



Title: **DOT reform stalls in Senate; threatens road proposal**
 Author: By JEFFREY COLLINS Associated Press
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DOT reform stalls in Senate; threatens road proposal

By JEFFREY COLLINS

Associated Press

COLUMBIA — A plan to change how the state Department of Transportation operates is stalled in the South Carolina Senate and could derail the entire proposal to get more money to roads and bridges.

Gov. Nikki Haley has vowed to veto any bill that doesn't include DOT reform along with income tax relief and additional money for roads. Lawmakers have less than two months to get it all accomplished before the session ends in June.



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HALEY

Complicating matters is a change eight years ago that allowed the governor to appoint the leader of DOT. That change ends in July, meaning doing nothing would remove any of the governor's control

of the agency.

The House is much further along with a roads plan that is more aligned with Haley's wishes. The bill on the House floor when the session resumes April 14 would raise an additional \$400 million for roads and allow the governor to appoint all eight members of the DOT commission, which would be screened by a panel of House members and senators. Those commissioners would appoint the DOT leader. Haley's biggest problem with the House plan is that its \$50 million income tax cut is not enough.

A Senate panel has discussed DOT reform bills twice in the past two weeks and gotten nowhere. The debate is reminiscent of 2007, when senators filibustered for three weeks before passing a DOT reform bill, then held up the state budget before working out a compromise with a

different version in the House.

Sen. Larry Grooms pushed that 2007 reform bill, which also required DOT to use a formula to set priorities for all but the largest highway projects. He said he wonders if some senators are stalling because they want to go back to the old system where the Legislature held all the power over roads and which project got funded first often was decided by which senator needed to be kept happy.

"Unfortunately, there are many legislators who want to go back to the system of horse trading because they think they would fare better," said Grooms, R-Charleston, and chairman of the Senate Transportation Committee.

Grooms said he doesn't understand all the anger toward the current

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DOT commission, which he calls the best he has ever seen.

DOT Board Chairman Jim Rozier has his own theory. He thinks the criticism is a smokescreen to make up for years of inadequate funding from lawmakers that have left the state roads and bridges crumbling and full of potholes.

"The roads are falling apart

under us. They are going to continue to fall apart unless they start putting some more money into it. I don't care who they have running things," Rozier said.

Rozier said an additional \$400 million won't do anything to make state roads better. He is calling for lawmakers to get closer to the \$1.4 billion the DOT said it needs per year to get all roads to good condition by 2040.

Haley remains a critic of the current structure of the DOT

board. She said a board completely appointed by the governor is the best for all of South Carolina roads.

"Gov. Haley knows we can't keep throwing money at a system that lacks accountability because too many people think they are in charge. Right now, transportation commissioners — selected by local delegations to represent a specific district — fight each other for state funds to support their own local interests rather than doing what's best for the entire

state," Haley spokeswoman Chaney Adams said in a statement.

The allegations that the current DOT board operates in secrecy and approves projects based on favors bothers Rozier the most. He said everyone on the board agrees improving Interstate 26 on its 200-mile trek from Charleston to Spartanburg is the big-priority.

"Even the guy in Myrtle Beach agrees that is the No. 1 need in the state," Rozier said.

Title: **North Charleston van plant to add 1,300 jobs, invest \$500 million**

Author:

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North Charleston van plant to add 1,300 jobs, invest \$500 million

Daimler AG announced March 6 it will invest \$500 million and add 1,300 jobs at its North Charleston plant to make the new version of the Mercedes-Benz Sprinter cargo van.

Construction of the new factory is scheduled to begin in 2016. The 200-acre site will house a new body shop, a paint shop and an assembly line.

Mercedes-Benz Vans will invest around \$500 million to build the next-generation Sprinter van.

"We are investing around half a billion dollars to create a top-notch Mercedes-Benz van plant here in South Carolina," company executive Volker Mornhinweg said in a statement. "This plant is key to our future growth in the very dynamic North American van market."

He also said Charleston "is an excellent location for our new plant."

"The region has very highly skilled workers, a dense network of reliable suppliers,

and an outstanding logistics infrastructure that includes good transport connections to the nearby harbor," Mornhinweg said. "Just as important is the very good cooperation and support we've experienced at the local, municipal and state levels."

Citing unidentified sources, The Wall Street Journal reported that the state is offering the company an incentive package with "tens of millions in grants, property tax abatements and training support."

Gov. Nikki Haley's office said the state Coordinating Council for Economic Development has approved tax credits that Daimler can claim based on the number of jobs it creates and a \$14 million grant to offset property improvements related to the new plant.

The Post and Courier was first to report that the German automaker would announce the expansion.

Right now, to avoid stiff import tariffs, Sprinter utility vans sold in North America

are made in Germany, partially disassembled and then shipped to Palmetto Commerce Park in North Charleston for reassembly. It's a costly and complicated process, Daimler said.

"The new plant and the vehicles 'Made in USA' will enable the company to more economically meet the growing demand from North American customers in the future and to considerably reduce delivery time on this market," the company said.

Haley attended the announcement.

"Mercedes-Benz is not only a world-class brand — they are also a great corporate citizen and partner for our state and for the Charleston community," she said in a written statement. "Its decision to bring South Carolina-made vans to the North American market is huge, and the 1,300 new jobs this plant will create is a big boost to the region."

North Charleston Mayor Keith Summey said the investment validates the city as "an automotive manufacturing hub."

—John McDermott, *The Post and Courier*



PAUL ZOELLER/POST AND COURIER

Volker Mornhinweg, head of Mercedes-Benz Vans, and Gov. Nikki Haley talk after revealing the building plans for the new plant that will make the Mercedes-Benz Sprinter line of vans in North Charleston.

