

Title: **Haley, Cruz two of a kind**

Author:

Size: 19.06 square inch

Myrtle Beach, SC Circulation: 61238



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Haley, Cruz two of a kind

It was no surprise that Governor Haley supports Ted Cruz. They are both made of the same fiber: ultra conservatives, who are rigid in their thinking with no room for negotiating or give and take. In fact, our state government in South Carolina is even worse than the federal government – complete gridlock.

The elected officials don't listen to their constituents, nor do they care about them. Our state is in terrible condition with dire needs to repair infrastructure, education, and improve the standard of living for millions. Yet, nothing comes out of Columbia.

Ted Cruz's philosophy is: "the less government the better." He proposes to increase the size of our military at the same time reducing the deficit. He proposes to eliminate Obamacare but offers no alternative. He never admits that Cubans received special treatment by the U.S. government – asylum due to political persecution. There are millions of other nationalities being politically persecuted, but they get no

special treatment by our government.

Cruz and Haley espouse ultra conservatism. They believe that the government should be as small as possible and tax the citizens only enough to provide for the common defense of our country and that the United States should not be involved in world events any more than necessary for our own safety and well being. Many of these goals are at odds with each other.

For example: We see what happened in Flint, Mich. when government oversight fails. Without the federal government, we would have no interstate highways, no GPS, no air traffic control system and many of the hundreds of medicines that help our sick.

Cruz also says we need to provide world leadership but do not get involved in world affairs. Both Cruz and Haley are not the kind of leadership the common people need. We need negotiators with a give-and-take attitude, not robots with attitudes on "my way" or "no way."

– Norbert Flatow, Myrtle Beach



Title: **Offshore drilling, testing could be revisited in a few years**
 Author: By the Editorial Board
 Size: 41.23 square inch
 Myrtle Beach, SC Circulation: 61238

EDITORIAL

Offshore drilling, testing could be revisited in a few years

By the Editorial Board

As members of SODA – Stop Offshore Drilling in the Atlantic – toasted the ocean with champagne in paper cups, Jim Watkins of Pawleys Island made the point that the federal government decision to halt plans to sell leases for testing and likely drilling, was about much more than protecting Grand Strand beaches and tourism.

“It’s about all of creation,” says the retired Presbyterian clergyman. Humans “have responsibility to creation but when we believe we can do anything we want to do with creation, it will come back to bite us.

“Decisions humans make on energy are about partnership creation,” Watkins says. This is an important lesson to take from the victory celebrated on the North Litchfield beach and along the Atlantic coast from Georgia to Maryland. Sierra Weaver, senior attorney for the Southern Environmental Law Center, termed it “an incredible day for the Southeast. It represents the hard work of thousands of people and protects some of our most cherished places, from the Chesapeake Bay and the Outer Banks to the South Carolina Lowcountry and Georgia barrier islands.”

Coastal communities along four states were unified in opposing a

proposal to open areas for testing to determine the viability of oil and natural gas production. The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management could have sold leases from 2017 to 2022. U.S. Secretary of the

Interior Sally Jewell noted the grassroots opposition: “When you factor in conflicts with national defense, economic activities such as fishing and tourism, and opposition from many local communities, it simply doesn’t make sense to move forward with any lease sales in the coming five years.”

Every five years BOEM is required to evaluate potential new energy reserves. So folks such as Peg Howell, a former oil rig engineer, are prudent to be cautiously optimistic and point out the need to be vigilant. “In another five years, we could be fighting this fight again,” Howell said during the celebration in North Litchfield.

There is room for optimism. Petroleum and other fossil fuels are in declining use. Electrical power from wind turbines and solar panels is decreasing the use of coal – China is closing coal mines and increasing use of other energy sources. The United States and Canada are producing record volumes of petroleum from shale – so much that crude oil prices have dropped. Who would have thought

the retail price of gasoline would be well below \$2 a gallon? A downside is the loss of thousands of oil field jobs.

