

Title: **DSS settles lawsuit over kids' care**
 Author: BY SEANNA ADCOX Associated Press
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DSS settles lawsuit over kids' care

BY SEANNA ADCOX

Associated Press

COLUMBIA

The South Carolina Department of Social Services has agreed to lower social workers' caseloads of abused and neglected children, put fewer children in institutions and do a better job investigating abuse allegations, according to a settlement filed in federal court Friday.

The agreement potentially ends a lawsuit that accused the agency of endangering the nearly 3,400 children in its care. A federal judge in Charleston must approve it.

The proposed, "life-changing" improvements mean a brighter future for the state's most vulnerable children, said Sue Berkowitz, director of Appleseed Legal Justice Center, which filed the lawsuit in January 2015 along with the New York-based watchdog group Children's Rights.

"We'd heard so many horrifying life events happen to children, we felt the lawsuit was critical," Berkowitz said.

Under the settlement, the agency promises to offer more face-to-face visits between caseworkers and children; keep siblings together unless that would be

unsafe; provide better health care; and lessen the times children are moved from one foster home to another. Investigations must start within 24 hours of abuse being reported, must include meeting the victim in-person and must be completed within three months — most of them sooner.

The agency must stop placing children in hotels and office buildings for overnight stays. It can no longer keep kids in juvenile jail beyond their sentence just because the agency has nowhere to put them. And children under 7 can't be placed in institutional group homes or shelters.

The issues addressed by the settlement have been scrutinized by state legislators since January 2014.

The agency's previous director, Lillian Koller, resigned later that year on the eve of a no-confidence vote in the Senate, following hearings that focused on children's deaths and high caseloads that exceeded 100 children for some social workers.

Director Susan Alford, who took the helm in February 2015, said signing the settlement represents the

next step in the agency's ongoing reforms.

"This plan will guide the department's efforts to continue to improve services for children, and we are grateful to our partners across the state who will work in tandem with us to achieve the outcomes our children deserve," she said in a prepared statement.

The budget that legislators passed in June 2015 provided DSS money to add 177 caseworkers and 67 caseworker assistants.

Responding to the settlement, the agency said that between January 2015 and March 2016 it reduced by nearly half the number of caseworkers responsible for 50 or more children, and fewer employees quit.

In February, senators were told that 73 caseworkers still had caseloads of more than 50 children. The goal of having one social worker for every 24 children, set in 2014, had been met in only seven of the state's 46 counties. A DSS spokeswoman did not immediately provide an update Friday.

The budget that legislators sent Gov. Nikki Haley this week provides DSS the

additional \$5.6 million Alford requested for more caseworkers.

"There is nothing more important than the safety of our children and our most vulnerable citizens, particularly those under the care of DSS. ... We remain focused on strengthening DSS," said Haley, who for months had refused legislators' calls to fire Koller.

Koller had repeatedly told legislators DSS didn't need any additional money, despite deep cuts amid the recession, and insisted that caseworkers were responsible on average for only six cases.

The settlement appoints two people to monitor whether DSS is meeting improvement goals and issue reports.

Sen. Katrina Shealy, R-Lexington, said the Senate's DSS oversight panel, which she sits on, will also continue its role.

"What we have to make sure of is that they're not afraid to ask for what they need," she said. "We're going to be the ones to make sure they have the money, and that they're using the money we allocate to them wisely."

Title: **Lawmakers OK tax break for SC military retirees**
 Author: BY JEFF WILKINSON jwilkinson@thestate.com
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Lawmakers OK tax break for SC military retirees

BY JEFF WILKINSON
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The S.C. General Assembly passed a bill offering state income tax deductions for military retirees.

The plan would offer military retirees with at least 20 years of service a deduction of \$17,500 a year for those under 65 or \$30,000 a year for those 65 or older.

A caveat is that the military retirees under 65 must embark on a second job in the state with an annual salary of at least \$17,500. An amendment requires the tax break to be phased in over five

years.

Also, the benefit would be extended to the surviving spouses of service members who have died.

The amended bill passed the Senate and House Thursday with 18 minutes left in the session.

"This is the first step in what needs to be a continuing process to make us competitive with other states," said Bill Bethea, chairman of the S.C. Military Base Task Force, which is charged with keeping military bases open

and retaining and creating military jobs in the Palmetto State.

Bethea, a Bluffton attorney, noted that 26 states levy no state tax on retirees' pensions. Also, some other states that tax pensions still have more competitive benefits.

About 58,000 military retirees live in South Carolina, according to the U.S. Department of Defense. The bill would cost the state about \$18 million a year,

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VETS

according to the S.C. Department of Revenue.

