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Subject: Morning Clips – Thursday, April 14, 2016

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Governor Nikki Haley News:

The State: SC House kills road-repair bill, governor, senator say

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/politics-columns-blogs/the-buzz/article71673907.html>

Cassie Cope

Gov. Nikki Haley said Wednesday the S.C. House has killed a proposal to change the structure of the state Transportation Department, giving her more control over the state's roads agency. But House members said the road-repair bill now is back in the Senate's court. Senators either can agree with the House's roads proposal or let a House-Senate panel work out the differences between the two proposals, they added. The House voted 113-6 to send the roads issue back to the Senate. The House's latest proposal includes requiring both the House and Senate — not just the Senate — approve the governor's nominees to the commission that oversees the Transportation Department. That caveat amounts to "essentially killing any possibility for a good roads bill," Haley said in a Facebook post Wednesday.

Independent Mail: Anderson County legislator: Gov. Haley is a 'hypocrite' on roads

<http://www.independentmail.com/news/anderson-county-legislator-gov-haley-is-a-hypocrite-on-roads-305fd665-fa57-141a-e053-0100007f6e43-375643281.html>

Kirk Brown

A freshman legislator from Anderson County sharply criticized Gov. Nikki Haley on Wednesday, calling her a "hypocrite" for changing her positions on raising South Carolina's gas tax and altering the governing structure of the state's roads agency. Speaking on the House floor, Rep. Jonathon Hill recalled remarks that Haley made during a June 2014 visit to Anderson. Responding to questions at that event, Haley said she was opposed to increasing the state's 16-cent per gallon gas tax and also complained about the commission that oversees the South Carolina Department of Transportation. Hill, a Republican from Townville, said he was "extremely disappointed" that Haley "came out with a plan to raise the gas tax" after she was re-elected and now is seeking the authority to appoint members of the DOT commission. "Gov. Haley, in Anderson that is what we call being a hypocrite," Hill said.

General Assembly News:

Associated Press: SC House alters roads bill; senators say bill is likely dead

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=G9Bad0mV

Jeffrey Collins

The South Carolina House made changes Wednesday to the roads bill that has been debated for more than a year, leading senators and the governor to say the proposal is likely dead for the year. South Carolina roads will still likely get more money. The House has placed an extra \$400 million in its budget it sent to the Senate. But Wednesday's amendment greatly reduces the chances of

reforming how commissioners are chosen to the board that helps run the Department of Transportation. Many lawmakers have said that is a critical first step toward getting closer to the extra \$1 billion a year the road agency has said it needs to get state highways back to good condition. The House could have agreed to the Senate road bill, which allows Gov. Nikki Haley to appoint all members of the DOT board with Senate approval. But instead, the House changed the bill to have approval by the House and Senate.

Greenville News: House changes could doom Senate roads plan

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/politics/2016/04/13/house-changes-could-doom-senate-roads-plan/82972440/>

Tim Smith

The House is refusing to go along with the Senate's road plan, despite a warning by Gov. Nikki Haley that changing what the Senate did would doom any chance of a roads bill this year. The House voted 113-6 Wednesday afternoon to amend the Senate plan by sending the issue of road funding to the budget and requiring that the governor's appointment of highway commissioners and a transportation secretary be approved by a joint assembly of House and Senate lawmakers. The bill also removes the state Department of Transportation chief internal auditor from the control of the DOT board and places it under the state auditor, following recommendations by last week's Legislative Audit Council report. The changes put the House on a collision course with the Senate, which labored for three years before passing a plan last month that would provide \$400 million a year for roads out of the General Fund, allow the governor to appoint highway commissioners and require any decisions on projects by the State Transportation Infrastructure Bank be approved by the highway commission.

Associated Press: Senate bill requires officials to report who pays them

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=gZspfpir

Seanna Adcox

Elected and appointed public officials in South Carolina would have to report the sources of their private income - but not how much they are paid - under legislation approved Thursday by the Senate. The Senate passed the measure by a vote of 40-1. In addition to legislators, the bill would include statewide officers, such as the governor, and members of public boards, such as school boards and city and county councils. Sen. Vincent Sheheen called it "fake" disclosure. "If the point of this is to disclose to voters so they can make intelligent decisions based on your economic activity, then y'all be real about it," said Sheheen, D-Camden. "There's a difference between \$100 and \$1 million." But his attempt to further amend the bill to require officeholders to report how much they make failed on a voice vote.

The State: Senate OKs requiring elected officials to disclose who pays them

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/politics-columns-blogs/the-buzz/article71697012.html>

Cassie Cope

The S.C. Senate passed a proposal Wednesday to require elected officials and candidates to disclose where they get their money. "Disclosing sources of private income is a significant first step for the Senate in enacting ethics reform," said Senate Judiciary Committee chairman Larry Martin, R-Pickens. "It will provide the public with important information about who pays public officials, making potential conflicts more transparent." Senate Majority Leader Shane Massey, R-Edgefield, said S.C. citizens deserve to know who is paying their elected officials.