Gov. Nikki Haley deserves much credit for a variety of economic development, including solar energy. She has been disappointing in continuing to call for offshore oil and gas exploration *and* protecting the ocean environment. We generally can’t have both at the same time. The bottom line is that we have more oil than we know what to do with, consumption is declining and if in the distant future Atlantic oil may be needed, it will still be there.

U.S. Rep. Tom Rice of Myrtle Beach has backed off a bit from his position – the national interest suggests a need for more details on what’s out there – but Rice could take a cue from his U.S. House colleague Mark Sanford, in Washington again from the 1st District. “This is fantastic news for the coast of South Carolina. It’s a decision that speaks volumes to the importance of voicing one’s opinion and local input in the political process.”

The BOEM decision is sound on several counts and it is without question a good call for South Carolina’s coast and the state’s tourism.

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CINDI ROSS SCOPPE
ASSOCIATE EDITOR
THE STATE

A new group of carpet-baggers, a familiar MO

IN HER FIRST Senate race, Katrina Shealy got more than half of her campaign donations from Howie Rich, the New York multimillionaire who spent several years trying to buy himself a nice little Southern Legislature. In her follow-up race, she was bankrolled by the out-of-state donors to Gov. Nikki Haley's unlimited-donations Movement Fund.

Now she tells reporter Cassie Cope that the anti-gas-tax campaign by Americans for Prosperity is dangerous because "We can't let some out-of-state special-interest group come into South Carolina and dictate how we do business."

I don't mean to pick on Sen. Shealy, who is absolutely right and hardly alone. Sen. Larry Grooms got some Rich money in 2012 and now says that having a couple of billionaires underwriting campaign efforts "limits the ability of having free and open speech." I suspect that if we talked to more Republican senators we could find similar revelations.

This new-found concern about deep-pocketed special interests helps explain why we keep having this problem with carpetbaggers trying to impose their will on our state: Legislators look the other way when outside interests support *them*. They only recog-

nize the danger when they become the targets — as they all eventually will.

Think of it as our lawmakers' version of Martin Niemöller's poem: First they came for the moderate Republicans, and I did not speak out, because I was a conservative. Then they came for the conservatives, and I did not speak out, because I was a libertarian.

The first major-money special interests who tried to buy our Legislature were actually our own home-grown video poker barons, who targeted anyone who tried to make them obey our laws. Too many Democrats agreed with them and fought GOP attempts to make people tell us when they were trying to influence our votes, but the Legislature managed to require that anyway. That was back when using campaign disclosure to make it more difficult for special interests to buy legislators was conservative orthodoxy — before the libertarians and anarchists started asserting themselves.

But then we elected a libertarian governor, and Mark Sanford's out-of-state fellow-travelers started flooding in, either ignoring our law or finding ways around it. Eventually they began melting one into another, this secession of anonymous carpet-

baggers who back their dump trucks full of cash up to our elections to buy their vision of a lawless society with a government shrunk small enough to drown in a bathtub.

First came the Michigan-based "All Children Matter," which tried to disguise its anti-schools motives by attacking legislators' refusal to sign a blood oath to a creepy Washington puppetmaster, swearing to never ever raise a tax so help me God.

When people caught on to where that group was from and what it was all about, the ironically named "South Carolinians for Responsible Government" took over and acknowledged its defund-the-schools agenda. Then, right in the middle of the 2006 primary campaign, the name "Conservatives in Action" suddenly replaced SCRG's name on attack pieces — after the State Ethics Commission told SCRG to start obeying the state law that required it to report how it spent money trying to warp our votes. Eventually the courts started going crazy, decided our law was too broad and struck it down.

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We’ll keep being plagued by these carpetbaggers until we take back our political system. That means insisting the Legislature pass that Republican orthodoxy law requiring them to tell

us when they spend money to distort our elections. And it means refusing to let the libertarians and anarchists control our elections.

The way to do that, if you’re one of the 65 percent to 85 percent of S.C. voters who boycott the polls until November, is to vote in the June state Republican primary (no one is bothering to try to buy the Democrats). And vote for the Republicans who actually care about South Carolina instead of fulfilling the fantasies of their out-of-state sugar daddies.