The bill's backers said the benefits outweigh the cost.

The tax break would retain disciplined workers, according to the task force, which was appointed by Gov. Nikki Haley and chambers of commerce in the state's four military communities. The cost would be offset by taxes on the retirees' new

jobs and those of their spouses.

The bill's passage would also help cement South Carolina as one of the most military friendly states in the nation. That's a distinction that will bolster the state's standing with the Pentagon when new rounds of base closings and realignment, called BRAC, kicks in, perhaps in 2019.

Currently, the Military

Officers Association of American rates South Carolina yellow – or average – when it comes to military issues. The rating is not green – the highest – primarily because of the income tax issue. Red is the lowest rating.

Boosters said another benefit of the bill is that it would say "thank you" to retirees for their lengthy service, which often includes combat.

Title: **Lawsuit forces SC agency to improve its care for ki<**
 Author: by john monk jmonk@thestate.com
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Lawsuit forces SC agency to improve its care for kids

Parties: Settlement announced Friday ensures vulnerable children will be safer

Child advocates said Legislature would not protect children, so they took state to court

Many children in DSS foster care died or were mistreated as DSS did little or nothing, critics say

BY JOHN MONK

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A negotiated settlement that parties said will better the lives of South Carolina's vulnerable children was filed Friday in federal court.

The settlement comes almost 18 months after Children's Rights, a national child safety watchdog group, and the Columbia-based Appleseed Legal Justice Center filed a lawsuit on

behalf of 11 children, alleging long-running mismanagement at the S.C. Department of Social Services has repeatedly endangered children in the agency's care.

Defendants in the lawsuit were Gov. Nikki Haley and Susan Alford, the DSS director.

Attorney Matthew Richardson of Columbia filed the lawsuit on

behalf of the 11 plaintiffs, identified as children ages 2-17 who were at that time in the care of the state's social services system.

It is the second major South Carolina legal settlement announced this week in which advocates had to sue state officials to stop vulnerable people from being killed and injured because of oversight failures by

state agencies. Earlier this week, the state agreed to spend some \$9 million to upgrade treatment and facilities for mentally ill inmates at state prisons.

The prisoner lawsuit had taken 11 years to reach a settlement. Child care advocates on

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FROM PAGE 1A

DSS

Friday gave Haley credit for taking the initiative to reach a speedy resolution to the DSS lawsuit in only about 18 months. The settlement still must be approved by U.S. Judge Richard Gergel of Charleston.

"We commend Gov. Haley and her administration for recognizing the need for change and doing the right thing for kids," said Ira Lustbader, litigation director for Children's Rights.

Unlike the prison agree-

ment, the settlement reached Friday does not require specific money to be spent.

However, it commits the state to:

- Develop and implement new caseload standards for child social workers. Many workers are still responsible for monitoring 50 children or more. During Legislative hearings last year, some were reported to have up to 100 cases.

- Upgrading the ways DSS monitors, investi-

gates and takes action when children are abused by a caregiver.

- Reducing the number of kids in institutions and placing more in family housing.

- Making sure an effective program is in place for giving children in DSS care regular medical and dental checkups and treatment, as well as access to mental health screening and treatment.

As part of the settlement, two recognized child welfare experts will

be appointed independent co-monitors of the agency. They will issue periodic, public reports on progress.

Appleseed Director Sue Berkowitz said that although the agreement doesn't set specific financial targets, it's reasonable to assume if more resources are needed, state officials will work for them in the Legislature.

In any case, Berkowitz said, by coming to an agreement in a relatively short time, the state

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avoided spending huge amounts of money on legal fees and leaving children "in limbo" during litigation.

"Both DSS and foster care have been woefully underfunded for a long time, and we feel confident the governor and the agency are committed to getting the resources that will be needed," Berkowitz said.

CRITICISMS

The lawsuit was brought on behalf of 3,400 abused and neglected children under DSS care.

It followed years of news reports about children under DSS care who were killed or injured as a result of various kinds of mismanagement and underfunding.

Under state law, DSS is charged with protecting children under the age of 18 from abuse and neglect. The agency has caseworkers who visit families with children who are suspected of being abused, neglected

or in dangerous situations and might even be in danger of dying. Many children are placed in foster or group homes, and DSS is supposed to have workers who specifically oversee their safety and well-being.

The agency now has 4,100 children under its care and a staff of 3,995, according to DSS figures.

The lawsuit targeted a foster home shortage, excessive caseworker workloads and poor health care for children.

Last year, in response to continuing reports of deaths, the lawsuit and

other public criticism, Haley and the Legislature began to take steps to better fund the agency and give it more resources.

