

Title: **Haley signs bill funding billions for roads by borrowing**
Author: By SEANNA ADCOX Associated Press
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Haley signs bill funding billions for roads by borrowing

By SEANNA ADCOX

Associated Press

COLUMBIA — Gov. Nikki Haley reluctantly signed legislation Wednesday that will let the state borrow \$2.2 billion to jump-start improvements to South Carolina's deteriorating roads, saying she did so only because its so-called reforms are better than nothing. The Republican governor said the law provides a step forward in highway funding and marginal improvements to the Department of Transportation's governance. "To claim this law as anything close to a victory, to represent

it in any way as a true solution to our infrastructure problems" would be deceiving the public, she said in a letter to legislative leaders she sent along with the signed law.

The bill allowing for \$2.2 billion in borrowing over 10 years

for infrastructure is funded with \$200 million annually in existing fees and vehicle sales taxes. Department of Transportation Secretary Christy Hall has said that frees up other money

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ROADS

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the agency can use to replace bridges and pave roads, allowing more than \$4 billion worth of total work.

Haley criticized the behind-the-scenes negotiations of the compromise approved in the legislative session's final days.

Senators passed their plan late May 31, hours after House Speaker Jay Lucas took the podium to blast senators for their inaction and Haley for not demanding a vote. The House gave final approval a day later.

Lucas said Wednesday the governor may have gotten better reform if she'd engaged in the final negotiations as he requested.

"The House never suggested that these DOT reform measures were perfect and we stand by our commitment to finding a long-term, sustainable funding stream to permanently fix our roads," said Lucas, R-Hartsville.

Senate President Pro Tem Hugh Leatherman has repeatedly called his borrowing proposal a step in

addressing the state's crumbling highways — not a fix.

The DOT has said it needs an additional \$1.5 billion annually over several decades to bring the nation's fourth-largest highway system to good condition.

"I appreciate the governor's signature and understand her frustration," said House Assistant Majority Leader Gary Simrill, R-Rock Hill, who has led the House's road-funding efforts since fall 2014.

When faced with the prospect of that effort

dying, "do you wait and tell the people of South Carolina that no, there will be no roads fix over the next 12 months, or that this is incremental progress?" he said. "You have a shot in the arm to dilapidated roads."

Haley's insistence for years that she would veto anything increasing the state's 16-cents-per-gallon gas tax stymied previous highway-funding efforts. After winning re-election, Haley said she could support an increase under certain conditions.



NIKKI HALEY

Title: **Little bit of irony as session ends**
 Author:
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■ OUR VIEW

Little bit of irony as session ends

Busy, busy, busy.

Indeed, with more than 40 pieces of legislation sliding across Gov. Nikki Haley's desk last week, one would be led to believe lawmakers had quite the busy session from January until Thursday. And yes, they were busy, but they were not necessarily as busy doing what *needed* to be done as they might have been busy *bickering* about what needed done. And busy doing what made them look good — at least, that is, in their eyes — to their constituents.

This is not to say that nothing meaningful was accomplished or that *all* lawmakers are guilty, but there is, we think, a bit of irony to some legislation passed as the session came to an end.

That lawmakers cut their session by several weeks and will now adjourn the second Thursday in May rather than the first Thursday in June is a splendid idea and a cost-saver. At least, it's touted to be a cost-saver. We'll agree, provided it also results in lawmakers getting on with business and being efficient with their time, and next year will be the year of discovery on that front. But if there is as much wrangling and busyness as before, only in a smaller window of time, nothing will have been gained by shortening the session. We'd like to see them streamline further by setting aside specific times for introducing people in the gallery and bestowing this and that recognition on their constituents, affording them more time to deal with real issues that affect the taxpayers.

Somewhat related is the legislation that establishes the third Saturday of May each year as "South Carolina Day of Service," in which residents are encouraged to "roll up their sleeves and lend a hand to make a positive difference in the state." C'mon, you have to see the irony in that one. But since the session will have adjourned the second Thursday of that month, there should be plenty of opportunity for the lawmakers to pitch right in. Reflecting on the other piece of legislation, however, makes us want to stress again that we'd like to see the abbreviated session be a session of service — again, harkening to the desire to see them give us an honest Session of Service.

Come to think of it, they could provide a meaningful bit of service to the state's residents by finally reforming the state's Freedom of Information Act right out of the gate instead of kicking it down the street yet again. Not to sound too pessimistic, but we suspect next year will be more of the same, only in less time than normal thanks to the shorter session. If they cannot come to terms with this issue after six years of wrangling, it is difficult to believe they will get it taken care of in a shorter session. And too many lawmakers apparently don't think the residents deserve speedy, cost-effective access to public information. Providing that would be too akin to good service. How ironic.