Post and Courier: Senate approves bill requiring lawmakers disclose private sources of income

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160413/PC1603/160419647>

Maya T. Prabhu

Less than a week after Gov. Nikki Haley said income disclosure had been killed in the Senate, lawmakers voted for an ethics reform bill that will require public officials to disclose sources of income. "Well it's not dead," Sen. Larry Martin, R-Pickens, said Wednesday following a vote on the bill's second reading. The 40-1 margin comes a day after senators moved to give the bill, which was sent over from the House of Representatives last year, a priority debate spot. Sen. Margie Bright Matthews, D-Walterboro, voted against the legislation. The bill will require everyone who files a statement of economic interest — from the governor to locally appointed boards — to include sources of private income, making potential conflicts of interest transparent, Martin said.

Associated Press : Some Richland legislators call for criminal investigation of Recreation Commission

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/crime/article71678767.html#storylink=apmobile>

Sarah Ellis

A trio of Richland County legislators is calling for an investigation by the Richland County Sheriff's Department into the Richland County Recreation Commission, which is facing lawsuits and recent reports alleging improper conduct by its director and members of its legislative-appointed board. Two lawsuits have been filed in the past two weeks against the commission; its director, James Brown III; the commission's director of human resources, David Stringer; and two members of the appointed board that oversees the commission, Marie Green and Barbara Mickens. One of the legal complaints, filed by commission employee Andrea Fripp James, accuses Brown of sexual harassment and other improper conduct. The second complaint, filed by the former assistant executive director of the commission, Kenya Bryant, claims Bryant was improperly terminated and accuses Brown and board members of improper behavior.

Aiken Standard: Gun reciprocity bill to head to Senate floor

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/article/20160413/AIK0101/160419749>

A bill that would allow concealed weapon permit holders to carry between Georgia and South Carolina is closer to a Senate vote. The bill, H. 3799, passed the Senate Judiciary committee Tuesday with a 21-0 vote and will now head to the Senate floor. If South Carolina passes legislation to recognize Georgia, there will be reciprocity between the two states. Rep. Bill Hixon, R-North Augusta, told the Aiken Standard in March an amendment has been added to the bill that would require concealed weapons permit holders to obey the CWP laws of South Carolina when they are in the state. Hixon has championed the legislation, frequently noting his constituents' close proximity to the Georgia border. He has gained support from members of the Aiken County Legislative Delegation in sponsoring the bill. It unanimously passed a Senate subcommittee in March. The House passed the bill 101-5 last April.

Sen. Lee Bright's 'Bathroom Bill':

Post and Courier: Palmetto Sunrise: Round two of testimony on transgender bathroom bill

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160414/PC1603/160419634>

Maya T. Prabhu

After nearly two hours of testimony, Roebuck Republican Sen. Lee Bright called for a second day for people who want to voice their opinions of his bill that would require transgender people to require them to use the bathroom that matches the gender on their birth certificate. Testimony will continue Thursday afternoon, with Bright and Sen. Joel Lourie, D-Columbia, meeting one hour after the Senate adjourns. The Senate is scheduled to begin 11 a.m. Thursday. Those wishing to testify during a

Senate hearing Wednesday morning filled the small hearing room and overflowed into the hallways on the third floor of the L. Marion Gressette State Office Building. After about 20 people testified, with the majority speaking against the bill, and many more saying they wanted to weigh in, Bright and Lourie agreed to meet again on Thursday.

Associated Press: Conservative lawmakers drive backlash against LGBT rights

<http://bigstory.ap.org/urn:publicid:ap.org:2c10907842cd4506a0c14ada1ac0b7c0>

Jeffrey Collins

Year after year, South Carolina Sen. Lee Bright has watched as gays won more rights through legislation and the courts. And as he sees proposals elsewhere in the U.S. aimed at allowing transgender people to use the bathroom that conforms to their identity, he says plenty of people feel just like he does. "I've about had just about enough of this. Years ago, we kept talking about tolerance, tolerance and tolerance. And now they want men who claim to be women to go in the bathroom with children," said Bright, who has proposed a bill to keep transgender people in restrooms conforming to their sex at birth. Bright's proposal is part of a backlash by lawmakers across the historically conservative South who have passed laws that LGBT groups say roll back their rights. South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley said Bright's proposal was unnecessary. Corporate leaders by the dozen, most with global reach, have been pressuring the same conservatives who lured their companies.