And last September, the lawsuit prompted Haley and Alford to reach an interim agreement with the plaintiffs.

The Legislature also increased DSS funding for the fiscal year that begins July 1. The agency will get \$715 million next year, up

from \$694 million this year.

A news release by Children's Rights when the suit was filed said DSS had the highest rate in the country for placing children 12 and under in institutions instead of in homes. Children under DSS care also were repeatedly shuffled around, placed far from relatives and denied visits with siblings, advocacy groups said.

LITTLE MONEY, DATA

Although DSS has for many years been the subject of criticism for being underfunded and mishandling children in its care, criticism has escalated in recent years as more cases of child deaths became known, and more people began speaking out.

In late 2014, a Legislative Audit Council report concluded that DSS failed to ask for extra money for its growing problems. The audit also found worker caseloads were excessive and the agency didn't

ensure children were placed in safe homes.

The report also said DSS kept unreliable data and, consequently, no one could say with certainty exactly how many children were dying on the agency's watch.

In a statement Friday, Haley said, "There is nothing more important than the safety of our children and our most vulnerable citizens, particularly those under the care of DSS ... we remain focused on strengthening DSS."

DSS director Alford released a statement, which said her agency has been working on "sustainable reforms" for two years.

The settlement announced Friday is "the next step in its ongoing reforms," Alford said. "This plan will guide the Department's efforts to continue to improve services for children."

Lawyers negotiating for the state included Becky Laffitte and Butch Bowers of Columbia.

Title: **ALSO . . .**

Author:

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**ALSO . . .**

● A 1-cent sales tax that has raised millions of dollars to market Myrtle Beach as a tourism destination to out-of-state visitors was resurrected by the state General Assembly this week after Gov. Nikki Haley tried to kill it, according to The Sun News of Myrtle Beach. The action lets the Myrtle Beach City Council extend the sales tax beyond 2019 without taking the issue to voters.

● The U.S. Department of Labor has awarded South Carolina's Technical College System a \$200,000 grant to expand apprenticeships, according to a news release from the state system. The grant is part of the Apprenticeship USA State Accelerator Grants designed to expand apprenticeship programs nationwide. The S.C. Technical College System's Apprenticeship Carolina program will use the money to promote apprenticeships and increase awareness of youth apprenticeship programs.

— STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

Title: **Veterans' tax cut passes; ethics bills could be dead again**
 Author: BY SEANNA ADCOX Associated Press
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Veterans' tax cut passes; ethics bills could be dead again

BY SEANNA ADCOX

Associated Press
COLUMBIA

Bills that give military retirees a tax cut, shorten South Carolina's legislative session by three weeks and ban ticket quotas in law enforcement are among the potential laws heading to Gov. Nikki Haley's desk.

The Legislature passed a flurry of bills Thursday in the legislative session's last hours. But ethics reform bills that legislators have called a priority for four years could be dead again.

There's still a chance they could reach consensus on measures that send complaints against legislators to independent investigators and require all officeholders to disclose who pays them.

Because they made it to panels that try to compromise on the chambers' differing versions of bills, they stay alive for the special session later this month. But legislators may take up little beyond Haley's vetoes then.

MILITARY TAX CUT

Legislation touted as enticing working-age veterans who served 20 years in uniform to retire in South Carolina passed with minutes to spare.

The tax benefits would phase in over five years. By

2020, military retirees younger than 65 could deduct \$17,500 of their income earned in the state. Retirees 65 or older could exempt up to \$30,000. Once fully phased in, the cuts are expected to reduce state revenues by \$18 million.

The House's initial version allowed for bigger benefits sooner, reducing revenues by an estimated \$31 million once fully implemented in three years. But with the 5 p.m. deadline looming, Rep. Murrell Smith, R-Sumter, encouraged his colleagues to accept the Senate's changes.

"At this late hour, this is the best we can do," he said. "We want people to retire and relocate here. They're at an age they can contribute to the economy."

Sen. Gerald Malloy had blocked the bill's passage, saying military retirees already have many benefits the state's poor do not. He argued it would be better to expand Medicaid eligibility.

He said he's concerned legislators "continue to pass bills that will end up benefiting some and not others."

But he allowed a vote after senators agreed to the five-year phase-in.

ETHICS REFORM

The House and Senate are still far apart on a bill requiring complaints against legislators to be independently investigated.

Currently, House and Senate ethics committees oversee the campaign filings and handle complaints against their colleagues, while the State Ethics Commission oversees all other public officials. Critics, including Haley, equate the arrangement to "the fox guarding the henhouse."

