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Lamar lady celebrates 97th birthday

Rozenia Nero of Lamar celebrated her 97th birthday on August 9 with a grand celebration at Mt. Tabor AME Church surrounded by her numerous friends and family members.

She was surprised with several congratulations, including a letter from President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama, Congressman Tim Scott, Congressman Tom Rice, Congressman Lindsay Graham, Governor Nikki Haley, SC Senator Gerald Malloy, Rev. Joseph White among many others.

Mrs. Nero and her late husband W.D. Nero raised three boys and four girls. The family now extends to over fifty grandchildren. She credits her faith in God and hard work as the secret to her many healthy years.

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Removing Confederate flag didn't solve problems

I would like to respond to Michael Jedson's Aug. 12 letter, "Stop lying about the smoke screen," that was written in response to Rudy Schmidt's letter, "Cut through smoke screen to solve U.S. problems."

Mr. Jedsen, you seem to forget the Ku Klux Klan was started within the Democratic Party, so it is my belief your question concerning the Democratic Party regarding the Confederate flag and what it has to do with them has just

been answered.

Now, I can't spout off about everything that happens in politics, but simply put, the removal of the Confederate flag was done at a very emotionally charged time.

Yes, the Republicans caved. I am ashamed of Gov. Nikki Haley as are, I believe, quite a few others.

For you to so boldly proclaim that Republican friends bent to overwhelming public opinion in South Carolina is another comment I take as a personal affront. I do not recall South Carolina allowed its citizens to vote on this action, so, please feel free to enlighten me if I am wrong.

Furthermore, the re-

moval of the Confederate flag solved nothing.

It may have appeased a very minute minority, but in the long run it woke others up. Everyday, somewhere at any given time, similar issues such as the atrocity at the AME Zion Church are still happening. What symbol will be next? Perhaps a snowman will not be allowed to be built because some look on that as a symbol of the KKK.

I hardly see where you can predict another Democratic president. Have you looked at their choices lately?

Patricia J. Frantz
Lancaster



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Haley Will Fight Terror Detainee Transfers

Gov. Nikki Haley denounced the Obama administration for considering transferring detainees from Guantanamo Bay to the naval brig in Berkeley County. The administration has long intended to close the Guantanamo Bay facility and is considering both the brig and Fort Leavenworth in Kansas as possible relocation sites for people detained as part of the war on terror. Haley's objections are both legal and safety-related, she said: "Let's be very, very clear, this is a violation of federal law," Haley said. "Even though the president signed this on his first day in office, Congress has never given him the support to move these terrorists into any of our states. We are absolutely drawing a line that we are not going to allow any terrorists to come into South Carolina. ... My job is to protect the people of this state and I take that very personally." — *Eva Moore*

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COURTESY PHOTO

GOV. NIKKI HALEY, center, her husband Michael, left, and daughter Rena, second from left, visited Grits and Groceries near Belton recently and talked to owners Heidi, second from right, and Joe, right, and their son Tom. South Carolina names four Chef Ambassadors each year to highlight their culinary talents. "This hidden treasure has been highlighted in

Southern Living and on NBC's Today Show. It is the ultimate in Southern Cuisine and is worth the trip to this sweet town," said Gov. Haley in an online post. Visit www.gritsandgroceries.com for more info. To learn more about our other chef ambassadors and the program visit www.certifiedscgrown.com/programs/chef-ambassador-program.



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Save us from Jesse Jackson!

I find it interesting and very hypocritical that Jesse Jackson is speaking this week in Florence on Medicaid expansion. Does he not know that our state and our federal government can no longer afford such giveaways? That is why Gov. Haley has wisely refused to expand Medicaid; our state cannot afford to replace rapidly disappearing federal dollars if our state took this Obama bait and switch of a program.

Our poor without Medicaid can attend free clinics like Mercy Medicine on Coit Street, which I financially donate to and know a very competent provider who works there. But this is a short-term fix.

