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SC House overrides Haley farm aid veto


May 17, 2016 by Staff Reports @carolinaledger @thecarolinaledger

The state House has voted 112 to 2 to override Gov. Nikki Haley's veto of a bill to send \$40 million to farmers whose crops were destroyed by flooding in October.

Haley vetoed the bill on Monday, calling it an "unprecedented bailout for a single industry" hit by the flooding.

"The average crop insurance you get is just about a joke," said Rep. Mac Toole. He abstained from voting because the business he owns deals in farm equipment.

The West Columbia Republican gave an anecdote of a 54-year-old farmer he knew who would only end up saving his house and several acres of his 500-acre farm, even if



File photo: state farmers' market the General Assembly overrode Haley's veto.

That man, said Toole, will be looking for a new job.

Farmers reported a collective crop loss of more than \$300 million resulting from the flooding.



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Opinion - Governor Haley, Farming is unlike any other industry

There has been much said about our Governor's lack of support for South Carolina Farmers during the aftermath of recent floods. Her lack of support is leaving many people perplexed as to "Why." Governor Haley says "It is about treating every industry fairly." Well let me tell you, not all industries are Farmers! Our very existence depends upon farmers and their ability to keep pace with the demand for food. There is only a seven day food supply in the major cities in the US and any disruption of this food chain can cause major problems. We have been blessed in the United States. We have never known famine in this land and it is because farmers have always been able to out produce demand even in the event of a flood or drought hitting a particular region of the country.

One day in the late 70's, in the midst of the "farm strike" and a major drought in the Southeast, I asked my Daddy this question, "Why do we have to have all of these programs that are supplementing the farmers?" My daddy, who was 5th generation farmer on the same land, a Hardware/Building Supply business owner, and a World War II veteran of the Pacific Theater,

answered, "Son, we must have a surplus of food, it is what has made this country great and is what will keep it great." Over the years, I have found those words to be so true. While other countries flounder, our food source has remained constant and kept the US

in the forefront.

I do not believe our governor understands the financial aspects of farming. Not only are many of our farmers going to forgo a whole year's gross income, but they will have nothing to invest in next year's crops. Would you believe that crop insurance does not cover

floods in many instances? Only after the flood did many of our farmers become aware of that fact! Many who may have debts from the previous year will be foreclosed on and generational farms will be sold to corporate Wall Street-traded land companies. Those lucky enough to keep their homes will likely become sharecroppers of their own land. I do not think Governor Haley understands a deep-rooted South Carolinian's connection to the land. For almost 300 years now, it is our land that has sustained us. When all else had been stripped away through wars and financial depression, our land kept us alive.

While I applaud the governor's efforts to bring jobs to South Carolina, it is our farmers who have been the backbone and moral compass of South Carolina. Many Main Streets have already been taken over by the coldness of the corporate world. Our family farms are the last stand! If we turn them over to the corporate world, we will have nothing but the greed of Wall Street to guide us. It is with fear and trembling that I look upon that day.

Sincerely
Doug Busbee, Wagener





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148 House Overrides Governor's Farm Aid Veto: Stands up for farmers and state's largest industry

(Columbia, SC) – House Speaker Jay Lucas (District 65-Darlington) issued the following statement today after the South Carolina House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly (112-2) to override Governor Haley's Farm Aid veto.

"The South Carolina House recognizes the unprecedented loss our farmers experienced last October and understands the economic impact at stake if these concerns are ignored," House Speaker Lucas stated. "Governor Haley's factually inaccurate justification for vetoing the Farm Aid bill is inconsistent with South Carolina values.

"When Governor Haley petitioned the federal government for flood relief assistance last fall, she included

homeowners and small businesses but intentionally ignored our farmers' plea for help by leaving them out of the request. Because of the Governor's refusal to advocate on behalf of our state's largest industry, the General Assembly was forced to take action.

"The Farm Aid bill establishes a verified grant process that will assist our farmers with the rebuilding process. This program provides our agriculture industry with state disaster assistance that has already been afforded to small businesses and homeowners by the federal government. I am extremely proud of the leadership the House has demonstrated today and hope the Senate will act accordingly to ensure our farmers are able to recover from last October's historic flood."