The legislation would revamp the State Ethics

Commission and expand its duties to legislators. However, House and Senate ethics panels would still get the final say over their members. The versions differ in who decides whether a legislator likely violated the law and when allegations become public.

Under the House's latest version, the revamped commission would make that determination. A probable cause finding would trigger documents becoming publicly available. The appropriate legislative panel would then hold a public hearing.

The Senate wants the commission to issue recommendations to the legisla-

tive panels.

House Speaker Pro Tem Tommy Pope, the bill's sponsor, said that won't boost confidence in the system.

"Their version will keep the same cloud over us," an obviously frustrated Pope told his colleagues from the podium. "I don't know where we can go, folks. We have given and given and given, but maybe they really want it to die."

Senate Judiciary Chairman Larry Martin said he's still optimistic a compromise can pass when the Legislature returns June 15.

The hang-up is that some senators believe the commission would vote for probable cause just to embarrass legislators. Martin said he doubts that.

"But, unfortunately, some of the members in there have a very strong opinion about it," he said.

Another ethics bill on life support would require all elected and public officials to report the sources of their private income - but not how much they are paid. Currently, officeholders must report only public income sources, such as legislative pay, on their annual "statement of economic interest."

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GOVERNOR GETS BILL ON FRATERNITY, SORORITY CONDUCT

South Carolina's public colleges soon could be required to post online misconduct violations by fraternities and sororities.

Under the "Tucker Hipps Transparency Act," approved by state lawmakers Thursday, colleges must update a website with violations related to alcohol, drugs, sexual or physical assault, or hazing by members of Greek organizations.

The bill, headed to Gov. Nikki Haley for her signature or veto, was named after a Clemson University student whose body was found in Lake Hartwell after a predawn run with other fraternity members in 2014.

If Haley signs the bill into law, colleges would be required to post reports with data going back to December 2012 and make that information available before the 2016-17 academic year. The law would sunset in three years unless extended or re-enacted by the Legislature. Technical colleges would be exempt.

— FROM THE (COLUMBIA) STATE

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Title: **Haley talks of Trump, Confederate flag ahead of anniversary**
 Author: BY SEANNA ADCOX Associated Press
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Haley talks of Trump, Confederate flag ahead of anniversary

BY SEANNA ADCOX

Associated Press

COLUMBIA

South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley said Thursday she wishes Donald Trump communicated differently because bad things result from divisive rhetoric, as evidenced by last June's massacre in Charleston.

The Republican governor said divisive speech motivated Dylann Roof to gun down nine black parishioners at historic Emanuel AME Church. Police have said the white 22-year-old charged with their killings wanted to start a race war.

The Confederate flag that Roof was seen brandishing in photos had to be removed from the Statehouse grounds, she said, and she supports sending the rebel flag in The Citadel's chapel to a museum too. But she opposes renaming buildings or monuments associated with the state's racist past.

Haley, who endorsed then-candidate Marco Rubio ahead of South Carolina's primary, said she has vocally criticized Trump because "I know what that rhetoric can do. I saw it happen."

She said she doesn't think people who support Trump are racist or haters.

"That's a different kind of anger. They're upset with Washington, D.C. They're upset nothing's got done," she said. "The way he communicates that, I wish were different."

Trump has a responsibility for the country's well-being to use a civil, respectful tone, she told reporters two weeks ahead of the anniversary of the Emanuel shooting.

Less than a month after the shooting, the Legislature - at Haley's urging - voted to remove the Confederate flag from the Statehouse's front lawn and send it to a museum.

The flag "hijacked by that murderer" had to go, she said, recognizing that some pro-flag people are still upset by her public prompting.

"I don't think they're bad people. I think they really were focused on heritage and sacrifice, but I think when that murderer kidnapped their flag and held it with hate and killed those

people, there was just no other option," she said.

The flag flying in The Citadel's Summerall Chapel in Charleston should be sent to a museum too, she said.

"You've got the museum right next door, so just take it from the chapel and put it in a museum and move on," she said.

But that's up to the Legislature, she said, noting she's told cadets to contact their legislators.

The state's Heritage Act bars altering any public monument that honors historic figures or events without overwhelming approval by the Legislature. The law was part of the 2000 compromise that brought the Confederate flag off the Statehouse dome and put it on the lawn.

Last year, House Speaker Jay Lucas said that as long as he's speaker, the House will not consider any other proposed change to the law. His spokesman did not respond Thursday to Haley's statements.

The governor said she

asked the Legislature last summer to keep the Heritage Act intact and not let the debate extend to changes beyond the Statehouse flag.

"The state would've been torn apart if we'd started doing that," she said. "We'd have disputes in every county and community and divide people. ... Our goal was to hold everything together.

