

Why is the governor picking on GOP legislators?

Only one in 10 state legislators apparently is conservative enough for Gov. Nikki Haley, who last week reignited a feud with the General Assembly by singling out only 17 state lawmakers for voting with her on three issues: pay raises, gas taxes and bonded indebtedness.

We're not quite sure how Haley is the queen of figuring out who is conservative enough, but you've got to wonder a little about her leadership skills after winning a second term if only 17 legislators out of 170 are backing what she thinks is important.

"Her strategy of calling people out is a unique strategy — one I'm not familiar with in terms of what she hopes to gain, other than rattle people whose votes she needs on other things," one veteran Republican insider said. "It's clearly a strategy, but to what end?"

Whatever Haley was doing, it didn't sit well with many of the 105 Republicans in the legislature, such as Spartanburg Sen. Lee Bright, who many view as more conservative than Attila the Hun.

He told The Greenville News that he didn't need Haley to be the arbiter of conservative credentials: "She has been playing footsie with the moderates ever since she became governor. She's continuing to do it, and we're not going to assist her in it."

So perhaps by dividing the world into Haley supporters and Haley opponents, as the governor did last week at the state Republican convention, the hyper-ambitious governor might be signaling something about her political future. Some possibilities:

» **Vice president.** Maybe Haley is hoping to be the next Sarah Palin, a vice-presidential candidate for the 2016 nominee. But most people agree that her background, such as the rebuffed ethics inquiry on activities while a member of the S.C. House, precludes serious



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consideration for the nation's No. 2 spot. Additionally, South Carolina is such a reliably red state that Haley wouldn't bring anything to the ticket.

» **Cabinet officer or ambassador.** If a Republican becomes president in 2016, some people say Haley might get a nod for a top administration post, although others say her background might get in the way of serving in the Cabinet. They admit, however, she could get a major ambassadorship, such as to India.

» **U.S. Senate.** A couple of scenarios are possible. First, she could run for the seat held by U.S. Sen. Tim Scott, whom she appointed in 2013 after Jim DeMint stepped down. While Scott won the seat in November, it is up for consideration again in 2016. Second, what happens if U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, who is up again in 2020, gets a big Cabinet position in the next administration? That could set off a chain reaction in which Haley could resign and then be appointed to finish out Graham's term — which would give her the national platform she so desperately seems to crave. Stranger things have happened.

» **National platform.** Haley, who is not independently wealthy, might need to earn a paycheck when she's done being governor, which could translate into serving on a couple of big corporate boards or becoming a television personality for a conservative group. Or she could head an industry group such as the late Gov. Carroll Campbell did when he ran a national

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ON HALEY'S GOP CONSERVATIVE LIST

- » Sen. Sean Bennett, Summerville
- » Sen. Chip Campsen, Charleston
- » Sen. Tom Davis, Beaufort
- » Sen. Mike Fair, Greenville
- » Sen. Larry Martin, Pickens
- » Sen. Shane Massey, Edgefield
- » Sen. Harvey Peeler, Gaffney
- » Sen. Paul Thurmond, Charleston
- » Sen. Ross Turner, Greenville
- » Sen. Danny Verdin, Laurens
- » Sen. Tom Young, Aiken
- » Rep. Reps. Todd Atwater, Lexington
- » Rep. Eric Bedingfield, Belton
- » Rep. Dan Hamilton, Greenville
- » Rep. Chip Huggins, Columbia
- » Rep. Rick Quinn, Lexington County
- » Rep. Tommy Stringer, Greenville

insurance trade association after finishing his gubernatorial service.

Collegé of Charleston political science professor Gibbs Knotts says it's a challenge to figure out Haley's endgame.

"She has a potentially long career ahead of her after the end of her current term," he said. "I could certainly see her being appointed to a Cabinet position or being named an ambassador. This makes sense. Though she might run for Congress or U.S. Senate, I would be surprised.

"For some, it is a difficult transition to move from a chief executive position back to a legislative position. The skills of executives and legislators are not always compatible. I would also not be too surprised if she transitions to a private-sector role or takes some other type of leadership position outside. Gov. James Edwards had a long and distinguished career as president of MUSC after leaving the governor's mansion."

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Union out at Johnson Controls plant

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Morning News
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FLORENCE — A majority of employees at the Johnson Controls plant in Florence successfully petitioned to remove union representation from the plant.

Management at the battery plant received a petition from employees April 21 to withdraw union representation, Jennifer Mattes, the director of global communications-Johnson Controls Power Solutions, said in a statement.

"Based upon the petition received from the employees, the company has withdrawn recognition of the union effective May 8, 2015," Mattes said in the statement. "Johnson Controls

respects the decision of the Florence employees and looks forward to working directly with our employees going forward."

The vote comes nearly five years after employees voted 76-71 in a National Labor Relations Board election in August 2010 to form the International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW) Local 3066.

Since then, Florence has been stigmatized, despite significant economic development. Gov. Nikki Haley touched on that stigma after a speech in March.

"The issue that has hurt the Pee Dee in the past that kind of still lingers that we're trying to get rid of is that things were unionized here not too long ago," Haley

said. "So manufacturers are fearful of this area. We have tried to tell them that that is not the label we want the Pee Dee to have, and we don't think it's a realistic situation."

For Joe W. King, executive director of the Florence County Economic Development Partnership, the vote is a game-changer.