Title: **Haley signs tax cut for military retirees**
Author:
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Haley signs tax cut for military retirees

COLUMBIA — South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley has signed a tax cut for military retirees into law.

Haley signed the bill Tuesday. The Legislature gave final approval to the compromise minutes before the session ended Thursday.

The tax benefits for veterans who served 20 years in uniform will phase in over five years. By 2020, military retirees younger than 65 can deduct \$17,500 of their income earned in the state. Older retirees can exempt up to \$30,000. Once fully phased in, the cuts are expected to reduce state revenues by \$18 million.

Title: **Better roads funding needed in state**
 Author: Editorial
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Better roads funding needed in state

Editorial

South Carolina lawmakers patted each other on the back following passage of S. 1258, a Senate road funding bill that legislators say will increase funding by more than \$4 billion in the next 10 years.

"Members of the House understand that the people of South Carolina expect their Legislature to pass a roads bill this year," House Speaker Jay Lucas, R-Darlington, said in a news release.

"Although more effort must be made next session to find a long-term funding stream, this bill is a starting point that allows for adequate repair of deficient roads and bridges without raiding our state's General Fund," the release said.

But it's also not entirely accurate to suggest S. 1258 won't potentially impact the general fund and the agencies that would be dependent on it.

S. 1258, for example, diverts \$84.2 million in S.C. Department of Motor Vehicles fee revenue to the State Highway Fund. The bill in its current form also creates a detour from the state's school build-

ing fund, ferrying nearly \$61 million to the State Highway Fund.

The bill includes a variety of other funding detours designed to generate billions of dollars.

Rep. Gary Simrill, R-Rock Hill, who crafted the House companion bill, said the S.C. DMV and school building funds would be replenished with general fund appropriations.

"The DMV will not be shortchanged as a result of this," Simrill said, noting the school building fund will be similarly unaffected.

That appears to be the case in this year's budget, but if there's one certainty to the budgeting process, it's that the general fund is a floating target and isn't immune to future funding cuts or transfers.

The Great Recession of 2008 made it painfully obvious that no public service is immune from budget cuts during times of economic downturn. Even in good times, there's no guarantee funding will remain in place

over the long term.

State lawmakers assert the fund transfers are integral components to highway legislation because it gives government more flexibility in bonding road projects. Simrill said it's easier to leverage bonds against guaranteed revenue sources, such as DMV fees, than it is against general fund revenue.

"It's a revenue bond and not a general obligation bond," he said.

Simrill said that's significant because revenue bonds can be issued more quickly and in smaller amounts than general obligation bonds, thereby accelerating road projects by borrowing in smaller, more frequent increments.

The Rock Hill lawmaker likened the process to the home mortgage lending process. It would be like paying for a house in phases instead of all at once, like with a conventional mortgage, he said.

That is a creative way of looking at it. And it's hard to deny the logic behind securing more frequent, short-term loans.

Rep. Bill Taylor, R-Aiken, tells us S. 1258 will generate \$32 million for road resurfacing projects in Aiken County, \$14 million for Edgefield County and \$15 million for Barnwell County.

Taylor said the bill would result in an additional \$52 million to resurface I-20 from Exit 5 to the Georgia state line. If funding comes to fruition, it's hard to reject that level of support.

That, however, still doesn't fully allay our concerns about shifting DMV and school building revenues to roads and replacing fee revenue with general fund revenue. General fund revenues almost always fluctuate; seldom are they etched in stone.

With travel reaching all-time highs, South Carolina needs a better, more dependable way to fund road repair and construction.

While the current plan likely headed to Gov. Nikki Haley's desk may generate short-term revenue, it's sustainability over the long-term still remains doubtful.

(From The Aiken Standard)

Title: **Japanese plutonium arrives in SC**
Author:
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Japanese plutonium arrives in SC

COLUMBIA — A shipment of plutonium from Japan arrived Monday at a South Carolina nuclear site, despite objections from Gov. Nikki Haley to her state being used as storage for such materials.

In a news release, the National Nuclear Security Administration confirmed that 331 kilograms of plutonium had arrived at the Savannah River Site near Aiken. Federal officials also said that a shipment of highly enriched uranium has also been transferred to the Y-12 National Security Complex near Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

Title: **Champions for children**
 Author: BY CLAYTON STAIRS cstairs@southstrandnews.com
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Champions for children

Foster families needed in Georgetown County

BY CLAYTON STAIRS

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Steve and Hope Smith of Georgetown have fostered more than 40 children in the past eight years through the Georgetown County Foster Parent Association. They have adopted two of them: Zack, 17, and Devin, 8.