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148 Senators justify 20-week abortion ban votes

BY ROB COTTINGHAM

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Twenty weeks is plenty of time. That's the consensus of the State Legislature after a controversial bill was recently passed by the state House and Senate.

The bill, H. 3114, would establish the previously mentioned time limit for women who are considering an abortion, making exceptions for circumstances that threaten the mother or the fetus.

Sen. Shane Massey, R-Edgefield, who represents part of Lexington County, voted for the bill, and said he feels it's a sensible compromise.

"I voted for the ban after 20 weeks," he said. "I think it is a reasonable limitation, especially considering the scientific discussions about the baby feeling pain."

Some studies have indicated that, at 20 weeks, a fetus can experience pain, recognize its mother's voice and have its heartbeat be heard through a stethoscope.

Sen. Katrina Shealy, R-Lexington, cited these studies. She expressed her support for the bill, explaining that she served on the Conference Committee for the proposed legislation.



Shealy



Massey

"First, let me say that I am a staunch pro-life supporter, and I believe that life begins at conception," she said. "That being said, this compromise gives 20 weeks after conception for the

mother to determine whether or not she wants to consider abortion."

One of the elements that makes the bill so controversial is that it offers no exceptions for rape or incest victims.

Massey said the time limit offers plenty of leeway for those cases.

"The rape and incest exceptions were excluded because we're talking about abortions after 20 weeks ... nearly five months into the pregnancy," he said. "If someone chooses to have an abortion because of rape or incest, they are not going to wait five months before making that decision."

Shealy echoed Massey's sentiments, saying the time limit takes those things into consideration.

"This is the compromise," Shealy said of the 20-week limit, "(other than) if the mother's life is in danger or the baby has no chance of surviving outside the womb."

The bill has been sent to the office of Gov. Nikki Haley, who will decide whether or not the bill is signed into legislation.

Arik Bjorn brings fighting spirit to 2nd District Congressional race

BY HAL MILLARD
halmillard@gmail.com

When it comes to politics, Arik Bjorn doesn't mince words.

On one hand he's fighting a Republican incumbent he considers a "do-nothing" legislator whose policy stances are nothing short of "barbaric." On the other, he's facing a Democratic challenger he considers a phony and a "disgrace to democracy."

A gentle, mild-mannered librarian in Columbia by day, 42-year-old Bjorn (whose Nordic surname, incidentally, translates to "bear"), is seeking to become the Democratic nominee on June 14 for the congressional seat held by Lexington County Republican Joe Wilson.

In "status quo Joe," Bjorn said he sees a congressman who has done little for his district since assuming office in 2001, unless you consider infamously yelling "You lie!" at President Obama in his 2009 State of the Union Address an accomplishment.

But before he can get a shot at Wilson (and American Party candidate Eddie McCain and independent Jordan Taylor) this November, Bjorn must next month get past "fake" Democratic challenger Phil Black of Lexington.

"There isn't one person in the know, not one district Democratic leader, that doesn't know my primary opponent is a fake Democrat, and a hack, and a Tea Party Republican," Bjorn told the *Chronicle*. "He's dishonoring democracy at large by running as a Democrat. Our Founding Fathers would turn in their graves at what he's doing. It's an abominable disgrace. And if the man had any scruples at all, he'd drop out."

Black managed to win the Democratic party nomination in 2014 against mainstream party favorite Ed Greenleaf, but was soundly thumped by Wilson in the general election. Prior to that, Black ran against Wilson unsuccessfully in 2008, 2010, and 2012 as a Republican before switching parties.

And indeed, with very few exceptions, Black's views veer sharply from those of Democrats on numerous issues such as welfare, education, Social Security, the environment, Obamacare, national security, gun control, and abortion rights.

Black played coy when asked about his party identification in a recent issue of the *Columbia Free Times*. When pushed, he said, "I'm running as a Democrat, so theoretically I'm a Democrat," but also noted he didn't believe there was much difference these days in either major party, since "lobbyists run both of them."

But it makes a huge difference to Bjorn and other area Democratic leaders.

"Mr. Black failed multiple times as a Republican and is now running under the Democrat banner. We trust the citizens of the Second District will see this for what it is," Lexington County Democratic Party chair Randy Herald told the *Chronicle*.