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Title: **Haley's role in presidential race starts to fade**
 Author: BY ANDREW SHAIN The (Columbia)State
 Size: 45.10 square inch
 Hilton Head Island, SC Circulation: 20015



Haley's role in presidential race starts to fade

BY ANDREW SHAIN

The (Columbia) State

After backing a new anti-Donald Trump candidate last week, S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley's role in the 2016 Republican presidential race is fading.

Haley's support of U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., won little in a year where GOP voters seem to care more about emotion than endorsements.

A day after Rubio dropped out, Haley said Wednesday she now is backing U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, in the race to win the GOP nomination.

But her support of Cruz was not very enthusiastic. Instead of offering any direct help to Cruz to defeat Trump, the Republican

front-runner whose combative campaign rhetoric she has criticized, Haley shared her opinion of the state of the GOP race.

The governor said she was not endorsing Cruz, suggesting a lesser role than with Rubio, where she hit the campaign trail and spoke on his behalf at county GOP dinners in Florida. And Haley's chances of becoming the Republican vice presidential nominee — already a long shot — seemed to shrink as well.

No Cruz events are planned with Haley — unlike U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, the Seneca Republican and former presi-

dential candidate, who agreed to headline a Cruz fundraiser this week.

"The ball is in her court," a source close to the Cruz campaign said.

University of Virginia political scientist Larry Sabato said Cruz, a self-proclaimed GOP outsider, might be better off taking a pass on public support from establishment politicians like Haley and Graham, who previously had endorsed former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush for president.

"This reinforces what Trump voters think about the establishment trying to deny their guy the nomination," Sabato said. "The thinking is that, 'They'll go with anybody,'

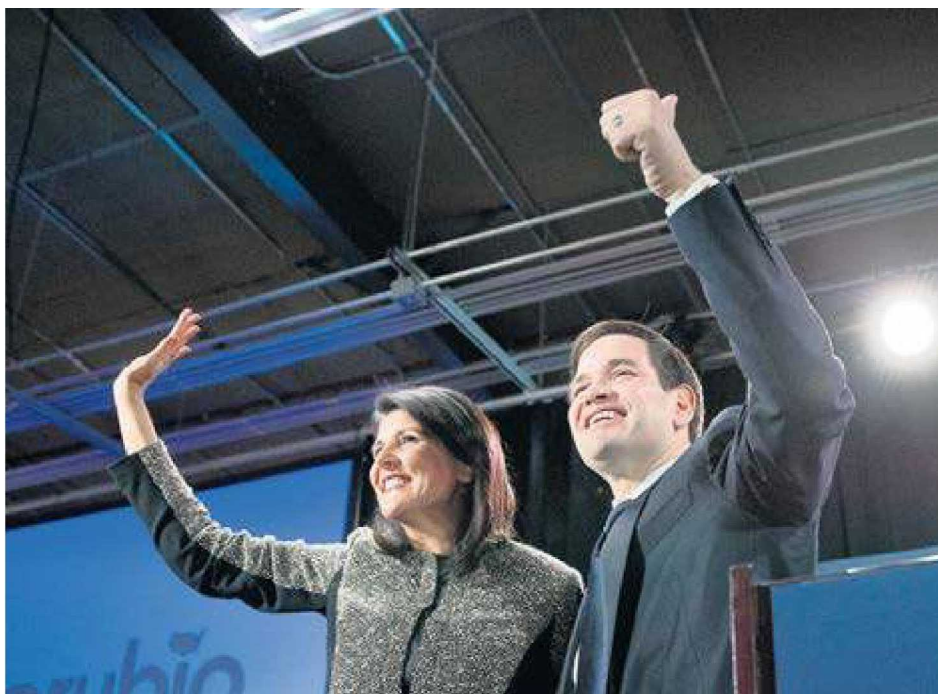
at this point."

For its part, the Cruz camp is pleased with support to try to keep Trump from winning a majority of GOP delegates before the Republican National Convention in July.