"Fostering is all about being there for children in their time of need," said Hope Smith, who works with Kid In Development Services LLC,

an early intervention program. "We provide them with a safe house until they can be placed back with their family, or in another long-term placement."

Zack, who has been with the Smiths for five years, said he is glad the Smiths adopted him. Previously acting out in school and receiving failing grades, he is now an A-B student who is planning to go

to college.

"I am happy that I got put with this family," he said. "They really accepted me and made me feel like one of their own children."

May was National Foster Care Awareness month, during which the South Carolina Department of Social Services worked to recruit and support foster parents to help provide care and protection

to the more than 4,000 children currently in care.

"Across the state, 54 percent of children were placed in foster homes outside their home counties because there aren't enough foster homes in their county," said Marilyn M. Matheus, spokeswoman for the South Carolina Department of Social Services.

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Foster families needed in county

FROM PAGE 1A

ment of Social Services. "In Georgetown County, there are approximately 40 children currently in foster care. However, only 43 percent are able to be placed in homes within Georgetown County due to the shortage of foster homes."

The Georgetown County FPA, which consists of 13 foster families, was recently named the 2016 Local Agency of the Year by the South Carolina FPA.

"Although the organization is limited in number, we have made huge strides this year to help foster children, as well as support Georgetown County's foster families," said Julie Speer, president

of the Georgetown County FPA. She said the group has partnered with Books-A-Million, Barnes and Noble, Goodwill, Lowes Foods, Bi-Lo, Georgetown County Public Library, Georgetown Breakfast and Lunch Rotary clubs, Georgetown Presbyterian Church Youth Group and International Paper.

Hope Smith said she wants to see more families open up their hearts and homes and become foster parents.

"I would urge them to foster, but to me the important thing is adopting kids out of the foster system and giving them a permanent home," she said. "And I would urge people to not be afraid of fostering or adopting older chil-

dren because a lot of people want babies."

Steve Smith, who is a sales associate with Advance Auto, agreed.

"It is very satisfying to be a foster parent," he said. "Most of the older children up for adoption will be in group homes until they age out of the system at 18."

Hope Smith said she and her husband would have adopted more of the children who have lived in their home, if it had been possible.

"The truth is, if every one of the children came up for adoption, we would have taken as many as we could," she said.

Earlier this year, the De-

partment of Social Services launched a foster care recruitment campaign. In March, Gov. Nikki Haley endorsed the recruitment campaign called "Champions for Children" with a goal of recruiting approximately 1,500 new foster parents in South Carolina.

"We are reaching out to people who may have never thought of foster care to consider ways they can help," said DSS State Director Susan Alford. "We want the public to talk about foster care because we know word of mouth is the most effective marketing tool."

For more information on becoming a foster parent, visit www.SCFamilies.org.

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CLAYTON STAIRS/SOUTH STRAND NEWS

Steve and Hope Smith of Georgetown, left, stand with their adopted sons, Devin, 8, and Zacki, 17. The Smiths are one of several foster families in Georgetown County.



PROVIDED

The Georgetown County Foster Parent Association was named Outstanding Local Foster Parent Association for 2016. From left, Robert and Mary Elmore, Jason and Michelle Oldaker, Linda and Arnold Shaw, Violet Hutchinson, Scott and Julie Speer.

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CLAYTON STAIRS/SOUTH STRAND NEWS

Zack and Devin walk with their foster brother near their home in Georgetown.

Title: **Haley takes sides in race for Senate**
 Author: BY MAX HREND A mhrenda@southstrandnews.com
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Haley takes sides in race for Senate

Governor 'disappointed' in Rep. Goldfinch

By MAX HREND A

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While most of Gov. Nikki Haley's appearance in Georgetown was spent discussing state business, after it concluded, she delivered harsh criticism toward a local state representative.

"I endorsed him because he was a freshman coming in," Haley said, "but I've never been more disappointed in a legislator than in Stephen Goldfinch."

Haley made her statement after appearing at

a Rotary Club of Georgetown Lunch event at Chacon's of Georgetown Tuesday, May 31, and hours before she was scheduled to appear at a campaign event for Reese Boyd III. Boyd, a Murrells Inlet resident and Myrtle Beach attorney, and Goldfinch, who represents District 108 — which includes Georgetown and Horry counties — in the state House of Representatives, are both seeking the District 34 state Senate seat that will be vacated when sitting Sen. Ray Cleary finishes out his term.

