great honor to represent the people of Pickens County in the General Assembly. I truly appreciate the confidence that has been placed in me to serve and to hopefully make our county and state a better place. I don't take for granted the upcoming primary campaign and humbly ask for the continued support of the citizens in Pickens County on June 14, Martin stated.

When asked about his accomplishments, Martin stated the recent bill that he and other members of the Pickens Delegation just pushed through the Legislature to stop coal ash from being dumped near Liberty was a good example of his leadership and effectiveness. "Pushing that bill through the Legislature in a very short period of time did not just happen because it was a good idea. I utilized every resource at my disposal to draft a workable bill and prepare it for introduction. Then it became a team effort as each member of the Pickens Delegation did his part in getting it through both houses and to the Governor's desk," Martin said.

"Also, I am extremely proud of the domestic violence reform legislation that was enacted last



MARTIN

session," the Pickens Senator commented. "For much too long our state has led the nation in domestic violence deaths, and that important legislation is just the beginning of a much larger effort to reverse that awful statistic."

Martin also pointed to reform efforts that began with a major state government restructuring bill early in his term as Judiciary Committee chairman. "I used the influence of the Judiciary chairmanship to work closely with Governor Haley and other reform-minded legislators to build on the late Governor Carroll Campbell's cabinet initia-

tive. We also formalized legislative oversight of state agencies so that the General Assembly has an ongoing responsibility to closely examine every state agency over a seven year cycle."

The Senator concluded, "The Senate just passed a significant reform of the Department of Transportation that also dedicates \$400 million of existing general fund revenues toward repairing our roads without raising taxes. Very soon, I intend to make another run at meaningful ethics reform. The bill would require independent investigations of ethics violations by members of the Legislature and disclose sources of private incomes."

Martin and his wife, Susan, have three children, one grandchild, and are longtime Pickens residents. The Martins are active members of Pickens First Baptist Church where he serves as a Sunday School teacher and church moderator. Martin has been associated with Alice Manufacturing Company in Easley for almost 35 years.

"I'm proud that all three of our children went through our local public schools, graduated from Clemson University, and are gainfully employed," Martin chuckled.

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148 Haley says she would most likely sign bill restricting abortion

COLUMBIA (AP) — Gov. Nikki Haley said Tuesday that she will almost certainly sign a bill banning abortion past 19 weeks in South Carolina.

"I can't imagine any scenario in which I wouldn't sign it," said the Republican governor.

She said she will look at the details once the bill reaches her desk. That could be soon. The GOP-controlled House is expected to vote Wednesday on a compromise the Senate passed last week.

The measure allows exceptions only if the mother's life is in jeopardy or a doctor determines the fetus can't survive outside the womb.

That exemption for a "fetal anomaly" was crucial for the bill clearing the Senate, where Democrats have blocked the legislation since 2010. Such anomalies are generally detected around 20 weeks.

Similar laws are in effect in 12 states. They've been blocked by court challenges in three others.

But the U.S. Supreme Court has yet to rule on the ban's constitutionality.

Supporters think a fetus can feel pain at 20 weeks. Opponents argue such later-term abortions involve women who want a child but are confronted with a medical diagnosis

that forces a difficult decision that shouldn't be up to politicians.

The measure's limited definition of "fetal anomaly" means it would be illegal to abort a fetus with a severe disability if the child could live.

Haley said Tuesday that she has always supported anti-abortion measures.

She's previously explained that support as personal.

"I'm strongly pro-life, very pro-life and not because my party tells me to be, but my husband was adopted, and so every day I know the blessings of having him there," Haley said during her 2010 campaign for governor.

As a House member that year, Haley voted to end abortion coverage in the state health plan for employees who are victims of rape and incest. The Senate defeated that proposal.

In 2012, Haley signed a bill intended to ensure that a fetus surviving an abortion attempt is not treated as medical waste.

It defined a person as anyone who is breathing and has a beating heart after birth, whether by labor, cesarean section, or abortion, copying a 2002 federal law enforceable on federal property.





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South Carolina Celebrates Ag Day

Special Report

Governor Nikki Haley proclaimed March 15, 2016 as Ag Day in South Carolina. In a ceremony held on the State House steps, Senator Danny Verdin and Representative David Hiott presented the Governor's Proclamation to South Carolina Agriculture Commissioner Hugh Weathers.