"We're more than happy to have everyone come aboard with us," Cruz campaign spokeswoman Catherine Frazier said.

Trump's top endorser in the state, Republican Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster, said he did not make a push to win over Haley and Graham for the New York billionaire. "They have given no hint of interest in endorsing or supporting Donald Trump," McMaster said.

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JOHN BAZEMORE AP

Then-presidential candidate Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., and South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley wave to the crowd after speaking at an election night rally Feb. 20 in Columbia.

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Now she tells reporter Cassie Cope that the anti-gas-tax campaign by Americans for Prosperity is dangerous because "We can't let some out-of-state special-interest group come into South Carolina and dictate how we do business."

I don't mean to pick on Sen. Shealy, who is absolutely right and hardly alone. Sen. Larry Grooms got some Rich money in 2012 and now says that having a couple of billionaires underwriting campaign efforts "limits the ability of having free and open speech." I suspect that if we talked to more Republican senators we could find similar revelations.

This new-found concern about deep-pocketed special interests helps explain why we keep having this problem with carpetbaggers trying to impose their will on our state: Legislators look the other way when outside interests support *them*. They only recog-

nize the danger when they become the targets — as they all eventually will.

Think of it as our lawmakers' version of Martin Niemoller's poem: First they came for the moderate Republicans, and I did not speak out, because I was a conservative. Then they came for the conservatives, and I did not speak out, because I was a libertarian.

The first major-money special interests who tried to buy our Legislature were actually our own home-grown video poker barons, who targeted anyone who tried to make them obey our laws. Too many Democrats agreed with them and fought GOP attempts to make people tell us when they were trying to influence our votes, but the Legislature managed to require that anyway. That was back when using campaign disclosure to make it more difficult for special interests to buy legislators was conservative orthodoxy — before the libertarians and anarchists started asserting themselves.

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ANDREW SHAIN

THE STATE

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A day after Rubio dropped out, Haley said Wednesday she now is backing U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, in the race to win the GOP nomination.

But her support of Cruz was not very enthusiastic. Instead of offering any direct help to Cruz to defeat Trump, the Republican front-runner whose combative campaign rhetoric she has criticized, Haley shared her opinion of the state of the GOP race.

The governor said she was not endorsing Cruz, suggesting a lesser role than with Rubio, where she hit the campaign trail and spoke on his behalf at county GOP dinners in Florida. And Haley's chances of becoming the Republican vice presidential nominee — already a long shot — seemed to shrink as well.

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"The ball is in her court," a source close to the Cruz campaign said.

University of Virginia political scientist Larry Sabato said Cruz, a self-proclaimed GOP outsider, might be better off taking a pass on public support from establishment politicians

like Haley and Graham, who previously had endorsed former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush for president.

"This reinforces what Trump voters think about the establishment trying to deny their guy the nomination," Sabato said. "The thinking is that, 'They'll go with anybody,' at this point."

For its part, the Cruz camp is pleased with support to try to keep Trump from winning a majority of GOP delegates before the Republican National Convention in July.

"We're more than happy to have everyone come aboard with us," Cruz campaign spokeswoman Catherine Frazier said.

Trump's top endorser in the state, Republican Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster, said he did not make a push to win over Haley and Graham for the New York billionaire. "They have given no hint of interest in endorsing or supporting Donald Trump," McMaster said.

McMaster added he did not think Haley's and Graham's support of Cruz would stop "the very strong Trump movement."

"No. 1, I think the effort to stop the movement is a mistake, and No. 2, it will fail."

Haley's choice

Haley, a rising star among national party insiders, runs the risk of finding herself on the outside of the 2016 race by backing Cruz.

Praise of Haley's handling of the Charleston church shootings and her call to remove the Confederate flag from the State House stoked talk of the governor as a possible GOP vice presidential pick.

As they trekked through the state, GOP presidential candidates visited the governor, who posted her photos with them on social media.

Her endorsement of Rubio before the S.C. presidential primary last month generated buzz. She appeared on national news shows as the Florida Republican finished second in the state's primary, placing ahead of Cruz. But Trump won the Palmetto State primary and all 50 S.C. GOP delegates.