Boyd and Goldfinch, along with contractor Joe Ford and businessman Dick Withington, are all seeking the Republican nomination for the Senate seat. With no other challengers from any other political party on the ballot, the June 14 primary will, in all likelihood, determine who will succeed Cleary in the Senate.

After speaking to Rotarians Tuesday, Haley made her preference known.

"I am looking forward to seeing Reese Boyd," Haley said. "I think he will be a fantastic legislator who will make some changes."

Boyd, who also attended Tuesday's lunch, said he was "thrilled" to have Haley's

support, while adding he saw it as a positive indication of his campaign efforts.

"We're very thrilled to have the governor's support," Boyd said. "Her appear-

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Port a priority,
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Haley takes sides in race

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ance at the event tonight is another indication of how the momentum is picking up. We're very happy with where we are."

While praising Boyd, Haley chided Goldfinch for what she called "terrible votes" that ran contrary to her conservative agenda.

"You've got one incumbent House member who is run-

ning who has made terrible votes, from tax increases to increasing his pay by 53 percent to even overruling my workplace initiatives," she said. "Anything that we have wanted, he sided with leadership and Democrats of the old guard."

Her statements came less than two years after Haley stumped for Goldfinch at a Sept. 25, 2014, Republican

rally in Pawleys Island, before he was elected to his second term in the House. During that event, she said, "I need a representative that is going to fight for the people he represents, not fight for the establishment in Columbia."

Goldfinch contended Haley supported him in 2014 even though the votes she called into question were cast before that election. He

added, however, he was disappointed to be chastised by someone whom he has supported.

"Here's why it hurts — we're not on opposite ends of the political spectrum," Goldfinch said. "This is 100 percent a personality difference. I believe — and, quite frankly, most people who know her and are in Columbia believe — she is running

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the state on emotions, rather than with business sense. This is an emotional reaction to a personality difference. ... Policy-wise, the governor and I agree 99 percent of the time. Leadership-wise, I completely and wholeheartedly disagree with her, and I will continue to tell her that until the day she leaves.”

The disagreement between Haley and Goldfinch moved into the public light earlier this year. According to a March 5 article in The State newspaper, Haley’s political action committee, A Great Day in SC, launched a series of ads against Goldfinch and other legislators who had “irked” her ahead

of this year’s election.

Despite his public feud with the governor, Goldfinch said he expected to secure a return to Columbia this election year.

“If she wants to recruit somebody to run against me, which she did, and support him, which she does, that’s fine,” he said. “But when I

go back to Columbia in the winter of next year as the next senator for Senate District 34, I’ll continue to fight for conservative reform, I’ll continue to do what I think is right, and I’ll continue to support her — regardless of her stabbing me in the back — because it’s the right thing to do.”



Haley



Reese Boyd III



Stephen Goldfinch

Title: **Governor: Port of Georgetown still a priority for SC**
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Governor: Port of Georgetown still a priority for SC

By MAX HRENDА

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Gov. Nikki Haley said the dredging of the Port of Georgetown remained a priority for the state, but did not specify as to when, or if, any action would be taken.

The question came from a member of the audience during Haley's appearance at a Rotary Club of Georgetown Lunch event May 31 at Chacon's of Georgetown.

Haley said the Port of Georgetown was the last of a three-tiered approach to repairing and maintaining three of South Carolina's ports: Charleston, Jasper and Georgetown.

She added, however, there was still some disagreement over the potential benefits dredging the port could offer.

"There are many members on the

(SC Ports Authority) board who feel like, 'I don't know what we can do with Georgetown; I don't know how much they can hold,'" Haley said. "What I had asked is that we bring a group together this summer to meet with the leaders of Georgetown, to meet with the leaders of the ports, to meet with tourism and come together to determine, OK, what are we going to do with Georgetown?"

Haley told those in the crowd to expect a public announcement of that meeting to be made sometime this summer, adding that details were still in the works.

"We need to do something with Georgetown," she said. "This is a fantastic place that has a lot of op-

portunities, and we need to make it everything that we can. So we've done one port at a time; it's Georgetown's turn."

Also during the meeting, Haley was asked if she had been contacted by Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump's campaign

with regard to the possibility of running as his vice president. As she has done in the past, Haley said she intends to finish out her term as governor before moving on to other political opportunities.

"I have said that I have a job to do in South Carolina, and I want to finish my job," Haley said. "It's a promise I made to all of you. ... I am staying, and I am not going anywhere. You all are stuck with me for three more years."