Let's be kind and accepting and understand history is just that - it's history."

She still opposes exceptions beyond the chapel's flag, including renaming Tillman Hall at her alma mater, Clemson University, as many students have requested. The building is named for a Clemson founder - a former governor and U.S. senator who bragged about killing black people.

"We can't go and start changing everything. ... The difference with the flag was it was a flying, living, breathing representative symbol," Haley said. "I don't see that in buildings and street signs."

Title: **State sales tax for tourism extended**
 Author: BY AUDREY HUDSON ahudson@thesunnews.com
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State sales tax for tourism extended

Myrtle Beach implemented tax in 2009 to raise tourism ad dollars and create property tax credit

Tax has averaged \$20 million annually for tourism promotion

Nearly \$18 million total used as property tax credits for residents

BY AUDREY HUDSON

ahudson@thesunnews.com

A one cent sales tax that has raised millions of dollars to market Myrtle Beach as a tourism destination to out-of-state visitors was initially killed by Gov. Nikki Haley, but resurrected by the state assembly this week in the waning hours of the legislative session.

The action allows the Myrtle Beach City Council to extend the sales tax beyond 2019 without going to the voters as a referendum.

The sales tax has funneled millions of dollars into the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce, which received 100 percent of the funds the first two years after it was enacted in 2009 to pay for tourism advertising.

The city of Myrtle Beach then

received a 20 percent split from the proceeds, of which nearly \$18 million was set aside as tax credits for resident property owners and more than \$8.5 million was used for tourism-related capital improvement projects, according to Mark Kruea, Myrtle Beach spokesman.

The other 80 percent raised roughly \$20 million a year for the chamber, said that organization's president, Brad Dean.

A bill to extend the ability of cities to levy the tax through 2029 was vetoed by Haley last week. The House and Senate overrode the governor's veto on Wednesday by an overwhelming majority.

The Senate passed the veto override 40-5, while the House

voted 80-13. The entire Horry County delegation voted in favor of the veto override, except for Rep. Carl Anderson, D-Georgetown, who was absent for the vote.

Myrtle Beach Mayor John Rhodes says the money was initially needed to help the Grand Strand recover from the Great Recession, and is still essential to advertise Myrtle Beach and provide tax-breaks for resident property owners.

"We have to have resources to promote the area, to compete with Virginia Beach and other places in Florida," Rhodes said. "So the tourism development fee has been essential in growth of tourism, and growth of local residents."

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TAX

"It does work, and those who think it should have been a referendum don't understand the consequences of what would happen if it didn't pass," Rhodes said.

Rhodes said putting the question to the voters, rather than passing it again through a city council ordinance, would be taking "a gamble."

"If we put it up for a referendum vote, it was going to take an awful lot of campaigning to educate people on how taxes are reduced

and what would happen if they didn't vote yes -- taxes would go up close to five times what they are," Rhodes said.

"So to have the bill passed the same as in the past was extremely important, not only to keep advertising dollars for Myrtle Beach, but for taxes," Rhodes said.

Haley says she vetoed the bill because it allows local governments to increase taxes on residents without a vote by the public.

"It is my belief that local tax increases - whether they are fees, property millage, or local option taxes - should be allowed only if the citizens subject to the tax agree to it through public referendum," Haley said in a letter to House Speaker James H. Lucas, outlining her objections to extending the timeline for the tax.

"Past elections have yielded mixed results - some communities agree to self-impose new taxes and fees

and others reject them," Haley said.

The bill passed in 2009 was scheduled to expire in 2019. Dean maintains that an extension was needed this legislative session so the property tax credit did not lapse.

"The primary focus was to correct the law to allow it to continue uninterrupted," Dean said. "The property tax credit could disappear, and no one wanted to see that happen."

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Haley said that arguments by supporters that the extension was needed for tax relief was “misleading,” because 80 percent of the funding is spent on tourism marketing and promotion.

The law allows towns that collect at least \$14 million in state accommodation taxes in a fiscal year to levy the one percent tax through referendum or by a council vote. Myrtle Beach authorized the tax through the city council.

Dean says the funding for marketing and advertising has helped increase the number of tourists who visit

Myrtle Beach from between 13 million and 14 million a year to 17 million annually, with a goal of reaching 20 million visitors over the next four years.

“When it was implemented, it was at the height of the Great Recession and we had to react to dire economic circumstances to protect our base of tourism and prevent a steep decline in tourism,” Dean said. “The tourism development fee has successfully enabled us to grow our economy, improve our infrastructure and create jobs while cutting city property taxes.”