Associated Press: Bathroom access for transgender people debated across South

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=KJS5t0jl

Seanna Adcox

Louisiana's governor issued an executive order Wednesday banning discrimination in state government based on sexual orientation and gender identity, and transgender people in South Carolina told state senators that a bill requiring them to use a public bathroom corresponding to their "biological sex" puts them in danger of harassment. In Tennessee, 60 business leaders - including the CEOs of Williams-Sonoma, Airbnb, Alcoa, T-Mobile and Dow Chemical - signed a letter asking lawmakers to kill similar legislation. The events seemed to unfold across the South almost simultaneously as the fight over LGBT rights raged on. The South Carolina bill introduced by Sen. Lee Bright would require multistall bathrooms on public property to be designated and used "based on biological sex." It specifically includes student bathrooms, locker rooms and showers in public schools. It would also bar local governments from requiring businesses to let transgender people use the bathroom of their choice. In Louisiana, the LGBT protection order signed by Democratic Gov. John Bel Edwards prohibits state agencies, boards and contractors from harassment or discrimination based on race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, political affiliation, disability or age. State contracts will be required to include a similar anti-discrimination provision.

Associated Press: SC senators continue hearings on transgender bathroom bill

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=yfCmsxBp

Seanna Adcox

South Carolina senators are taking more testimony on a bill limiting the bathroom choices for transgender people, as debate on similar bills continues across the South. Most of the people at Wednesday's hearing opposed the measure. Only a fraction of attendees could fit inside the room. A larger room has been reserved Thursday. Republican Sen. Lee Bright says his bill is about the privacy and safety of women and children. Transgender people say the proposal puts them in danger of harassment and violence. Opponents also say it would cause economic fallout, as North Carolina's

law did.

The State: SC transgender bathroom bill draws more opponents than support

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/politics-columns-blogs/the-buzz/article71540477.html>

Cassie Cope

Two state senators — bill sponsor Lee Bright, R-Spartanburg, and bill opponent Joel Lourie, D-Richland — heard from opponents and supporters of the proposal, which mimics part of a North Carolina law that brought a national backlash. The bill would ban local governments from passing laws allowing transgender people to use the bathrooms or locker rooms of the gender with which they identify. Bright's proposal faced a tough uphill fight to become law, considered unlikely this year. If it passes the Senate's full General Committee, Lourie vowed to do everything he can, procedurally, to kill the proposal. And, in the Senate, a single member can hold up a bill, particularly as the legislative session winds down. Republican Gov. Nikki Haley also has said the bill is unnecessary, and the state's powerful Chamber of Commerce opposes it. However, a handful of supporters testified in favor of the proposal Wednesday.

Herald-Journal: SC panel hears from foes, supporters of transgender bathroom bill

<http://www.goupstate.com/article/20160413/articles/160419847>

Chris Lavender

A Spartanburg woman told a state Senate subcommittee Wednesday that a bill preventing transgender people from using the bathroom of their choice is based on fear and misunderstanding. Deb Foreman, whose adult son is transgender, was one of several people who testified both against and for the measure proposed by state Sen. Lee Bright, R-Roebuck, during the hearing. Bright's bill would force transgender people to use bathrooms, showers or changing rooms based on their biological gender. Private businesses also would not have to accommodate transgender men or women. The measure is modeled on a similar law in North Carolina. Foreman described how her son has struggled because of others' ignorance. "He still fears using a public bathroom because of societal hate and discrimination, and this legislation would make it even worse," Foreman said. "With all due respect, Sen. Bright, you are ignorant to the issues of the LGBT community," Foreman said.

Herald-Journal: Sheriff Wright defends bathroom bill comments

<http://www.goupstate.com/article/20160413/ARTICLES/160419842/1083/ARTICLES?Title=Sheriff-Wright-defends-bathroom-bill-comments->

Bob Montgomery

Longtime Spartanburg County Sheriff Chuck Wright has become something of an Internet sensation with his comments on the controversial transgender "bathroom bill" being discussed in the South Carolina Senate. "If you're a guy ... I'm gonna whip your tail if you go in there with my wife while she's trying to use the bathroom," Wright, who's running for re-election, said at last week's GSP Republican Women's candidate forum in Pelham. A video of the comments posted by a user named DimsdaleDebate has made waves on YouTube. On Wednesday, it had 41,320 hits, 173 likes, 11 dislikes and 63 comments. "If you're a guy ... I'm gonna whip your tail if you go in there with my wife while she's trying to use the bathroom," Wright, who's running for re-election, said at last week's GSP Republican Women's candidate forum in Pelham. Wright told the Herald-Journal he stands by his comments and support of Republican state Sen. Lee Bright's bill, which would require transgender people to use the bathrooms of their biological gender. "I do support a bill that says men have to use the men's room and women the women's room," he said. "My fear is that some of these folks that are not truly transgender are going to use this as an avenue to get into the restrooms, like pedophiles and

rapists."