"Arik understands that the purpose of government is to do for us what we cannot do individually," Herald added. "This begins with taking care of our national security and especially the men and women who provide that security. He also supports the infrastructure which provides South Carolinians the means to compete on a world stage, whether it be highways,

healthcare, or education. The future of our state and country is in building up, not tearing down. Mr. Bjorn embodies the Democratic ideals of citizen-oriented service."

A future at stake

Bjorn, the doting single-father of an 8-year-old daughter and caretaker of his mother, is currently a librarian at Richland Library. Though he is new to politics, he does have a successful record in the world of government and economic development.

Before returning to school for a Masters in Library Science at USC, he previously managed South Carolina's SmartState program, a multi-billion-dollar initiative created by the state legislature that brings together the state's research universities and major employers to spur development of high-tech research and economic development across the state.

Since 2002, the program has created more than 10,000 jobs in such sectors as the automotive, alternative energy, and biomedical industries.

A graduate of Wheaton College, Billy Graham's alma mater, Bjorn has been a prolific writer for years, largely on the subject of religion.

"I have an academic background in religious studies, and I am a firm believer in interfaith cooperation," he said.

He also has worked for Health Sciences South Carolina, the nation's first statewide healthcare research collaboration, which includes as members Clemson, MUSC, and USC, as well as major healthcare systems such as Palmetto Health.

Though this is his first run for office, several factors

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came into play that compelled Bjorn to run, he said. Presidential candidate Bernie Sanders' electrifying visit to Columbia last year provided a major spark. Providing a better future for his daughter also factored heavily in his decision. And, Bjorn said, as a Progressive Democrat he just couldn't sit back any longer while Wilson coasted to victory every two years and candidates such as Black were allowed to carry his party's banner into battle.

The 2016 races are crucial, a possible tipping point, he warned. After mulling it over, and discussing it with his daughter, he said he felt he had to run.

"(In 2016) very bad things could happen," he said. "Many of the foundations of our society and our civilization could be at stake. And no democratic spot on any ballot can be left blank this time."

Among his top issues, Bjorn insists that the state and nation's failing infrastructure must be modernized. He also insists that the state must not only improve and fully fund secondary education, but increase access to and lessen the financial burden of higher education, noting

that the state still lags far behind in the numbers of its citizens with college degrees.

Bjorn also believes the state and nation must increase access to affordable healthcare, calling Gov. Nikki Haley's refusal to expand medicaid under Obamacare an "ethical and criminal wrong" that Wilson has been complicit in.

"Blood is on her hands," he said.

On national security and military policy, Bjorn said he supports the military, but believes the nation has been too quick to wage war when diplomacy could have sufficed. He added that politicians have failed the nation's soldiers and deserve the treatment, care, and employment opportunities due them. And, he added, he would not cut military funding, but rather would direct more of it to humanitarian and peace-building efforts abroad.

Bjorn said the next congressman must also work to move the state towards better stewardship of its natural resources, for economic as well as environmental reasons.

"The citizens of District 2 need to approach the preservation and maintenance

of our natural resources, our home, with deliberate care," he said. "That isn't just philosophy and stargazing—it's business common sense."

And, on the subject of business common sense, the state and nation must also work towards providing everyone the chance at a living wage before income disparities between the richest and poorest completely spiral out of control, he added. Further, he called for a major expansion of Internet access into poor and rural areas, which he believes would create greatly expanded economic opportunities.

Finally, he said, he'd like to change the way the district thinks of itself, by stressing that it truly is a community with similar needs and aspirations, regardless of whether citizens are liberal or conservative.

"We have to think of ourselves as a community, as neighbors," he said. "When we begin to do that we realize we have mutual goals and needs – and they're absolutely not being met under the legislative henchman known as Joe Wilson."

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Photo provided

Democratic U.S. House candidate Arik Bjorn hopes to take on the mighty incumbent U.S. Rep. Joe Wilson (R-Springdale) in November's election, but first, he has to win the June primary over his party opponent Phil Black.

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THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley speaks with reporters outside the Jasper County office building in Ridgeland on May 2 after a briefing on a \$4.5 billion container terminal South Carolina and Georgia are jointly building on the Savannah River.