After South Carolina, Rubio's fortunes dimmed due to poor showings in March's multi-state primaries, including Florida. Last week, Trump handily trounced Rubio, including winning the two Florida counties where Haley spoke at county party dinners on his behalf.

Now, a Trump nomination could land Haley on the presidential sidelines.

The one-time political allies — Trump donated to Haley's campaigns — are feuding.

Haley has ripped Trump for his proposal to temporarily ban Muslims, calling it unAmerican. And, in recent speeches, Haley has suggested Trump's campaign rhetoric is leading to the type of division that reared its head last year in the racially motivated slayings at Emanuel

AME Church and the shooting death of an unarmed African-American motorist in North Charleston.

Trump has returned the rhetorical fire, calling Haley lax on stopping Syrian refugees from moving to the state and preventing the possible relocation of Guantanamo Bay prisoners to a Navy brig near Charleston.

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With Rubio out of the race and backing Trump out of the question, Haley bounced her support to Cruz.

Putting ideology first

Haley's role with Cruz, however, is murky.

In part, that could be because she was seen as being closer to Rubio and Bush in the months ahead of the GOP primaries.

Like Bush and Rubio, Cruz made the short list for Haley's endorsement, earning a dinner with the governor.

"My sense is that she just picked Rubio over Cruz because she liked Rubio, and he was

probably more aligned with her," said Rick Tyler, a former campaign spokesman for Cruz. "I don't have any reason to believe that she disliked or couldn't work with Cruz."

See GOP, Page 4A

"This reinforces what Trump voters think about the establishment trying to deny their guy the nomination. The thinking is that, 'They'll go with anybody' at this point."

LARRY SABATO

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA POLITICAL SCIENTIST

GOP

Continued from Page 3A

After Rubio dropped out last week, Haley put ideology first, talking about Cruz having a consistent, steady record as a conservative, unlike Trump, who once supported abortion and previously donated money to Democratic presidential front-runner Hillary Clinton.

Meanwhile, two other top S.C. Rubio supporters, U.S. Sen. Tim Scott of North Charleston and U.S. Rep. Trey Gowdy of Spartanburg, have not said who, if anyone, they back now.

Sabato said Haley and Graham perhaps should have considered a different tactic.

"They would help more if they stayed silent," he said. "But they can't do that by nature."

More in common?

Haley's office said Friday the governor was not commenting about Cruz, other than her state-

ments of support made earlier in the week.

Critics have raised concerns that Cruz will not compromise, citing his role in shutting down the federal government for 16 days in 2013 in a failed effort to defund the Affordable Care Act. They also worry that his strict views on religion and abortion could

hurt efforts to broaden the Republican voting base.

Cruz's camp said Haley supporters have little to worry about with the governor's new choice for the White House.

Despite any differences Republicans might have with each other, they share the same views about repealing the Affordable Care Act, supporting Second Amendment rights and curtailing undocumented immigrants, Cruz aide Frazier said. Plus, she added, plenty of Republicans have issues with the front-runner.

"No one trusts what Trump will do or has any confidence he will be a conservative," Frazier said.

Tyler said voters should take comfort that Cruz has served in the Senate, argued cases before the U.S. Supreme Court and worked in the administration of President George W. Bush, Tyler said.

"He understands the workings of government," Tyler said.

Whatever role Haley eventually takes with the Cruz campaign, Lt. Gov. McMaster said he and the governor will continue to speak about issues affecting the state without broaching the elephant in the room — their differences over presidential politics.

"It's not an elephant, it's just a fact," McMaster said. "I'm 100 percent for Trump, and she is 100 percent for anybody but Trump."

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WIN MCNAMEE/FILE

Former Republican presidential candidate Marco Rubio and South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley addressed supporters at a primary night event in Columbia, South Carolina, last month. With Rubio out of the race, Haley has turned her support to Sen. Ted Cruz for the GOP nomination.

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LAUREN PETRACCA/STAFF

South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley says she is certain only about which candidate she will not endorse. She's shown here speaking at Trelleborg Wheel Systems in Spartanburg in January.