Wilson-Pascoe Dispute:

The State: EXCLUSIVE: SLED report names 2 with ties to SC Attorney General Wilson

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/crime/article71716197.html#storylink=apmobile>

John Monk

Attorney General Alan Wilson has close ties to two individuals named in a secret eight-page section of a SLED report involving potential public corruption in the S.C. General Assembly. The two people are Rep. Rick Quinn, R-Lexington, and his father, Richard Quinn, as well as the father's political consulting firm, Richard Quinn & Associates, the report says. The Quinns are Republicans, as is Wilson. "Nothing improper was done," Rick Quinn said in a statement to The State newspaper Wednesday. A copy of the secret portion of the State Law Enforcement Division report – which is at the center of an explosive and historic legal battle between the attorney general and his special prosecutor, David Pascoe – was reviewed by State newspaper reporters and editors. The secret pages of the SLED report are also in play in the S.C. Supreme Court, which may be set to decide whether Wilson can fire Pascoe and thereby possibly shut down or slow the ongoing investigation. Wilson has said publicly he wants the investigation to move forward but wants Pascoe to step aside. Last summer, Wilson and his office, acknowledging that Wilson had an unspecified conflict of interest in the case, authorized Pascoe to be a special independent prosecutor and work with Keel to continue investigating material in the eight pages and portions of two other pages that were redacted when SLED released the report in November 2014. The report was issued in December 2013 during the public corruption report of then-House Speaker Bobby Harrell.

The State: EXCLUSIVE: What's inside the SLED report's blacked-out pages

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/politics-columns-blogs/the-buzz/article71716847.html#storylink=apmobile>

Andy Shain

Mystery has surrounded the eight blacked-out pages of the State Law Enforcement Division investigative report into former S.C. House Speaker Bobby Harrell over the past 18 months. What did authorities find? Who was named? What were the allegations? The mystery ended Wednesday, when The State newspaper was able to review those redacted pages. They show authorities laying out their case for potential allegations of misusing political office and violating campaign finance laws against 20 lawmakers and candidates. No charges have been filed.

Savannah River Site News:

Post and Courier: Future of MOX still uncertain as U.S. Senate appropriators punt on the problem

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160413/PC1603/160419664>

Emma Dumain

Congressional appropriators were originally expected to decide the fate of the embattled MOX program. But lacking consensus on how to handle the project's unsustainable costs, they have punted the problem to their colleagues on an entirely different committee. The chairman and ranking member of the U.S. Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development said at a business meeting Wednesday they are now looking to the Senate Armed Services Committee for recommendations on how to proceed. Until then, they said, they will hold off on recommending any sum of money to continue operating the mixed oxide fuel fabrication facility at the Savannah River Site near Aiken. U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., a fierce defender of MOX and a member of the

Senate energy and water panel, said he was actually gratified that fellow appropriators appeared committed to finding a solution. He even suggested he was happier with this arrangement than that which is currently being pursued in the U.S. House, where lawmakers are poised to recommend MOX funding at \$340 million — the bare minimum to keep the facility operational.

Greenville News : Congress divided on MOX funding

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/politics/2016/04/13/congress-divided-mox-funding/82985230/>

Mary Orndorff Troyan

President Obama's plan to shutter the plutonium recycling project in South Carolina is getting a mixed reception in Congress, where a key Senate committee appears receptive to the spending cut but the House is considering a plan to keep construction going. The mixed-oxide fuel fabrication facility (MOX) at the Savannah River Site is taking longer and costing more than originally proposed and has become a controversial piece of the U.S. Energy Department's budget. The agency in February recommended cutting the project's fiscal 2017 budget to \$270 million, or just enough to halt construction and start closing the site. Instead of recycling excess plutonium into fuel for nuclear reactors at the MOX plant, energy officials now want to switch to a dilute-and-dispose plan at a New Mexico facility, which they believe would be cheaper and faster. The U.S. and Russia have agreed to dispose of 68 metric tons of weapons-grade plutonium as part of broader nuclear nonproliferation efforts. On Wednesday, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development approved a fiscal 2017 spending bill that would give MOX the \$270 million requested by the Obama administration.

Aiken Standard: No consensus in Congress on future of MOX

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/article/20160413/AIK0101/160419731>

The debate in Congress this week about the unfinished Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility at the Savannah River Site heated up, and lawmakers expressed mixed feelings about its future. On Wednesday, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development decided to seek recommendations from the Senate Armed Services Committee on how to proceed with the funding of MOX. A lack of consensus among the subcommittee's members was the reason given. The Senate spending plan in its current form appropriates \$270 million to MOX. The full Senate Appropriations Committee is scheduled to consider the measure today, according to a news release.