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**IT IS MY BELIEF
 THAT LOCAL TAX
 INCREASES ...
 SHOULD BE
 ALLOWED ONLY IF
 THE CITIZENS
 SUBJECT TO THE
 TAX AGREE TO IT
 THROUGH PUBLIC
 REFERENDUM.**

Gov. Nikki Haley



The Sun News file photo

A one cent sales tax that has raised millions of dollars to market Myrtle Beach has once again been extended.

Title: **Governor gets bill on fraternity, sorority conduct**
 Author: BY AVERY G. WILKS awilks@thestate.com
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'TUCKER HIPPS' BILL

Governor gets bill on fraternity, sorority conduct

Bill requires public colleges to create online listings of misconduct violations

'If Tucker had had this information ... he wouldn't have been on the bridge that day'

BY AVERY G. WILKS
awilks@thestate.com

South Carolina's public colleges soon could be required to post online misconduct violations by fraternities and sororities.

Under the "Tucker Hipps Transparency Act,"

approved by state lawmakers Thursday, colleges must update a website with vio-

lations related to alcohol, drugs, sexual or physical assault, or hazing by members of Greek organizations.

The bill, headed to Gov.

Nikki Haley for her signa-

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ONLINE

THESTATE.COM: Student's questions remain about the death of Tucker Hipps

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HIPPS

ture or veto, was named after a Clemson University student whose body was found in Lake Hartwell after a predawn run with other fraternity members in 2014.

"This is actually going to help fraternities," said Rep. Josh Putnam, R-Anderson, who spent much of Thursday watching the Senate debate the bill. "It's going to help

improve their image within communities because they're going to do a better job of policing themselves. They're going to have a better standing within communities. ...

"You're going to see college campuses become safer because of this bill. ... Hopefully, we'll see these horrible instances be avoided."

If Haley signs the bill into law, colleges would

be required to post reports with data going back to December 2012 and make that information available before the 2016-17 academic year. The law would sunset in three years unless extended or re-enacted by the Legislature. Technical colleges would be exempt.

The bill passed the S.C. House 84-0 in mid-March but stalled in the Senate,

as some senators said it unfairly targeted Greek organizations. Sens. Vince Sheheen, D-Kershaw, and Harvey Peeler, R-Cherokee, briefly proposed broadening the bill to include all student social organizations.

Other senators criticized the proposal saying it could create a "road map" for litigation against colleges.

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Sen. Brad Hutto, D-Orangeburg, said the online misconduct listings likely would hurt schools' recruiting efforts and probably wouldn't change many students' decisions about joining Greek organizations. "I don't see where this report is going to affect anything other than put a black eye on one of our institutions."

Hipps' parents disagreed. "If Tucker had had this information about this organization, he wouldn't have been a member of it, and he wouldn't have been on the bridge that day," said Cindy Hipps, Tucker's mother.

With just minutes to go before Thursday's end of the legislative session, House members voted 99-0 to accept the Senate's version of the bill.

Putnam said he plans to ask the governor to hold a bill-signing ceremony with the Hipps family. "This is a huge step," he said.

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Hipps

Title: **What SC lawmakers did - or didn't do - for you**
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2016 LEGISLATIVE SESSION AT A GLANCE

What SC lawmakers did — or didn't do — for you

Some roads, bridges in Richland and Lexington counties to be repaired

You still can get Viagra without new state hurdles

But state won't pay you \$1,000 to shoot a coyote

BY CASSIE COPE
ccope@thestate.com

Permanent fixes to major issues — repairing the state's roads and rebuilding poor schools — were outstanding as the 2016 legislative session drew to a close Thursday.

Still, S.C. lawmakers did some things for you this session.

A START TO FIXING ROADS

S.C. lawmakers approved a borrowing proposal that will pay for \$4 billion in road-and-bridge repairs during the next 10 years.

In Richland and Lexington counties, the largest

project will be widening and upgrading the interchanges in Malfunction Junction, the poorly designed, congested area around the intersection of Interstates 20 and 26.

The Transportation Department also estimates it will spend \$38 million in Richland and \$37 million in Lexington to repave roads. Specific roads are not yet available, the Transportation Department said, adding that will depend on annual assessments.

Also, of the nearly 400 bridges to be replaced

statewide, 24 are in Richland and 10 are in Lexington.

The roads bill still must be signed into law by Gov. Nikki Haley.

YOU CAN CARRY YOUR GUN TO GEORGIA

Georgians with concealed-weapon permits will be able to carry their weapons in South Carolina, if Haley signs a proposal passed by lawmakers this week.

The proposal also would allow South Carolinians with concealed-weapon permits to carry their guns

in Georgia.