Title: **Questions Al Joseph's allegiance to voters**
 Author:
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Questions Al Joseph's allegiance to voters

To the editor,

Why is Al Joseph so hell-bent on dissing the very constituency which helped him get elected? What does Joseph know that Gov. Nikki Haley, Sen. Lindsey Graham, Paul Thurmond, James Clyburn don't? Each of these noted officials have argued for an end to the bitter divisiveness brought on by the public display of the Confederate flag.

Overwhelmingly blacks abhor the symbolism of this flag, but realize that it represents something totally different to many Southern whites who view it as part of their heritage. However, we draw the line when asked to fund the flag with our tax dollars. The City Council is debating whether to help fund the construction of a monument by American Legion Post 114 and the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 6444 on Church Street. They're asking taxpayers to chip in \$15,000 for this project.

The proposal is being championed by Republican councilmembers Carol Jayroe, Ed Kimbrough and newly elected Democratic Council member Al Joseph.

Interestingly, during his

campaign, Joseph went out of his way to befriend the black community. He visited black churches, counseled black youth after the tragic death of one of their own offering them mentorship programs, and even hired a black deputy campaign manager who extolled the virtues of how Joseph's parents showed his family great empathy while growing up - something about getting meat on credit from a store Joseph's family operated. With 67 percent of the population African-American, how benevolent of Joseph to reach out to black community?

Ignoring the proverbial semblance of separation between church and state, Joseph's own church proudly endorsed his candidacy on the church's marquee located on the corner of Highmarket and Broad streets. Tragically, it took the death of nine God-fearing, taxpaying South Carolinians at another church, Mother Emmanuel, before fair-minded officials said enough is enough.

Gov. Haley, Sen. Graham and the son of Strom Thurmond (who obviously knows a thing or two about Southern heritage) all agreed it was time to end the deep

emotional and psychological scars that blacks suffer at the sight of the Confederate flag.

In this highly polarized political season the proverbial lines between liberal/conservative, Democratic/Republican and legal/illegal immigrant have been blurred by the current crop of bloviating bombastic bigots running for president. Is Joseph a true Democrat or just a Republican cleverly disguised as a Democrat?

Doesn't he know that any monument which honors Southern heritage at the expense of black taxpayers is a slap in the face to the black community? Asking blacks to pay for a monument for those who've marginalized, brutalized and dehumanized their ancestors for 300 years is like asking Mexicans to build a wall and pay for it or asking Jews to pay for the construction of a monument to honor dead Nazis - truly, a rare form of stupidity.

Steve Williams

Georgetown

(Editor's note: This letter was submitted before the City Council voted against providing public funds for the veterans monument on May 10)



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Lewis M. Caswell receives The Order of the Palmetto

Contributed by
Beverly Austin

Lewis M. Caswell, chairman of W. O. Blackstone & Co., Inc., was presented the Order of the Palmetto by Senator Katrina Shealy at the 12th Annual Statewide Meeting of the Mechanical Contractors' Association of South Carolina March 21, 2016, at the Phillips Market Center, State Farmers' Market in West Columbia, S.C. The Order of the Palmetto is the highest civilian honor awarded by the State of South Carolina. It is awarded to persons who make contributions of statewide significance and was bestowed by Governor Nikki Haley.

Lewis attended Lower Richland District 5 Schools, graduating with honors from Lower Richland High School in 1954. He graduated from USC in 1959 with a bachelor of

science in mechanical engineering, has been associated with W.O. Blackstone and Co. Inc. since 1959 except for a tour of active duty in the USAF, and was majority stockholder from 1982-2013.

He has been a member of the Mechanical Contractors' Association of S.C. for 56 years, served as president from 1971-1972, and is a life member of The American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers, having served as president of the South Carolina Chapter in 1967-68.

He retired from the S.C. Air National Guard with the rank of colonel in 1987 after nearly 34 years of service. He was a member of the S.C. Building Codes Council for 18 years, having been appointed by Governor West in 1972 and reappointed by Governor

Edwards and Governor Riley. Governor Beasley appointed him to the S.C. Contractors' Licensing Board in 1996. He was reappointed by Governor Hodges, Governor Sanford, and Governor Haley, and is now in his 20th year on the board, the past four as chairman.

Lewis has been a member of the Greater Columbia YMCA Board since 1995. In 2014, he was named to the National YMCA Honor Roll. He is an endowed Scholarship Donor to the USC College of Engineering, a member of the College of Engineering Partnership Board, member of the USC 1841 Society, member of the USC Horseshoe Society, and has been a scholarship donor to the USC Gamecock Club for the past 47 years.





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Sen. Katrina Shealy presents Lewis M. Caswell with the Order of the Palmetto.