Aiken Standard: Savannah River Site retirees discuss benefits

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/article/20160413/AIK0101/160419750>

Bill Bengtson

Insurance coverage and other retirement benefits were in the spotlight Tuesday afternoon at USC Aiken's Etherredge Center, during the Savannah River Site Retiree Association's annual meeting. "The pension issue is the biggest issue," said John Veldman, the association's chairman, who was completing his second term and led the meeting. "We have not had a pension adjustment since 1999, and ... as with many pensions that don't have cost-of-living provisions, the loss of purchasing power hits the very elderly very hard, because they're the ones that were retired in 1999, so they had smaller pensions, and with those smaller pensions, inflation has eroded their purchasing power." A goal, he said, is to work with the U.S. Department of Energy, contractors and the legislative delegation to assist "the oldest people with the smallest pensions at least a modest pension adjustment, to help them make it through the financial situation they're in."

SC Agency News:

The State: Juvenile facility toughens searches, security measures

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/politics-columns-blogs/the-buzz/article71678642.html#storylink=apmobile>

Tim Flach

Searches of persons entering and leaving the state's juvenile detention center have been stepped up in an effort to stop the flow of contraband, agency officials said Wednesday. In the wake of a February riot at Juvenile Justice's Broad River Road facility, vehicles and bags now are being "thoroughly searched" to keep out prohibited items, including cell phones and cigarettes, said Freddie Pugh, a State Law Enforcement Division agent who has been re-assigned temporarily to improve security. Those searches were started in the last month as a part of a new emphasis on security at the facility, which had operated "more on a therapeutic approach than prison," Pugh told an S.C. House panel reviewing the state Department of Juvenile Justice. Previously, searches only were sporadic in order to keep traffic from backing up at entrances to the St. Andrews area facility, he said. Agency leaders also are huddling daily to look at new ways to deal with problems. Some staff members have said those problems stem from gang feuds inside the center. "We're not going to be able to fix it overnight," Pugh said. "(But) we're taking steps to get it done."

WACH: DJJ Director sits down with WACH FOX News to speak on troubled agency

<http://wach.com/news/local/djj-director-sits-down-with-wach-fox-news-to-speak-on-troubled-agency>

Tara Petitt

Department of Juvenile Justice officials have reported to WACH FOX News that another incident happened at the agency over the weekend. The agency will not provide details of the incident because it is an ongoing investigation, but they are calling the situation 'serious'. DJJ has been under the microscope since February 26th when a riot broke out the facility. A gang leader was jumped, juveniles set fires to dormitories, damaged more than a dozen vehicles, assaulted females, and one juvenile escaped through a drain pipe before being caught several hours later. WACH FOX News first reported the incident just days after it happened and, since then, state lawmakers have launched an official investigation and agency personnel have been fired. DJJ Director, Sylvia Murray, sat down one-on-one with WACH FOX News Wednesday for an exclusive interview about changes the agency has been making. "He has actually made a tremendous difference." Sylvia Murray says the new DJJ Police Chief at her agency has put changes in place to help the department run more efficiently. Some of Freddie Pough's changes include handling investigations in a more timely manner, searching every vehicle that enters the facility and placing managers in every dorm at all times. Two weeks ago, Pough also had the Midlands Gang Task Force provide training for DJJ workers. DJJ officials will appear before a House panel again next week to provide additional testimony, and a Senate panel will soon be launching it's own investigation into DJJ. Department officials say they believe they are on the right track, but it will take time to complete all of their goals to fix the troubled agency.

WLTX: Members of The DJJ Speak Out On Current Improvements During House Subcommittee Hearing

<http://www.wltx.com/news/local/members-of-the-djj-speak-out-on-current-improvements-during-house-subcommittee-hearing/131707353>

Loren Thomas

Testimony was heard from members of the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) following February's riot. Lawmakers are investigating the DJJ with hopes that major changes will be made. "How long does an incident go on before other agencies are brought in?" asks Representative Kirkman Finlay,

(R) Richland County. Rep. Finlay and members of the House Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Subcommittee, spent an hour and a half questioning members of the DJJ staff, including Interim Inspector General Freddie Pough. "We've increased security at the gate to include all vehicles," Pough explains. Pough, who has been in the role for a month now, says improvements are underway. "We're aware that there are some things at DJJ that need to be fixed and I wanted to committee to know that not only are we aware of those things, but we're working on them," says Pough. Finding a gang coordinator is at the top of the list, as a riot on February 26 at the Broad River facility was believed to have stemmed from rival gangs.