Meanwhile, proposals to strengthen background check requirements before gun purchases — proposed by Democrats after last June's Emanuel AME massacre — went nowhere. Democrats say they will try again next year.

YOU CAN USE THE BATHROOM OF YOUR CHOICE

In the wake of North Carolina's controversial House Bill 2, S.C. lawmakers tried to enact

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SESSION

similar bans on transgender people and students using the bathrooms of their choice. However, those efforts — led by state Sen. Lee Bright, R-Spartanburg — failed.

Another bathroom-ban bill would have applied only to Berkeley County students. That proposal — opposed by Gov. Nikki Haley, schools chief Molly Spearman and Commerce Secretary Bobby Hitt —

ultimately was defeated, too.

YOU CAN GET YOUR VIAGRA WITHOUT NEW HURDLES

Rep. Mia McLeod, D-Richland, said she wanted to make it more difficult for men to get Viagra.

Before a doctor could prescribe Viagra, McLeod proposed requiring a sworn affidavit from a sexual partner, a report

from a sexual therapist and a cardiac-stress test.

Actually, the proposal by McLeod — running for the state Senate — was a tongue-in-cheek swing at S.C. GOP lawmakers for their efforts to restrict women's access to abortion. They were not amused, and the proposal did not pass.

HOWEVER, ABORTIONS WILL BE LIMITED

A ban on abortion at 20 weeks of pregnancy or later became law, including no exceptions for cases of rape or incest.

Under the law, an abortion would be allowed at 20 weeks or later only in the case of a severe fetal anomaly that would prevent the child from surviving or if a doctor says an abortion is necessary to protect the mother from death or severe bodily

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impairment.

Opponents say the restriction is unconstitutional.

YOU CANNOT GET \$1,000 FOR SHOOTING COYOTES

A proposal failed to offer a \$1,000 reward for killing tagged coyotes.

The proposal, supported by state Rep. Alan Clemmons, R-Horry, would have directed the S.C. Department of Natural

Resources to tag and release at least 12 coyotes across the state. The tagged coyotes would have had a bounty of at least \$1,000 each, payable to any hunter who bagged them.

Supporters said the bounty program would have encouraged hunters to shoot the vermin. Opponents said it would encourage reckless hunting.

YOU COULD HAVE TO REGISTER YOUR MOPED

Moped drivers soon could be required to register with the Department of Motor Vehicles and follow the same traffic rules as other vehicles.

The proposal, which lawmakers sent to Gov. Haley on Thursday, also would require mopeds to stay off most interstates — or roads with speed limits higher than

55 mph — and raise the minimum age to drive a moped to 15 from 14. It also would require drivers and passengers younger than 21 to wear a helmet.

The bill does not require moped drivers to carry insurance. Senators stripped that requirement earlier this week, saying it would have doomed the bill.

Staff writers Avery Wilks and Jamie Self contributed

Ethics reform remains unresolved

When lawmakers return to Columbia on June 15 to take up the governor's budget vetoes, they also could take up two proposed ethics reforms.

An agreement appeared to have been reached earlier this week on a proposal to have an independent panel investigate ethics allegations against lawmakers.

However, that deal broke down Thursday when the Senate insisted on its independent-investigation proposal.

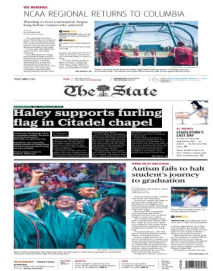
But House Speaker Pro Tempore Tommy Pope, R-York, said the Senate plan would keep investigations of lawmakers secret for too long, leaving the General Assembly under the cloud of recent ethics scandals.

Sen. Larry Martin, R-Pickens, said a joint House-Senate panel will continue to work toward an agreement on independent investigations and a second ethics proposal, requiring public officials to disclose information about the sources of their private income.

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REMEMBERING THE 'CHARLESTON NINE'

Haley supports furling flag in Citadel chapel

Anniversary of shooting is time to remember families, the good and bad of massacre's aftermath, S.C. governor says

Republican says expanding waiting periods for background checks on gun purchases would not solve problem

Divisive rhetoric leads to violence, Haley says

BY JAMIE SELF

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S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley said Thursday she would support lawmakers approving the removal of a Confederate flag from a chapel at The Citadel to a nearby museum.

But Haley said she does not support the state lengthening a federal three-day waiting period to complete background checks before gun purchases.

At the urging of Republican Haley, S.C. legislators removed

the Confederate flag from the State House grounds last summer after a self-avowed racist, who had posed with the flag, was charged with slaying nine parishioners of Charleston's Emanuel AME Church.