What Jesse should be talking about is the epidemic of black-on-black crime, the 71 percent rate of single-mother births in the black community versus 20 percent in the white community, the fact that one-third of black males in this country are either on probation, parole or are in prison and to refocus the black community on work instead of handouts. Work is the long-term fix; handouts are a budget-buster that will only get the poor addicted to their liberal politicians.

Now, I do like some things about the black community: their strong sense of family (gotta love it when your family has T-shirts printed for a family reunion) and their culture of church and faith in God, and as we saw in Charleston, a culture of forgiveness.

However, embracing divisive people like Jesse Jackson to come to Florence preaching more addiction to government welfare is not the answer for any of us. Say what you have to say, Jesse, then ride west to another state that is stupid enough to pay for your costly handouts like your broke home state of Illinois.

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Florence



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148 Public workers won't pay more for health care in 2016

The Associated Press

COLUMBIA — The health care costs of South Carolina's public employees will stay the same next year, but their employers will pay more.

The State Fiscal Accountability Authority unanimously approved Tuesday the health care rates that legislators wrote into this year's budget. It called for no change to employees' monthly premiums, co-payments or deductibles.

However, state agencies, school districts, public colleges and participating local governments will pay 4.5 percent more starting Jan. 1 to cover rising costs.

The little overall change means the state remains grandfathered under the federal health care overhaul.

The state health plan covers more than 465,400 people in South Carolina. They include roughly 185,000 public workers, 200,000 of their family members, and 80,000 retirees, according to the Public Employee Benefit Authority, the agency that doles out public benefits.

Those covered by the plan will see additional benefits next year.

Changes recommended by the benefits agency and approved Tuesday by the fiscal oversight board include the elimination of co-payments for contraceptives already covered by the health plan.

Also starting Jan. 1, employees who smoke will

pay nothing for prescription medicine to help them quit, such as Chantix.

The goal is that helping them quit will ultimately cut down on health care costs paid by taxpayers, said Peggy Boykin, executive director of the Public Employee Benefit Authority.

Employees can also reduce their premiums by quitting. Since January 2010, smokers have paid a surcharge. The cost has risen to between \$40 and \$60 extra monthly, depending on how many people their policy covers.

Out-of-pocket costs will also be eliminated for colonoscopies and adult vaccines, including yearly flu shots. Those changes are among what would be required anyway if the state health plan had to comply with the federal law.

There is one exception to what's otherwise no additional cost for employees. People enrolled in a Medical University of South Carolina pilot plan will pay \$10 more to visit a specialist, as approved by the benefits agency.

The five-member fiscal oversight board has followed legislators' recommendations on health coverage since 2012. That's when Gov. Nikki Haley convinced a majority of the board, which she chairs, to split rising costs with employees even though legislators designated money in the budget to cover workers' premiums.



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148 Governor Haley: No Guantanamo detainees

The Associated Press

COLUMBIA—The governors of South Carolina and Kansas wrote to the Obama administration on Tuesday, threatening to sue if detainees from Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, are brought to military installations in either state.

“We will not be part of any illegal and ill-advised action by this Administration, especially when that action relates to importing terrorists into our states,” Govs. Nikki Haley and Sam Brownback told Defense Secretary Ash Carter. “Please know that we will take any action within our power to make sure no Guantanamo Bay detainees are transferred to South Carolina or Kansas.”

At a news conference last week, Haley said Defense Department officials were “wasting their time” in evaluating the Naval Brig near Charleston as a potential site to house detainees and that she would not “allow South Carolina to be a magnet for terrorists.” The Pentagon has said it will send a survey team to the military prison in South Carolina by month’s end, and a similar as-

essment was conducted earlier this month at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

The closure of the Guantanamo Bay detention center has been a priority for President Barack Obama, but the effort has faced persistent hurdles, including staunch opposition from congressional Republicans and some Democrats. About 52 of the 116 current detainees have been cleared for release. The remaining 64 have been deemed too dangerous.