Opinion/Editorial:

The State: Editorial: Bad as it is, SC anti-refugee bill represents far worse

<http://www.thestate.com/opinion/editorials/article71645672.html#storylink=apmobile>

THE SENATE HAS done worse than order SLED to keep track of refugees and hold churches at least theoretically liable for any crimes refugees commit. Much worse. So we might not even comment on the offensive bill the Senate passed last month but for this: It's part of a disturbing pattern, and unless we do something about it, it's only going to get worse. What's even worse than the bill itself — which was stripped of its most outrageous provisions — is what it represents: the latest effort to kick aside any pretense of writing laws in the best interest of our state and instead throw red meat at legislators' political base. The latest effort not to act like leaders — people who calm irrational fears — but to play the demagogues who fan the flames, or set them to begin with. It comes on the heels of legislative proposals to nullify Obamacare, to nullify same-sex marriages, to nullify federal gun laws and too many other distractions to name...

The Herald: S.C. learns wrong lesson from N.C. bill

<http://www.heraldonline.com/opinion/editorials/article71667882.html>

The Herald Editorial Board

South Carolina should steer clear of the controversy over so-called "bathroom bills." But tell that to S. C. state lawmakers. North Carolina recently passed a law, HB2, signed by Gov. Pat McCrory, that limits attempts by cities and other jurisdictions from providing legal protections for LGBT individuals, including measures that would have allowed transgender people to choose the public restroom of their choice. The backlash from critics, including some of the state's largest employers, was swift and unequivocal. Last week, for example, PayPal scrapped plans to build a new Charlotte operations center, a move that will cost the city at least 400 jobs, as a protest to the new law. Largely as a result of this pressure, McCrory now has reconsidered and is seeking to walk back parts of HB2. So far, other legislators and state leaders, including Gov. Nikki Haley, don't seem too concerned about the issue for a couple of reasons. For one, the Legislature is too busy with other priorities to deal with Bright's bill. But lawmakers also feel free to ignore the brouhaha because they are confident the state already has a law on the books that effectively allows residents to discriminate against the LGBT community. These bathroom bills address a nonexistent problem. They are little more than a license for people to discriminate against members of the LGBT community and ignore longstanding law regarding public accommodations. North Carolina's law is unnecessary, unenforceable, harmful to commerce in the state, unfair and, basically, ridiculous. Why would South Carolina want to emulate that?

South Carolina News:

Island Packet: Jason Day returns to RBC Heritage as world's top player

<http://www.islandpacket.com/sports/golf/rbc-heritage-tournament/article71652337.html>

Stephen Fastenau

Jason Day owns the top spot in golf. Now he wants a cushion. Day returns to Harbour Town Golf Links for the first time in three years and is the first top-ranked player in the RBC Heritage field since Luke Donald in 2012. He ascended to the top with consecutive victories in March, and remains confident despite a lukewarm finish at the Masters. Now he wants some distance between himself and Jordan Spieth in the Official World Golf Ranking. Day is back at Harbour Town for the first time since 2013 for what is a home game for caddie, coach and Bluffton resident Colin Swatton. Spieth is not in this week's field. "If you want to become a dominant player, you have to be consistent, but you also have to consistently win," said Day, who won five times in 2015. "And (I've shown) that over the last year and early on this year, as well, but I want to make sure I keep that level of play up."

Associated Press: USC celebrates opening of new center, partnership with IBM

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=h9TK0VFy

SC State Wire

The University of South Carolina is celebrating the opening of a new center that will focus on research with industry partners such as IBM. University President Harris Pastides is joining IBM executives at the opening of the new Center for Applied Innovation and Analytics at 10 a.m. Thursday. The new center is to be located in a recently completed building at the corner of Blossom and Assembly Streets. It is expected to house collaborative research efforts between the university and IBM, as well as with other industry partners. When the collaboration was first announced in 2014, it was described as helping expand student skills in information technology and improve their employment chances for IT careers.

Local News:

Aiken Standard: Aiken brings in FBI to investigate civil rights search complaint against police officers

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/article/20160413/AIK0101/160419738>

Maayan Schechter

The FBI has opened a civil rights investigation into complaints against four Aiken police officers who are now at the center of a federal lawsuit that says two officers unconstitutionally performed a public cavity search of an Aiken County man in 2014. Elijah Pontoon and Lakeya Hicks are suing in federal court the Aiken Department of Public Safety, its Chief Charles Barranco, four Aiken police officers and the City of Aiken over what they say was an unconstitutional search by police on Oct. 2, 2014. The suit also says officer Chris Medlin and former officer Clark Smith unconstitutionally performed a public cavity search of Pontoon in broad daylight after Hicks' vehicle was pulled over for a "paper tag" on Horry Street, near Richland Avenue. Aiken City Manager John Klimm told the Aiken Standard on Wednesday he has taken a "two-pronged approach" to investigate the matter that includes bringing the FBI in to conduct an external investigation of the complaint.