2016 marks the 43rd anniversary of National Ag Day, a day set aside to celebrate the abundance provided by American agriculture. As the world population increases, there

is an even greater demand for the food, fiber and renewable resources grown right here in South Carolina. Through efforts like Certified SC Grown and Fresh on the Menu, the South Carolina Department of Agriculture promotes locally grown foods while reconnecting consumers and farmers.

"After the devastation that South Carolina farmers faced in 2015, they certainly deserve to be celebrated," said Agriculture Commissioner Hugh Weathers. "Farmers provide the food, fuel and fiber that keeps our state and country running, and they do it all

while protecting valuable natural resources."

Agriculture is a driving force of the South Carolina economy: it's the number one industry generating \$41.7 billion in annual economic impact and supporting over 200,000 jobs statewide. There are approximately 25,000 farms in the state.

For more information about Ag Day or the programs and services offered by the South Carolina Department of Agriculture, please visit agriculture.sc.gov.

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¹⁴⁸ **'We're on borrowed time,' principal says**

Residents voice urgent need for S.C. 165 repairs

BY JENNA-LEY HARRISON
jharrison@journalscene.com

It's long and winding and filled with ditches, potholes and limited visibility at night. It's the haunting backdrop for nearly 250 collisions during the last five years, including one fatal. It's Delemar Highway (S.C. 165), and it's one of the most talked about county roadways in recent weeks.

County officials announced earlier this month that the Delemar widening project had been halted due to the need for more funding, but community members weren't satisfied with that answer.

"We're on borrowed time," said Ashley Ridge High School Principal Karen Radcliffe.

She spoke those words to council Monday night, prompting them to find a way to get the road fixed sooner rather than later. She said she feared

for her students who daily drive the road, which leads up to the school's entrance.

During her eight years as principal, Radcliffe's responded to a number of S.C. 165 crashes — all of them visually terrifying.

"Many of the accidents ... have involved a car flipping into a ditch, cars on their sides leaned on a tree, etc.," she said. "This road must be fixed before we are discussing a tragedy."

Student Emma Sutton felt the same way. She also stood at the podium during council's public comment segment.

An emotion of urgency filled her words as she described her own experience driving on it.

"Every time I drive past one of those big trucks — like an 18-wheeler — I feel like they're going to hit me. Once I scoot over... I'm already in a ditch," she said.

The 16-year-old sophomore just got her restricted license,

but because of the narrow roadway lets her sister Savannah, 17, drive them to school.

Emma Sutton will never forget watching a crash unfold near the school exit in recent years. She said a parent was T-boned while pulling out onto S.C. 165.

"It was terrifying. I had to call 911," she said.

She's been thankful for the recent repaving effort S.C. Department of Transportation completed along parts of the roadway.

"I know the school and county are doing all they can. We can tell it's getting somewhat better so it's not like they aren't listening to us," she said.

Her father Rick Sutton reiterated her concerns.

"I've got two girls who ride

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Jenna-Ley Harrison/Journal Scene

Ashley Ridge High School student Emma Sutton addresses Dorchester County Council Monday about the dangers of S.C. Highway 165.



One of many potholes along the shoulder of S.C. 165.

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Photos by Jenna-Ley Harrison/Journal Scene

A memorial for Joe Bunch, a local deputy and volunteer firefighter killed in a crash on S.C. 165 in 2008, sits out front of Rollings Middle School on South Main Street. Bunch was also a crossing guard for the school.





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that road back-and-forth every day. It's just nasty," he said. He also noted the high probability of young drivers falling off the shoulder of the road and over-correcting, hitting oncoming traffic.

Rick Sutton is all too familiar with the dangers of Deleamar Highway after losing friend Joe Bunch — a county deputy and volunteer firefighter at the time — in a fatal wreck in October 2008.

Bunch's vehicle was struck sitting at a stop sign. Another vehicle traveling down S.C. 165 ran into him, said South Carolina Highway Patrol. Bunch died later at MUSC, according to past Journal Scene reports.

Bunch also served as the school's key holder and crossing guard, and Dorchester District Two hired him as a courier. The beloved town icon is not forgotten.

A brick memorial honoring his life sits in front of Rollings Middle School of the Arts, along South Main Street.

Project details

Currently, the Deleamar Highway widening project is on hold. And for how long? Indefinitely. Initially slated to start November 2014 and be completed this past January, the project's new timeline is now non-existent.

County officials said earlier this month that they need more funding. The \$13 million the State Infrastructure Bank (SIB) gave the county to cover the cost is now roughly \$1.8 - \$4 million shy of what's needed to jumpstart construction.

The dilemma is ironic since the project started out \$2.1 million under budget, the Journal

Scene previously reported.