Title: **House swaps DMV money to enable bonds for roads**
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TIM SMITH

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COLUMBIA - The House is shaping its budget to put more money into roads, including a transfer of \$100 million from the state Department of Motor Vehicles that could enable the money to be used to borrow about \$1 billion.

The transfer proposal by House Ways and Means Chairman Brian White was adopted Monday by the House 103-0 as the body began debating a \$7.5 billion General Fund budget.

White explained that this year, the

House would fund DMV out of the General Fund, replacing the money transferred to the state's highway fund. Because road bonds by the State Transportation Infrastructure Bank require certain types of non-taxable revenue, the DMV money, made up of a variety of fees, can be used to borrow much more than \$100 million, he said. Senators have said bonding can raise about 11 times the amount sent to the State

Transportation Infrastructure Bank, meaning \$100 million could raise more than \$1 billion.

The House continued debating the budget into the evening. Debate on the spending plan was expected to occupy the House for at least the next two days.

White said the \$100 million would be part of more than \$400 million in the budget proposed for roads. The budget

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Roads

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version passed by the Ways and Means Committee allocated a total of \$250 million for roads, most of it for county transportation committees.

But that was before the Senate adopted a roads bill that would use \$400 million in recurring money from the General Fund for roads.

Senators argued that the Senate GOP plan made more sense than raising the state's gas tax in a year in which lawmakers had a \$1.4 billion surplus.

"We're trying to get as much as we can for roads in this," White told the House.

He said Gov. Nikki Haley visited the House GOP Caucus last week along with State Transportation Secretary Christy Hall, "and said things like Malfunction Junction had to be done."

Malfunction Junction is the local name given to the confluence of Inter-

state 26 and I-20 in Columbia. Rebuilding those interchanges is expected to cost more than \$1 billion, money the state Department of Transportation doesn't have although the project is the top-ranked interstate project for the state and has been for years.

White said the only way to do that and other costly projects is through the Infrastructure Bank, using bonds.

"I think this will help the DOT to be able to raise a whole lot more money," White said when asked if the DMV money could help in the Malfunction Junction project. "I think this is the right way to go. This is the way you actually don't kick the can down the road. You get sustainable, long-term funding to the DOT that fixes our problems and brings an agency online."

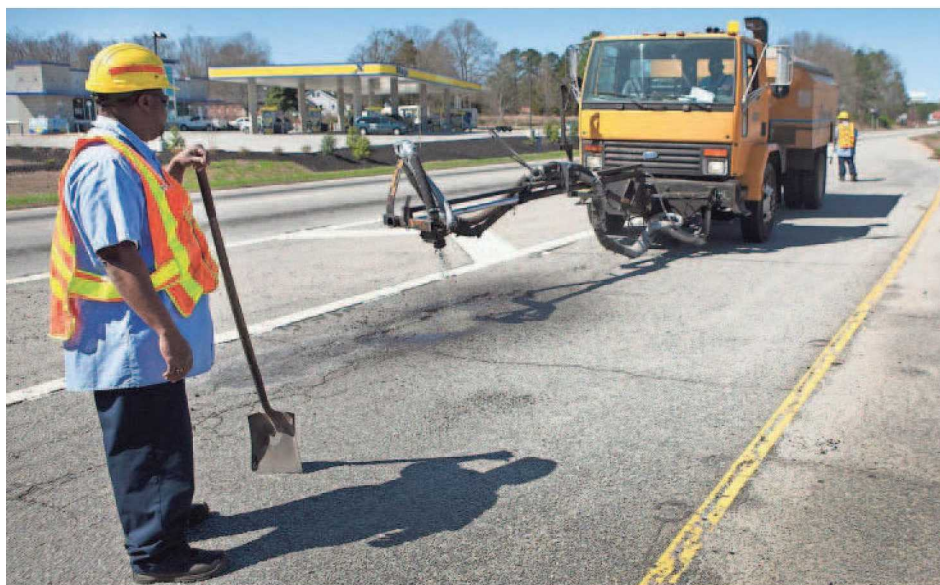
White and House Speaker Jay Lucas have both criticized the Senate plan as

avoiding a long-term solution to the state's road-funding problem.