The State: Heroes in Blue raises funds for family of fallen Columbia officer

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/article71676832.html#storylink=apmobile>

Glen Luke Flanagan

A local nonprofit is sending a message to the family of a Columbia officer killed in a crash last year – you aren't forgotten. Stacy Case died in November after a crash in the Vista while responding to reports of gunfire. Following the crash, Heroes in Blue – led by Kassy Alia – raised money for Case's Michigan-based family by selling T-shirts. Alia started the nonprofit after her husband, Forest Acres police officer Greg Alia, was shot and killed in September while responding to a situation at the

Richland Mall. She said the goal is to strengthen relationships between law enforcement and the community. "It's time to bring to light all the wonderful things that law enforcement officers do around the country, and really show the negative stories we're seeing are not even 1 percent of what's actually happening," Alia said.

Post and Courier : Illumination Project gathers input at ILA Hall

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160413/PC16/160419636>

Paul Bowers

Jamal Middleton attended Wednesday night's Illumination Project police listening session with low expectations. A Charleston native who grew up in East Side housing projects, he said he had been the subject of racial profiling and random searches ever since he was a young man. "I came here tonight with zero expectations because I just have no interest in continuing to beat my head against the wall," Middleton said. The Illumination Project, funded by the Charleston Police Fund and other community organizations in the wake of the Emanuel AME Church shooting, is meant to foster better community relations through a series of listening session and brainstorming events. But even after Wednesday night's meeting, co-hosted by the NAACP Charleston branch in the International Longshoremen's Association Hall on the East Side, Middleton remained skeptical that change would ever come to what he saw as a "perpetual cycle" of mistrust. Wednesday night's meeting drew a crowd of about 70 that included police officers, facilitators and several community leaders.

Greenville News: Clemson students protest racism on campus

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/local/pickens-county/2016/04/13/clemson-students-protest-racism-campus/82989312/>

Ron Barnett

One day after Clemson University broke ground on a historical marker intended to express the institution's acknowledgement of its racism of the past, more than 100 members of the school's Black Student Union marched on the administration building Wednesday to complain that not enough is being done to deal with the racism of the present. The group met in front of the John C. Calhoun home, where enslaved African Americans once worked for the vice president of the United States, and where two days earlier, students hung bananas on a banner depicting the role of blacks in Clemson's history. "Part of the reason we are here is to express not only our sentiments regarding the fact that this incident actually happened, but also the lack of productive response from the administration to the efforts made by concerned students relating to this event as well as others in the past," said Richelle Hayes, a communications major from Mullins. Clemson President Jim Clements stepped up onto a millstone in front of the historic site and asked the students to do their part to help make the university's diversity training and inclusion efforts succeed.

The Herald: 'Build the wall,' other pro-Trump chalking spotted around Winthrop campus

<http://www.heraldonline.com/news/local/education/winthrop-news/article71614112.html>

Bristow Marchant

Some secret supporters of Donald Trump made their presence known at Winthrop University overnight. Chalked messages in support of the Republican presidential frontrunner popped up around campus Wednesday morning, but were quickly removed by the Winthrop administration as unauthorized. Several messages appeared on sidewalks, steps and walls, around Byrnes Auditorium and Scholars Walk. "Build the wall!" was written on the side of the Leitner Wall near Byrnes. Another punned "Trumpet Your Success" or, mockingly "Safe Space Here." A statue on Scholars Walk also had one of Trump's signature red "Make America Great Again" hat. Similar chalkings have sparked a strong reaction on other college campuses. Students at Emory University in Atlanta staged protests

last month and called for administrative action after "Trump 2016" and similar messages were chalked on surfaces around campus. Winthrop removed the messages, because chalked messages on campus must be authorized by the Office of Student Activities, said Ellen Wilder-Byrd, associate vice president for university communications and marketing.

Greenville News: Pageant director says she was bullied by Simpsonville mayor

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/local/golden-strip/2016/04/13/pageant-director-says-she-bullied-simpsonville-mayor-voicemail/82992880/>

Nathaniel Cary

At one time, Michelle Lastringer and Simpsonville Mayor Janice Curtis were colleagues and acquaintances. The two helped run beauty pageants in the Golden Strip until Curtis stepped down last summer when she began to run for mayor of Simpsonville. Lastringer, once a beauty pageant contestant herself and now a plus-sized model and mother to her own pageant contestant, bought the rights to the Miss Golden Strip, Miss Fountain Inn and Miss Mauldin pageants with a friend and took over. Lastringer and Curtis hadn't spoken in months, Lastringer said, until Curtis left a voicemail at 1:20 p.m. last Friday on her cell phone that Lastringer said left her in shock. In the voicemail, Curtis made fun of Lastringer's weight using a derogatory phrase and threatened to call Ashley Byrd, the director of Miss South Carolina as well as Van Broad, who had helped with the pageant when it had been held in Fountain Inn, to have Lastringer removed as the local executive director of the pageants.