Construction bids put out by the county last summer returned higher than expected, county officials said. The project calls for widening S.C. 165 near Carolinian Avenue to just beyond Ashley Ridge High School. Initial plans also suggested using money saved from the under-budget effort to complete smaller related projects. Those entailed building a pedestrian crosswalk at the intersection of S.C. 165 and S.C. 61 and putting a multi-purpose path along Bacons Bridge Road to the Ashley River Bridge, connecting it to Rosebrock Park.

The SIB met earlier this month, Ward said, and the county has requested the funds. South Carolina Bank Board Chair Vincent Graham has also toured the project. But SIB has new members on its evaluation committee, and Ward said they, too, may want a tour before recommending increased funding.

Rounding up supporters

While DOT has repaved parts of the road as a temporary fix, council members are restless at the thought of waiting on the state to grant more money.

To hopefully speed up the process, County Councilman Jay Byars started an online petition this week.

He said he's "tired of excuses" and isn't stopping until he gets at least 2,000 signatures.

He also wasn't surprised by the number of people who spoke on the issue during Monday's public comment segment. For several months he's been receiving community complaints via phone, email and social media.

"Many people are frustrated with the lack of progress and feel their voices and concerns

are not being heard," he said. "It is time for someone in Columbia to lead and make this decision to allocate the needed funding immediately to fix this road."

Byars plans to send the petition to Columbia "with a strong letter" detailing the motivation behind it. Both items will go to SIB, Gov. Nikki Haley and the county legislative delegation.

He hopes the move will prompt state officials to immediate action.

"Impress upon the decision makers to act immediately at the next SIB meeting and vote to approve the needed funding to proceed without haste. ... We need help, and we needed it eight years ago," Byars said.

Council Vice Chair George Bailey isn't too happy about the project being so "long overdue." But he's hopeful action will occur.

"We'll get it done," he said.

What do the stats show?

According to Highway Patrol statistics, from 2011 through the first part of 2016, one fatality has occurred along S.C. 165 between S.C. 61 and Clubhouse Road. Of course, Bunch was killed in 2008.

But for a tight-knit town, any death is one too many, along with hundreds of crashes on that stretch. Of those incidents, 121 involved injuries, troopers said.

But more than double that amount has occurred in total wreck counts — 247 to be exact.

Any wrecks having occurred in recent weeks have not yet been added to the statistics, troopers said.

To view the petition, visit ipetitions.com. The information can be found under "Fund and Build Deleamar Highway Now."

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Filing books open, and candidates are ready

Lane Cribb filed shortly after the books opened for a sixth term as Georgetown County sheriff. He is the longest-serving sheriff, according to available records. "I've got too many things going on," said Cribb, who will turn 70 in August. "I don't want to stop."

He was among 17 candidates for state and local offices who filed Wednesday. The books opened at noon and will remain open until noon on March 30.

Although the sheriff's office is scaled to a county with a population of 66,000, Cribb, a Republican, said it deals with a peak population many times that number. He noted that the sheriff's office was reaccredited by S.C. Law Enforcement Accreditation. "We're doing the right thing and we're doing it in a professional way," Cribb said.

Darryl Carr, who ran as a petition candidate for sheriff four years ago when a filing snafu disqualified challengers statewide, says he plans to file as a Democrat. "I feel like I just got the raw end of the deal having to run as a petition candidate," Carr said. "I didn't get any of the straight party votes. If I had gotten those I would have been right

there giving Mr. Cribb a run for his money."

Republican Lee Hewitt was the first to file for S.C. House District 108, a seat being vacated by Stephen Goldfinch, who filed to run for Senate District 34.

Hewitt, 55, is owner of Garden City Realty and was appointed by Gov. Nikki Haley to the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control board. He is a former chairman of the Georgetown County Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals.

The District 34 race is attracting interest from candidates because incumbent Ray Cleary isn't seeking re-election.

Joe Ford of Hagley Estates also filed for the seat Wednesday. Reece Boyd III of Murrells Inlet, Goldfinch's former law partner, has said he will file too. All three are Republicans.

Democrat Alma White filed for a fifth term as Georgetown County clerk of court. "Over the past decade, I was able to assemble a very competent staff, and together we do a very efficient job in operating the state court system for Georgetown County," White said.

There will be a contested race for county treasurer. Democrat Chelice

Cox Waites and Republican Allison Sippel-Peteet both filed Wednesday. Waites is property and accounts receivable manager for the Georgetown County School District. Sippel-Peteet is chief clerk in the county auditor's office. Incumbent treasurer Loretta Washington-Cooper, a Democrat, is not seeking re-election.

