

I just want to be there on Judgement Day when the Lord performs unwelcome  
acts on the basis of all your dirtbags and casts you into hell for eternity.



**F**UNNY. IT'S usually Democrats who think you can get something for nothing. You know, a chicken in every pot, a car in every garage. It was libertarian economist Milton Friedman who had to come along and remind the Keynesians that there's no such thing as a free lunch.

And people sort of seemed to get that.

Then came Gov. Nikki Haley, who promised us for months that she was putting together a plan to patch our pock-marked highways and bolster our deteriorating bridges. And instead she offered us ... a tax cut. Which she called a road-repair plan.

Last week, in a blizzard of interviews apparently aimed at tamping down any traction that could be building for plans to actually fix our roads, the governor told reporters that she would only accept a road-repair plan that was packaged with "a significant" income tax cut. And then, in a jaw-dropping elaboration, she added: "It can't be revenue neutral."

Not to put too fine a point on it, but what the governor is saying is that she will oppose a road-repair plan that does not cut taxes. Massively.

## Tax-cut mandate

What's next? No legislation to toughen penalties for domestic violence unless it includes a significant income tax cut? No ethics reform unless it includes a significant income tax cut? That makes every bit as much sense as

what she's saying.

She didn't stop there. She also told reporters: "We'll let everything fall by the wayside before we allow the people of South Carolina to see a tax increase."

Note what she didn't say. She didn't say, "We'll let everything fall by the wayside before we subject the people of South Carolina to a tax increase." She said "before we allow the people of South Carolina to see a tax increase"

And I know this might seem like I'm playing with semantics, but you know, at some point, words matter. At some point, the governor is acknowledging that there are a lot of people in this state who want the Legislature to raise

taxes to pay for road repairs, because they understand math, and they know that's the only way to catch up after decades of neglect. And the governor is not going to

possible for our state to continue providing even the current sub-par level of services. The danger is that her plan will prevent any improvement of our roads.

As I've written before, I'm not certain that our roads ought to be our No. 1 priority. But a lot of people are convinced of that, and the fact is that if they want to improve them, it's going to mean either raising taxes or else making substantial cuts to the rest of government.

And that's the problem with the Haley plan: It pretends — based on absolutely nothing but that pixie dust — that we can have something for nothing. It pretends that we can fill a \$400 million-per-year pothole not by raising taxes by \$400 million but by cutting them by \$1.4 billion.

Seriously.

It's such a nutty idea that reasonable people can react by saying, "Oh, it must be that I just don't understand; there must be some other reason." I'm missing, because I would propose insane." It's precisely what she's done. And she's arguing that state taxes every year, afford to cut taxes a year because they show annual revenue will have grown by the time her term is over, in 2025. They could take all of the budget to cut the budget: total fund revenue in next year, and it would be \$8.7

lies on our economy growing at 4.1 percent per year — about the same rate it's grown in the past few years — for the next decade, which certainly is no certainty. But even if state revenue does grow that much, that doesn't mean there wouldn't be cuts. And it doesn't mean services wouldn't be diminished. There would be, and they would be.

## Inflation + population

There are three general approaches to government budgeting. You can keep providing the same level of services, you can provide more services, or you can provide fewer services. But those three options don't translate into spending the same amount of money, spending more money or spending less money.

The way to keep government the same size is to limit spending increases to the growth of population plus inflation. That way you can keep paying the bills — just like you keep buying gas and groceries and other necessities — while costs increase. You also can keep providing the same level of services as you have more people demanding those services.

And frankly, if your government is providing all the services that it needs to provide, then you ought to be able to continue to run it on the basis of inflation plus population growth. And over time, that's generally how much revenue grows if you neither raise nor lower taxes. That natural revenue growth, as it's called, is what Gov. Haley is referring to when she says we'll have \$3.2 billion a year more to

spend in 2025 than we do today.

But if you don't have that natural revenue growth — if you cut taxes so much that revenue remains flat or grows by a much lower rate than population and inflation rather than increasing naturally as the population rises and people make more money and spend more on taxable goods — then every year, the level of service you're able to provide per person shrinks.

Not only are you unable to hire another teacher when you get an extra 30 first-graders in your school, but you can't give any teachers a raise, even to keep up with inflation; so eventually all the good teachers will leave, or else you'll have to give them a raise, which means you have to reduce the number of teachers even more.