Several members of South Carolina’s congressional delegation, including U.S. Rep. Mark Sanford — Haley’s predecessor as governor — and U.S. Sen. Tim Scott have expressed concerns about the potential transfers.

Both the House and Senate versions of the 2016 federal defense policy bill maintain prohibitions on transferring detainees to U.S. facilities. The Senate legislation, however, allows the restrictions to be lifted if the White House submits a plan to close the facility and it’s approved by Congress. House and Senate negotiators are working to reconcile the

two bills.

The Navy brig has previously held an al-Qaida terrorism plotter, before he was convicted. Jose Padilla, a U.S. citizen, was held there for more than three years without charge as an enemy combatant before he was indicted in Miami. A jury found Padilla guilty in 2007. He’s serving a 21-year prison sentence.

For Haley, the threat to sue the Obama administration is far from an empty one. Since she took office in January 2011, the governor has pushed at least three lawsuits against the administration, on matters ranging from voter ID laws to nuclear fuel production and illegal immigration.

After a lawsuit in 2012, South Carolina’s law requiring voters to present identification was ultimately upheld in federal court. Last year, the state sued the U.S. Department of Energy over its plans to mothball a nuclear fuel repurposing project at the Savannah River Site. And South Carolina was one of more than a half-dozen states to sue Obama late last year over his executive order on immigration.



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**AG looking into
Medicaid payments
to abortion clinics**

COLUMBIA — Attorney General Alan Wilson's office is looking into Medicaid payments to South Carolina's three abortion clinics to determine whether any fraud occurred, according to letters provided Thursday to The Associated Press.

Wilson becomes the latest Republican to pursue investigations into abortion clinics following the release of videos — secretly taped by an anti-abortion group — that show Planned Parenthood officials elsewhere discussing the collection of fetal organs for research.

Gov. Nikki Haley asked the state's public health agency Tuesday to investigate the clinics' policies and practices, starting with Planned Parenthood. The agency responded that it will promptly do so.

From wire reports



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**Haier expansion
expected to add
410 jobs**

CAMDEN — Appliance manufacturer Haier America is announcing plans to expand its refrigerator plant outside Camden, creating an expected 410 new jobs over the next five years.

Gov. Nikki Haley is joining company officials and local leaders on Thursday to break ground on a 250,000-square-foot addition that's slated to increase production by about 50 percent. The facility can currently produce more than 400,000 appliances annually.

The New Jersey-based Haier America is a subsidiary of the Haier Group. The Chinese manufacturer chose South Carolina in 1999 as the site of its first U.S. plant. The company employs more than 60,000 people worldwide.

Its \$72 million expansion in Kershaw County is expected to be finished by mid-2018. Hiring will begin next summer.



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148 Gov. Haley will fight bringing detainees to South Carolina

The Associated Press

COLUMBIA — Gov. Nikki Haley said Thursday that she will fight the possibility that detainees from Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, will be brought to the Naval Brig near Charleston.

The Defense Department has said it will evaluate the brig in Hanahan as a potential site to house detainees as part of the Obama administration's push to close the Guantanamo prison. Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, also is being considered.

"They are wasting their time," she said. "We are absolutely drawing a line. We are not going to allow South Carolina to be a magnet for terrorists."

The Republican governor said moving the detainees to any state would violate a law passed by Congress, but she doesn't trust that will prevent their transfer to

South Carolina.

Haley said she's exploring all options but gave no specifics for how she'll fight the possibility, other than to say, "I can get loud."

She noted that South Carolina's known as a strong military state.

"This is a slap in the face to people of South Carolina who have sacrificed so much for their country," Haley said.

On Wednesday, her predecessor, U.S. Rep. Mark Sanford, wrote a letter to the Defense Department opposing the possibility. In it, Sanford said he's concerned about moving detainees from a remote corner of Cuba to a prison near a school, homes and a port.

U.S. Sen. Tim Scott of South Carolina has expressed similar concerns and says there's no study that shows that bringing the detainees to the United States will make the nation safer.