Brian Shult filed for a second term as county auditor. Shult, 68, a Republican, was elected in 2012 after incumbent Linda Mock decided not to seek re-election.

Three members of Georgetown County Council filed for re-election: Democrat Leona Myers-Miller in District 3; Democrat Lillie Jean Johnson in District 4; and Republican Austin Beard in District 5. Republican Ron Charlton has said he plans to seek re-election in District 2.

Coroner Kenny Johnson filed for re-election Wednesday. He was first elected in 1996.

Leigh Powers Boan and Teresa Bennani both filed as Republicans for the county probate judge. Incumbent Republican Waldo Maring is not seeking re-election.

Boan and Bennani are both attorneys.



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Corks pop as coast stays closed to oil drilling

BY JASON LESLEY

COASTAL OBSERVER

Peg Howell raised a paper cup of champagne on the beach at North Litchfield Tuesday in a toast to the little people who objected to drilling for oil and natural gas in the Atlantic Ocean.

Members of SODA — Stop Oil Drilling in the Atlantic — were celebrating an announcement made by Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell that areas off the shores of Virginia, the Carolinas and Georgia would not be opened to oil leasing. Members of the group had gotten word that something big

was coming from Washington, but they exploded in cheers at the home of Howell and her husband, John Thomas, a member of Georgetown County Council, when the news was official. "People were just ecstatic," said Jean Marie Neal, the SODA spokeswoman.

Howell, a former offshore rig boss for Chevron, began the local movement to stop drilling in the Atlantic with a speech at the Waccamaw Library more than a year ago. She disputed claims being made about jobs and economic benefits to the states as well as industry statements that oil spills are

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less likely now. She said oil drilling is a dirty business and didn't want to see tar balls and globs of oil on South Carolina shores. Even without a disaster like the 2010 BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, she said industrialization and pollution would harm beaches — and the state's biggest industry, tourism.

National environmental groups, such as Oceana, Sierra Club and the Natural Resources Defense Council, quickly applauded the Obama administration's decision. They shared the credit for the pressure brought to bear with individual citizens and municipal governments.

Jewell said the decision was made "after robust public input" that included more than a million comments, most expressing opposition, and input from more than 60 groups. But she added that concerns for commercial fishing and national defense, as well as public opposition and market conditions drove it. The decision does not end the leasing process for seismic testing and exploratory drilling, but profit for that work is in fees paid by oil industry companies, and the lease applications are widely expected to be dropped.

All the heavy hitters came late to the protest, Neal said. Opposition bubbled up from the bottom, answering the eternal chicken-and-egg question about which came first, the grass-roots protesters or the professional environmentalists. "This is so rare," said Neal, a former chief of staff for two U.S. senators. "We had no elected officials with us other than Mark Sanford and Jim Clyburn. That was it. The governor was on the other side. It's very rare to overcome odds like that. When Josh Earnest did his daily briefing at the White House, he paid credit to all

the resolutions and coastal community opposition as one of the reasons."

Surprising opposition by the Navy may have pushed the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management over the edge. Director Abigail Hopper told members of Congress that the Department of Defense uses some of the lease areas and has "significant concerns" with the proposed oil and natural gas work. Environmentalists have opposed the Navy's sonar training for fear of harm to marine life but welcomed it to the fray.

Oil industry supporters weren't buying the theory that the Navy tipped the balance against drilling. "The use of our nation's military in justifying this decision is a red herring," said Randall Lothi, the National Ocean Industries Association president.

"Military and oil and natural gas activities have co-existed for years in the Gulf of Mexico. By removing the Atlantic sale (leases), we are saying the military and industry can't figure out a way to make it work. That doesn't even come close to passing the red-face test."

American Petroleum Industry CEO Jack Gerard said the administration's offshore oil and natural gas policy is inconsistent with the will of American voters, governors and members of Congress. "The decision," he said, "appeases extremists who seek to stop oil and natural gas production."

Terry Munson of Heritage Plantation said the low price of oil will suppress some of the protests over the Obama administration's decision to remove the Atlantic from leasing. "When oil goes back up," he said, "holy hell will break out again. When it starts appearing to politicians the money is there again and they start getting paid off, they will

get back in."

Munson said Gov. Nikki Haley and U.S. Senators Tim Scott and Lindsay Graham are influenced by "Big Oil."