"I think it's good news for Florence County, for the Pee Dee and for the state," King said. "In the past, we have had several projects that Florence could have received a look, but the site consultants, the first thing they asked: 'Do you have a UAW facility or Teamsters facility in your county? If you do, we will not

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GAVIN JACKSON/ MORNING NEWS

Laura Ervin and other members of UAW Local 2404 wave to a car leaving the Johnson Controls battery plant Wednesday. Union members and union retirees from around the area stood across from the plant several days this week to show support for the union since the UAW contract was set to expire Thursday. Employees successfully petitioned management to remove union representation.





Union

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look, and we will not put anything within a 40-mile radius of a UAW facility.”

King said the move positions Florence County for future projects.

“We will notify those site consultants today about the decertification vote at Johnson Controls,” King said. “This is the third go-round. They had a decertification vote and lost, and this time local people were involved, and that made a big difference.”

A vote to decertify the union failed in November 2011.

UAW members from around the state and region stood across from the plant at 3046 Bill Crisp Drive this week with signs to support union members at the plant. One sign read “Holiday Inn Express,” referring to the hotel down the street where union officials were located to speak with employees.

The UAW did not comment.

Several community leaders spoke out against the organization of the plant in 2010, including Dr. Charles Gould, former chairman of the Economic Development Partnership board and former president of Florence Darlington-Technical College.

“There are, however, potential headwinds that can derail economic development and dampen the hopes of Florence County workers for brighter futures,” Gould wrote in the Aug. 15, 2010, edition of the Morning News. “The recent organizing activity at Johnson Controls comes at a time when this region and the state can ill afford to take a step back in our efforts to rebuild our economy.”

The union was a deterrent for some industries,

but Michael Carrouth, a Columbia-based labor lawyer with national clients, said that unions still didn’t take root.

“It should have never been held against the area or the people from an economic-development standpoint,” Carrouth said. “It really was an outlier. It never was going to be some launching point, especially for the UAW, which has lost over a million members over the last decade.”

Carrouth was not involved in the situation, but based on previous events and his experience, he believes things were heated.

“I’m sure it got pretty intense in there once the company notified the union that they were going to withdraw recognition when the contract expired,” Carrouth said. “The union at that point is fighting for its life, and it’s not going to accept easily the voice of the majority. It’s going to fight to maintain its relevance and position.”

The current manager, Rick Thompson, deferred to Mattes, who did not comment.

King didn’t provide many details around the decertification, other than that this time more local people were involved in the effort.

After a called Florence County Council meeting Thursday, council Vice Chairman James Schofield said he was not aware of the situation at Johnson Controls, but that the move would have a positive effect.

“It does discourage some industries from locating. I think we lost a tire plant because of it,” Schofield said. “Industries are going to go where they want to go. Anything that’s an impediment to industry coming and creating jobs is a problem for me because that’s tax base.”

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EDITORIAL

THE COST OF HALEY'S CAUSTIC ATTITUDE

The following editorial was published in the Aiken Standard:

With only a few days left in the legislative session, the General Assembly has become so crippled by divisive and partisan politics that few, if any, of their priorities are likely to become done deals. This lack of success has to be pinned, in part, on the combative and bullish mentality of S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley.

Instead of blossoming an engaging public discourse, the governor has turned politics in Columbia into an even more tumultuous and sectarian atmosphere.

Haley's political style is one that's essentially all or nothing. Lawmakers are either with her or against her.

She clearly has a penchant for calling people out on social media, which has become a root of her shaky relationship with the Gen-

eral Assembly.

During her first term in office, Haley actually issued report cards for lawmakers, which publicly shamed those who didn't vote her way. Her Facebook page features posts firing back at individual lawmakers, or posts that simply list the names of those who disappointed her by their votes.

Tensions between the two branches sparked again earlier this month, when she chastised her fellow Republican lawmakers at the South Carolina GOP convention.

"These are the people who are supposed to be with me," Haley said about some Republicans in the state. "These are the people who are supposed to be moving South Carolina forward."

Haley has largely harped on legislators concerning four bills. These proposals include bumping up salaries for lawmakers, issuing

\$500 million in bonds, a transportation bill increasing the gas tax and an ethics reform bill, which has essentially died in the Senate.

This isn't an environment for progression in our state. This is an environment that merely hardens the partisan lines.

To her credit, Haley has presided over some momentous times in South Carolina. This is particularly true with the amount of economic development and industrial recruitment that has occurred during her tenure. Although she's not the state's only salesperson, these are efforts for which she undoubtedly deserves kudos. The recent recruitment of Volvo to Berkeley County is a prime example.

However, her combative and outspoken attitude isn't a sign of needed leadership that was shown in emphatic ways by previous gover-

nors, particularly Carroll Campbell in the 1990s.

This approach is much more reminiscent of Haley's predecessor Mark Sanford, whose governorship was marked by few concrete successes because of, at least in part, his inability to work with the legislators.

It's important to realize that Haley isn't fighting just with those across the aisle. She's shown on too many occasions an incapacity to work with members of her own party, even some of the most conservative in the legislature.

This "my way or the highway approach" is only hurting our state when there are real and concrete needs facing it.

A hard line attitude is undoubtedly needed sometimes. However, when it becomes so recurring and inflexible, it does much more harm than good in the long run.