And that repeats throughout the government — fewer Highway Patrol troopers, fewer clerks to process the papers when you want to adopt a child or get a divorce, fewer SLED agents to catch bad guys, fewer case workers to investigate parents who might be abusing their children, and on and on.

That's what Nikki Haley is proposing.

The governor says we'll be able to "absorb" that loss, but she doesn't say how. And here's the best thing, from her perspective: She won't have to say how, not really. Her plan would phase in over 10 years, with the bulk of the cuts coming long after she has left the governor's mansion, spreading her trail of pixie dust behind her.

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Cindi Ross Scoppe

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And it's a proven fact that  
TAX CUTS bring the state  
back to life! Right, Nikki?



at projection re-

File Tim 03/18-24/15

# news of the weird

By Chuck Shepherd

"This will be upsetting," cautioned Justice Robert Graesser, addressing jurors in February in the Edmonton, Alberta, murder trial of Brad Barton. At issue was the cause of the victim's having bled to death from her genitals, and the judge, ruling that jurors would benefit by inspecting the actual wound, admitted the vagina itself (not a photograph) into evidence. The organ had been removed for autopsy and preserved, and the chief medical examiner donned rubber gloves and pointed out to jurors how "clean" the wound was (suggesting a sharp object), rather than the rougher "scraping" wound that would have been created in other ways, such as by impalement.

## News You Can Use

Researchers from Cornell University, inspired by the book *World War Z*, recently computer-simulated the spread of a zombie apocalypse — and now advise the anxiety-prone to head for higher ground if infections break out, recommending Glacier National Park in Montana or, even better, Alaska. Using differential equations and "lattice-based" models, the statisticians demonstrated that infections would slow dramatically as fewer

people became available to bite. The state most quickly wiped out? New Jersey.

## Legislators' War on Science

Nevada Assemblywoman Michele Fiore told a radio audience in February that she would soon introduce a bill reforming end-of-life procedures for terminally ill cancer patients, such as administering baking soda intravenously to "flush out" the cancer "fungus." Before her election in 2013, she was CEO of Always There Personal Care of Nevada, which she describes as being "in the healthcare industry."

In February, Idaho state Representative Vito Barbieri, at a hearing on a proposed bill to ban doctors from prescribing abortion-inducing medications via remote telecommunication, asked expert witness Dr. Julie Madsen about one alternative he had in mind: Couldn't a woman just swallow a small camera, he asked, and then have doctors conduct a remote gynecological exam? Dr. Madsen quickly reminded Rep. Barbieri that swallowed things do not end up in that part of a woman's body.

## Breaking Bad

Mark Rothwell made the news in Portland, Oregon, in March 2010 when he prevented a bank robbery (and rescued the terrified Chase teller) by jumping the thief, knocking his gun away and holding him until police arrived. He was later awarded a coveted Civilian Medal for Heroism. However, on Feb. 19, 2015, according to an arrest report, Rothwell himself pulled a

gun and robbed the Albina Community Bank in Portland, making off with \$15,700.

For Arthur Mendella, 57, a successful man

Both Republicans

Jesus H E

My Republican party has  
become a party of

CRACKPOTS!

You boys specifically included!

(R)

parking space at a Walmart in Greenfield, Wisconsin, Kezia Perkins, 32, was charged with assaulting a 71-year-old woman by, said a witness, "chest-butt[ing] her," knocking her to the ground. Said Perkins, "It's not my fault (she) bounced off my big [chest]." ("Chest" was substituted by WITI-TV of Milwaukee.)

## Our Next Delicate Generation

Several University of Iowa students requested and received — special "exceptions from assistance with" class work, including excusing after complaining of stress and a "loss of focus" caused by the appearance of a Ku Klux statue on campus in December. The alleged de-facto policy at Avalon Elementary School in Orlando, Florida, officials said, prohibited toilet-flushing during the state Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test. It was thought, an official said, that the running water sounds from nearby bathrooms would disturb the students.

## alcade of Rednecks

A 17-year-old man and two female companions were charged in February with stealing tires from nine trucks in the Orlando area. The spree ended when, noticing that a club car had offered a reward on Facebook for his help, the three tried to sell it back to the owner but botched the transaction.

In February, the driver of an empty car-carrying truck pulled off the Bishop Ford Freeway near Calumet City, Illinois, after he heard a calamitous sound and felt the trailer shaking violently. It turns out Asa Cole, 23, speeding and following too closely, had inadvertently driven his pickup truck up the low-hanging tracks of the trailer and come to a stop only inches away from the cab. [E]