Haley has indicated she supports the Senate roads plan. Last year, she told lawmakers she would agree to support a 10-cent increase in the gas tax but only if they agreed to reduce the top income tax rate and also changed the way highway commissioners are selected. Lucas, in a letter to her last week after her visit to House Republicans, said she agreed with him that the state needs a sustainable source of funding for roads to address the state's long-term needs.

Lucas wrote to Haley that the House is faced with the options of either rejecting the Senate plan, agreeing with it, or proposing changes. He said the caucus does not support rejecting the Senate plan but said House members were still discussing the other options.

Title: **House swaps DMV money to enable bonds for roads**
Author: TIM SMITH TCSMITH@GREENVILLENEWS.COM
Size: 54.09 square inch
Greenville, SC Circulation: 113473



FILE/STAFF

State work crews repair a pothole on Highway 153 in Powdersville.

Title: **Haley's role in presidential race starts to fade**
 Author: BY ANDREW SHAIN The (Columbia) State
 Size: 45.10 square inch
 Beaufort, SC Circulation: 11269



Haley's role in presidential race starts to fade

BY ANDREW SHAIN

The (Columbia) State

After backing a new anti-Donald Trump candidate last week, S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley's role in the 2016 Republican presidential race is fading.

Haley's support of U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., won little in a year where GOP voters seem to care more about emotion than endorsements.

A day after Rubio dropped out, Haley said Wednesday she now is backing U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, in the race to win the GOP nomination.

But her support of Cruz was not very enthusiastic. Instead of offering any direct help to Cruz to defeat Trump, the Republican

front-runner whose combative campaign rhetoric she has criticized, Haley shared her opinion of the state of the GOP race.

The governor said she was not endorsing Cruz, suggesting a lesser role than with Rubio, where she hit the campaign trail and spoke on his behalf at county GOP dinners in Florida. And Haley's chances of becoming the Republican vice presidential nominee — already a long shot — seemed to shrink as well.

No Cruz events are planned with Haley — unlike U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, the Seneca Republican and former presi-

dential candidate, who agreed to headline a Cruz fundraiser this week.

"The ball is in her court," a source close to the Cruz campaign said.

University of Virginia political scientist Larry Sabato said Cruz, a self-proclaimed GOP outsider, might be better off taking a pass on public support from establishment politicians like Haley and Graham, who previously had endorsed former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush for president.

"This reinforces what Trump voters think about the establishment trying to deny their guy the nomination," Sabato said. "The thinking is that, 'They'll go with anybody,'

at this point."

For its part, the Cruz camp is pleased with support to try to keep Trump from winning a majority of GOP delegates before the Republican National Convention in July.

"We're more than happy to have everyone come aboard with us," Cruz campaign spokeswoman Catherine Frazier said.

Trump's top endorser in the state, Republican Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster, said he did not make a push to win over Haley and Graham for the New York billionaire. "They have given no hint of interest in endorsing or supporting Donald Trump," McMaster said.

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Size: 45.10 square inch
Beaufort, SC Circulation: 11269



JOHN BAZEMORE AP

Then-presidential candidate Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., and South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley wave to the crowd after speaking at an election night rally Feb. 20 in Columbia.

Title: **A new group of carpetbaggers, a familiar MO**

Author:

Size: 63.24 square inch

Beaufort, SC Circulation: 11269



CINDI ROSS SCOPPE
ASSOCIATE EDITOR
THE STATE

A new group of carpet-baggers, a familiar MO

IN HER FIRST Senate race, Katrina Shealy got more than half of her campaign donations from Howie Rich, the New York multimillionaire who spent several years trying to buy himself a nice little Southern Legislature. In her follow-up race, she was bankrolled by the out-of-state donors to Gov. Nikki Haley's unlimited-donations Movement Fund.