Sun News: Myrtle Beach proposed budget includes tax increase

<http://www.myrtlebeachonline.com/news/local/article71704932.html>

Emily Weaver

Taxes and utility fees may be on the rise in Myrtle Beach. The city manager's proposed budget for the next fiscal year, which begins in July, includes a 4 percent increase in property taxes. The hike equates to an extra \$24 a year for a \$200,000 home. The increase would raise an estimated \$1 million to give across-the-board raises and merit raises to employees, who for several years have had salary adjustments that have not kept pace with the cost of inflation, according to city leaders.

"Without salary recognition for admirable service good employees will leave or become unhappy and their service to our citizens will be compromised," councilman Phil Render said after the night's meeting. "We're not asking to raise any debt service millage this year," Michelle Shumpert, the city's budget and evaluation director told the group.

National News:

Associated Press: CDC: Zika definitely causes severe birth defects

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/5a1d09f330274fb18421c2e59ff173c6/cdc-no-doubt-now-zika-virus-causes-rare-birth-defects>

Mike Stobbe

Confirming the worst fears of many pregnant women in the United States and Latin America, U.S. health officials said Wednesday there is no longer any doubt the Zika virus causes babies to be born with abnormally small heads and other severe brain defects. Since last year, doctors in Brazil have been linking Zika infections in pregnant women to a rise in newborns with microcephaly, or an unusually small skull. Most outside experts were cautious about drawing such a connection. But now the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says enough evidence is in. "There is no longer any doubt that Zika causes microcephaly," CDC Director Dr. Tom Frieden said. The CDC said it also is clear Zika causes other serious defects, including damaging calcium buildups in the developing brain. Among the evidence that clinched the case: Signs of the Zika virus, which is spread primarily

through mosquito bites and can also be transmitted through sex, have been found in the brain tissue, spinal fluid and amniotic fluid of microcephaly babies.

Associated Press: US reveals joint patrols in South China Sea with Philippines

<http://bigstory.ap.org/urn:publicid:ap.org:bd92d542c71d409a82cac13981b2f461>

Lolita C. Baldor

In a military buildup certain to inflame tensions with China, the United States said Thursday it will be conducting joint South China Sea patrols — and eventually air patrols — with the Philippines, while dispatching U.S. troops and combat aircraft there on more frequent rotations. The announcement by Defense Secretary Ash Carter was the first time the U.S. revealed that its ships had conducted patrols with the Philippines in the South China Sea, a somewhat rare move not done with many other partners in the region. While Carter insisted the U.S. was "trying to tamp down tensions here" and not provoke anyone, Philippine Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin — standing beside him at a news conference in Manila — said he expects that U.S. forces, "with their presence here, will deter uncalled-for actions by the Chinese." While the military boost doesn't include permanent basing for U.S. troops, any increased U.S. military presence and activities in the region is viewed as a threat by Beijing and will likely trigger an angry response.

Associated Press: News conference amid reports Trump aide won't be prosecuted

<http://bigstory.ap.org/urn:publicid:ap.org:d27da5a218084fc9a3a7ba7c1790d555>

A Florida prosecutor's office plans to hold a news conference amid reports that presidential candidate Donald Trump's campaign manager won't be prosecuted over a videotaped altercation with a female reporter. A spokesman for Palm Beach County state attorney Dave Aronberg told The New York Times there will be a news conference Thursday afternoon but would not say what the news conference will be about. Police in Jupiter, Florida, charged Corey Lewandowski with simple battery, a misdemeanor, last month. The charge came after a video showed Lewandowski grabbing Michelle Fields, who worked for Breitbart News at the time, as she tried to ask Trump a question after a March 8 appearance. The video appears to show him yanking her backward. Lewandowski has said he's innocent. Corrects earlier version that incorrectly identified Dave Aronberg as the spokesman for the state attorney.

World News:

Associated Press: EU approves security plan to track airline passenger info

<http://bigstory.ap.org/urn:publicid:ap.org:81bec758c6d04f03ac852e728b256bc3>

European Union lawmakers on Thursday approved a scheme to share airline passenger information that can be used to track foreign fighters heading to and from conflict areas like Syria and Iraq. They endorsed the Passenger Name Record law in a series of votes at its legislature in Strasbourg, France, ending years of wrangling over how to balance security needs and privacy rights. Under the scheme, traveler details will be collected from any flights entering or leaving the EU and from flights between member countries. The information will be kept for six months. "This is an important tool in the fight against terror," said Ivo Belet, a member of parliament for the EPP Christian Democrat group, the biggest in the legislature.

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