Munson and Tom Stickler, a Hagley resident, did an economic study showing the petroleum industry's promises of income and jobs were vastly overstated. Further, it showed the region's established economy based on tourism and fishing eclipsed even the inflated projections for drilling jobs.

The potential of any boost to employment was enough to attract an array of supporters. Stephen Gilchrist, president of the South Carolina African-American Chamber of Commerce, called the decision a loss for the state. "Instead of creating high wage, year round local jobs in some of the coastal areas that need them the most," he said, "BOEM is allowing misinformation and fear tactics to slam the door on a developing portion of the American energy renaissance by stifling significant business development, job creation, economic growth and potential revenue that could be used for education and infrastructure improvements in some of our poorest communities in South Carolina."

Haley worked largely behind the scenes with industry lobbyists to urge federal officials in the Obama administration to open the Southeast coast to oil and natural gas testing and drilling. She maintained adamant support even as opposition grew.

"No one ever wanted to do anything to harm our coastline," she said Tuesday. "Tourism is too huge to South Carolina to take that chance. But at least explore what the possibilities are. And what happened was D.C. just shut us down from being able to have those possibilities. It's one more time they

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said they were going to do something and didn't follow through with it."

Ian McLaren of Litchfield welcomed the five-year delay before a leasing process can start again for the Atlantic. "It will be an even more difficult equation for oil companies to start five years from now with production in 10 to 20 years," he said. "Renewables are gaining ground every year in terms of

scale. I'm hoping that's another reason this will quietly go away in five years."

Munson predicted Obama will make more controversial decisions in the remaining months of his term. "This was a fairly courageous act on his part," Munson said. "He's going to make a lot of aggressive moves in the next nine months. He doesn't personally have anything to lose."

Howell handed out the last of the SODA T-shirts on the beach Tuesday as the celebration wound down. She had a word of caution to her supporters. "We all have to continue to be vigilant," she said, "because BOEM's responsibility is to examine this every five years. Congress can do things in between. It's really important for all of us to pay attention."

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Jason Lesley/Coastal Observer

Peg Howell, center, said SODA will remain vigilant.



Jim Watkins, who chairs SODA, pops open a bottle of Champagne at North Litchfield.

Jason Lesley/
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By SEN. TIM SCOTT

Guest column

Justice Scalia's passing is no doubt a great loss to his family and to our country. My thoughts and prayers continue to be with his family. His efforts to uphold the Constitution and our country's founding principles will be sorely missed.

The president and I both agree that the confirmation of a Supreme Court Justice is a responsibility that the president and the Senate share under the Constitution; however, it is ultimately the voice of the people that should be held in the highest regard when nominating our next justice.

This seat on the Supreme Court should not be used as a political tool to promote a legacy. Instead, it should be used as an opportunity to promote the will of the people.

Because it is an election year, the American people will make clear their preference when they elect our next president in November. This election should be seen as a great opportunity for the people to tell government exactly what they want from the Supreme Court in the decades to come.

It is our next president who should be responsible for nominating our next justice to ensure that the people's wants of the future, not of the past, are clearly represented.

The president's argument that a strict reader of the Constitution would see the postponement of the nomination to hear the voice of the people as misleading is faulty at best.

The Constitution certainly gives the president the ability to nominate a new justice; however, he must do so with the advice and consent of the Senate.

To claim that the GOP is not doing its job by not considering a nominee from a lame duck president is simply incorrect. The Senate has advised the president that we are rightfully siding with the people who elected us, the people we work for, and that he should do the same.

This advice virtually mimics the advice that Vice President Biden gave President Bush in 1992:

"...it is my view that if a Supreme Court justice resigns tomorrow, or within the next several weeks, or resigns at the end of the summer, President Bush should consider following the practice of a majority of his predecessors and not

— and not — name a nominee until after the November election is completed." (Sen. Biden, Congressional Record, S.16316-7, 6/25/1992)

I, along with my colleagues in the Senate, will stand firm on the principle that Americans should have input in determining who will be the next Supreme Court nominee. The last time the Senate confirmed a nominee in a similar situation was 128 years ago.

It has been widely understood that for over a hundred years a lame-duck president should not be making a lifetime appointment, and that is not something we should or will ignore.

I will continue to fight for our country's right to have a say in the future makeup of the Supreme Court. The next president must nominate a successor to Justice Scalia who upholds the Constitution and our founding principles.

Tim Scott is a junior U.S. senator for South Carolina. A Republican, he was appointed as senator in 2013 after S.C. Governor Nikki Haley named him to fill the U.S. Senate seat vacated by Jim DeMint.