Subsequently, some legislators called on the state to close the so-called "Charleston loophole," which allows guns to be

purchased if a background check has not been completed

in three days.

Dylann Roof, accused of shooting and killing nine African-American churchgoers in Charleston last June, was able to buy a gun because the three-day waiting period ran out before a background check had been completed accurately. Roof should have been barred from

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HALEY

buying a gun because of an undiscovered pending drug charge, federal officials later said.

Speaking to reporters Thursday as the anniversary of the Charleston

massacre draws near, Haley blamed the federal background-check process for the gun sale, adding expanding the waiting period would not solve the problem of guns getting in

the wrong hands.

"You can expand it multiple days, but if you don't fix the system ... none of this matters. If I give you six more days, how are you going to

prove to me that it's going to fix it?"

Haley said she is concerned with making "sure this doesn't happen again."

But, she added, gun-

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control measures have not come up in her talks with legislators or the families of the church shooting victims.

"With the families that I talk to, it's more personal. We talk more about what they're going through and their faith and the hardships."

Jennifer Pinckney, the widow of pastor-Sen. Clementa Pinckney, who was among those slain at Emanuel, appeared with President Barack Obama when he announced executive orders on gun control, including expanded background checks.

HALEY: CADETS SHOULD PRESSURE LEGISLATURE

The Charleston church shooting also added vigor to an effort to remove the Confederate flag from a chapel at the nearby Citadel, which U.S. Rep. Jim Clyburn, D-Columbia, recently tried unsuccessfully

to push at the federal level.

Haley said she has told Citadel cadets that if they want to remove the flag, they need to call their legislators. A state law requires legislative approval to remove Confederate monuments and symbols from public spaces.

However, Haley said she does not support making other changes, including efforts to change

the names of buildings named after Confederate figures or sympathizers.

For example, some at Clemson University – Haley's alma mater – want to rename a building named for Ben Tillman, a racist post-Reconstruction S.C. governor and U.S. senator.

The flag was a "flying, living, breathing, representative symbol," Haley said Thursday. "You can't have that representation there, and have children drive by and think that they don't belong."

"If you start to go back in history for South Carolina, you'd be replacing every street sign, every building."

The goal in removing the flag at the State House, lowered last July, was "not to erase history," she said. "Our goal is to make sure every child felt welcome on State House grounds."

WISHES TRUMP RHETORIC WAS DIFFERENT

Haley said divisive rhetoric – like that seen in the presidential campaign – drives violence like the Charleston mass slaying.

Hearing that rhetoric from Donald Trump, the presumptive GOP presidential nominee, was "the reason I was vocal about it. I know what that rhetoric can do. I saw it happen" in Charleston, she

said.

"Bad things can happen when you have rhetoric like that, and people can get hurt."

Haley said she endorsed U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida in the GOP presidential contest "to show that that's not all of who we are."

"I don't think that people who support Trump are haters. I don't think that people who support Trump are racists. I think that's a different kind of anger in that they're upset with Washington, D.C. They're upset that nothing got done. And that's what this is about."

But, Haley added, "the way that he (Trump) communicates that, I wish were different."

'THE STATE WAS FOREVER CHANGED'

Haley spoke to reporters ahead of the first anniversary of the June 17 Charleston massacre.

Speaking at times through tears, Haley said that not a day goes by that she does not think about what happened in Charleston.

Haley said the anniversary, which she will spend in Charleston, is a time to think about the families of the victims, the community and how the state responded in the immediate aftermath.

"What I hope you will

do on this (one-) year anniversary (is) remember the families, remember the people, remember all the good and the bad that came out of it, and focus on that," she said. "That's what it is to me."

"The state was forever changed. I see good and bad that came out of June 17," Haley said. "The bad, obviously, is that we lost nine people, and that three other people (survivors who also were in Emanuel) have to live with that memory of what happened in that room that night."

"The good side of it was, I've never been more proud of the people in South Carolina. It should restore everyone's faith and goodness in people."

Haley said South Carolinians learned something about themselves in the aftermath of the shooting "that they didn't know" – something she credits with bringing down the Confederate flag.

"They all knew that they were a people of faith" and loved their neighbors, she said. "But this was a time that they were actually tested on it."

"They came through showing that that faith and that love that they talk about is real, and it was shown all across the state."

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After Emanuel

Nearing the one-year anniversary of the Charleston massacre, S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley said Thursday that:

- She favors removing the Confederate flag from a chapel at The Citadel but not renaming buildings
- She opposes closing the so-called 'Charleston loophole' by lengthening the background-check period to buy a gun
- Divisive rhetoric – like that of presumptive GOP nominee Donald Trump – can lead to violence