Now she tells reporter Cassie Cope that the anti-gas-tax campaign by Americans for Prosperity is dangerous because "We can't let some out-of-state special-interest group come into South Carolina and dictate how we do business."

I don't mean to pick on Sen. Shealy, who is absolutely right and hardly alone. Sen. Larry Grooms got some Rich money in 2012 and now says that having a couple of billionaires underwriting campaign efforts "limits the ability of having free and open speech." I suspect that if we talked to more Republican senators we could find similar revelations.

This new-found concern about deep-pocketed special interests helps explain why we keep having this problem with carpetbaggers trying to impose their will on our state: Legislators look the other way when outside interests support *them*. They only recog-

nize the danger when they become the targets — as they all eventually will.

Think of it as our lawmakers' version of Martin Niemöller's poem: First they came for the moderate Republicans, and I did not speak out, because I was a conservative. Then they came for the conservatives, and I did not speak out, because I was a libertarian.

The first major-money special interests who tried to buy our Legislature were actually our own home-grown video poker barons, who targeted anyone who tried to make them obey our laws. Too many Democrats agreed with them and fought GOP attempts to make people tell us when they were trying to influence our votes, but the Legislature managed to require that anyway. That was back when using campaign disclosure to make it more difficult for special interests to buy legislators was conservative orthodoxy — before the libertarians and anarchists started asserting themselves.

But then we elected a libertarian governor, and Mark Sanford's out-of-state fellow-travelers started flooding in, either ignoring our law or finding ways around it. Eventually they began melting one into another, this secession of anonymous carpet-

baggers who back their dump trucks full of cash up to our elections to buy their vision of a lawless society with a government shrunk small enough to drown in a bathtub.

First came the Michigan-based "All Children Matter," which tried to disguise its anti-schools motives by attacking legislators' refusal to sign a blood oath to a creepy Washington puppetmaster, swearing to never ever raise a tax so help me God.

When people caught on to where that group was from and what it was all about, the ironically named "South Carolinians

for Responsible Government" took over and acknowledged its defund-the-schools agenda. Then, right in the middle of the 2006 primary campaign, the name "Conservatives in Action" suddenly replaced SCRG's name on attack pieces — after the State Ethics Commission told SCRG to start obeying the state law that required it to report how it spent money trying to warp our votes. Eventually the courts started going crazy, decided our law was too broad and struck it down.

Next came Howie Rich, who used his network of limited liability corporations to bypass spending limits with his attack on universal public education, the lifeblood of our democracy.

And now there's Americans

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for Prosperity, the flagship organization of the political network overseen by industrialist billionaires Charles G. and David H. Koch. Rather than pretending to provide “choices” for students, AFP is all about shrinking government and taxes.

That’s a popular enough idea that you’d think it could afford to be honest, and to go after actual tax increases. Of course, you’d then wonder why it would target a state where the Legislature cuts taxes a little every year, and a lot lots of years. The group’s robocalls targeting senators who supported raising gas taxes while cutting income taxes left off the “cutting income tax-

es” part. They warned of a “72 percent” gas tax hike (12 cents per gallon) in a way that made it sound like a “72-cent gas tax hike.”

It was an open secret during the roads debate that Republican senators were terrified that voting for the gas-tax increase — even an increase that was offset by an income-tax cut — would bring the trucks full of AFP money into their districts to defeat them.

We’ll keep being plagued by these carpetbaggers until we take back our political system. That means insisting the Legislature pass that Republican orthodox law requiring them to tell us when they spend money to

distort our elections. And it means refusing to let the libertarians and anarchists control our elections.

The way to do that, if you’re one of the 65 percent to 85 percent of S.C. voters who boycott the polls until November, is to vote in the June state Republican primary (no one is bothering to try to buy the Democrats). And vote for the Republicans who actually care about South Carolina instead of fulfilling the fantasies of their out-of-state sugar daddies.

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**LEGISLATORS ONLY
RECOGNIZE THE
DANGER WHEN THEY
BECOME THE TARGET
— AS THEY ALL
EVENTUALLY WILL.**