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PAUL ZOELLER/POST AND COURIER

Volker Mornhinweg, head of Mercedes-Benz Vans, flanked by the new Mercedes-Benz Sprinter vans, said the new facility will bring 1,300 new jobs to the region.



Title: **Unraveling history, education and race**
 Author: BY JON N. HALE
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Unraveling history, education and race

BY JON N. HALE

The recent resignation of the embattled former superintendent, Dr. Nancy McGinley, exposed some of this fine city's not-so genteel visceral and racist comments on Facebook, Twitter, and the comment sections of on-line news stories. Charges of "race-baiting" harkened back to the by-gone era of de jure segregation. The race-based comments suggested that the history of segregation is over. Yet a brief look at the Lowcountry's history of race and education suggest the situation at hand is much more deep-seated than infuriated locals would have you believe.



Hale

Rebellion and unrest among enslaved communities prompted South Carolina to pass laws that forbade the education of Africans and African Americans. On September 9, 1739, a band of slaves outside Charleston, South Carolina, robbed a store that served local plantations, killed the owner, armed themselves and began marching toward Spanish Florida. Those of the Stono Rebellion did not make it to their Florida destination and Lowcountry planters crushed the rebellion that same afternoon. But the banners, drums and colors displayed sent a powerful message that literacy was a dangerous tool.

Local planters speculated that slaves read the news that announced the Spanish declaration of freedom to slaves owned by the British. They also surmised that slaves read a law that mandated whites to bear arms in church (a precursor to Nikki Haley's legalization of guns in bars?). The notion inspired planters in South Carolina to establish a powerful precedent and they passed a law

forbidding the education of enslaved communities.

Anti-literacy laws and other edicts that explicitly forbade the education of Africans and African Americans, both enslaved and free, comprised the foundation of the "Slave Codes" that sought to regulate, control and suppress the activities of enslaved and free black communities across the South.

Robert Smalls, the enslaved boatman who heroically delivered the Confederate warship, the CSS Planter, to Union lines, continued the next phase of struggle in the 1860s. Smalls and his contemporaries, including Hiram Revel and John Lynch of Mississippi, constituted the first black caucus ever elected to Congress. They reconstructed the South by ensuring that South Carolina and her sister Confederate states reentered the Union by promising, for the first time in Southern history, a public system of education. Yet as the Klan swept through the Upstate, education was barely permissible and they ensured it would be segregated and underfunded.

Under the oppressive weight of Jim Crow, Septima Clark led black educators in the push to provide a quality education in spite of legal barriers to a quality education. When the city of Charleston refused to hire black teachers, the local branch of the NAACP organized to overturn the law, which it did in 1919. While the Lowcountry was guided by the principle of "separate but equal" as established by the Supreme Court, the education white administrators provided was impeccably separate but far from equal. Reverend Joseph DeLaine led his congregation to demand a bus in Clarendon County in 1949. When local officials refused, they contacted Thurgood Marshall and the NAACP. The subsequent court cases, *Briggs v. Elliot* (1952) was one of the five court cases that constituted the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision.

Local discourse dismisses this history. Critics overlook the fact that race has played a crucial role in educational policy for centuries. The comment sections on local news stories surrounding the resignation of Dr. McGinley imply that we have moved on since Brown and that we live in a "post-racial" epoch. They want us to believe that race should not be a factor in the decision-making policies of the district. We do not need diversity consultants, they argue. Superintendents that prioritize race should be dismissed, they insist.

Yet the long history of education in the Lowcountry suggests otherwise. Race and diversity are permanent fixtures in our educational landscape. The sooner we understand that this is a resource and not a blight on our record, the sooner we can set a national example for reformers to follow. By recognizing a long history of racialized policy we can ethically lead the nation's commitment to provide a quality education to all students.

The nascent student-led organization, Students Advocating for Multicultural Education (SAME), is putting race at the front of policy discussions once again. They ask that the school board recognize this long history of a race-based struggle for a quality education and allow for greater diversity in our schools. Policymakers, parents and concerned community members should listed to the young William Pugh, Alexandra Hepburn, and their student peers who are courageously demanding that our officials recognize this history. To legally and ethically increase the diversity of our nearly all-white schools while devoting more resources to those that remain largely black is indeed taking an important historic step to achieve a quality education.

Jon N. Hale, Ph.D. is assistant professor of educational history at the College of Charleston.



Title: **Offshore drilling**

Author:

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Offshore drilling

The period for public comments to BOEM (Bureau of Ocean Energy Management) about Gov. Haley's desire to explore for oil off of South Carolina's coast has ended. However, BOEM says that ultimately it will be Gov. Haley who will decide the fate of oil exploration in South Carolina, and she can be contacted at any time at www.governor.sc.gov/contactus.

One argument against oil exploration is that an oil disaster could seriously damage the S.C. coast.

An even stronger argument is that the world already has more known reserves of fossil fuels than can safely be burned.

Any fossil fuels burned over 565 gigatons will push global temperatures over 4° F, and scientists and the United Nations have said we must not exceed 4° F if we want to sustain civilization.

The world's proven fossil fuel reserves are worth \$27 trillion, which is equivalent to 2,795 gigatons of carbon dioxide ("This Changes Everything" page 148). This amount is almost five times more than we can safely burn.

Therefore, most of the oil that has already been discovered needs to stay in the ground. So why is South Carolina proposing to search for more?

We should be divesting in oil and investing in wind and solar.

GEORGE TAYLOR
*Burwell Lane
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