Georgia approves \$7.5M for joint seaport with S.C.

BY RUSS BYNUM

The Associated Press

SAVANNAH, Ga. — The Georgia Ports Authority approved \$7.5 million on Monday for the first big steps toward building a new seaport terminal on the Savannah River to be operated jointly with South Carolina.

Both states have spent years discussing, studying and debating the proposed \$4.5 billion Jasper Ocean Ter-

minal, which would occupy 1,500 acres in Jasper County, South Carolina, not far from downtown Savannah.

The two states are expected to split the \$15 million costs of preparing for the required permits during the next three years.

South Carolina Ports Authority spokeswoman Erin Dhand said her state's lawmakers have approved \$2.5 million to cover next year's share.

"It's a huge step," said Curtis Foltz, executive director of the Georgia Ports Authority. "This gets a very important phase of the project going forward. It's a strong voice of confidence."

A joint board overseeing the project already asked the Army Corps of Engineers to begin the permitting process for construction at the site as well as widening and deepening the shipping channel.





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The Jasper terminal would be a huge investment for both states.

Consultants say the first phase alone would take more than a decade to build at a cost of more than \$2 billion.

Georgia and South Carolina officials insist the shared terminal is their best bet for expansion once the rival ports of Savannah and Charleston run out of space.

The finished Jasper terminal would have room for 7 million shipping container units to accommodate future growth.

Port leaders from both states are expected to give final approval to the initial funding plan in Charleston next month.

"I don't know that we have a choice," said Jimmy Allgood, who is chairman of the Georgia-South Carolina board steering the project as well as the incoming board chairman of the Georgia Ports Authority. "We've got to have the capacity. We're going to run out of capacity in 10 to 15 years."

Jeffrey Holt, a banker who specializes in financing for port expansions and other infrastructure projects, told the board last November that for every \$1 billion they borrow, the states should expect to pay \$50 million to \$130 million each year to cover debt obligations.



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Deadline approaches for passing military retiree tax break

BY JEFF WILKINSON
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When Tom Robillard retired from the Air Force 12 years ago after 30 years of service, he had to decide where to put down roots. But at 58, like most military retirees, he still needed to work.

A big factor in where he would embark on his second career was which state wouldn't tax his pension.

Robillard, a Connecticut native, favored Tennessee or Florida — neither of which have state income taxes. But he settled on South Carolina because his daughter and grandchildren are in Columbia.

"Otherwise, I would be in Destin (Fla.) right now," said Robillard, who went on to work as a biomedical consultant at Shaw Air Force Base in Sumter and later was supervisor of the biochemistry department at Moncrief Army Community Hospital at Fort Jackson. "When you get out of the service, there are a lot of people

that are competing for you."

The S.C. General Assembly is considering a bill that would offer state income tax deductions for military retirees. The plan would offer military retirees with at least 20 years of service a deduction of \$17,500 a year for those under 65 or \$30,000 a year for those 65 or older.

A caveat is that the military retirees under 65 must embark on a second job in the state with an annual salary of at least \$17,500.

The bill unanimously passed the House in 2015 and was carried over to the Senate this year. It has passed the Senate Finance Committee twice but has been held up mainly by state Sen. Gerald Malloy, D-Darlington.

Malloy has lodged an objection to the bill, which means his presence is necessary before it can be debated and voted upon by the entire Senate. He

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was out of town Monday and said by text that the issue warranted further discussion but didn't elaborate.

The legislative session ends June 2. If senators don't vote on the bill by then, it will have to be reintroduced next year.

About 58,000 military retirees live in South Carolina, according to U.S. Department of Defense. The bill would cost the state about \$18 million a year, according to S.C. Department of Revenue.

But the bill's backers — including the S.C. Military Base Task Force, which is charged with keeping military bases open and retaining and creating military jobs in the Palmetto State — said the benefits outweigh the cost.

The tax break would retain disciplined, skilled workers such as Robillard, said task force chairman Bill Bethea of Bluffton, who was appointed by Gov. Nikki Haley. The cost would be offset by taxes on the retirees' new jobs and those of their spouses.

"We're very fortunate to have Boeing and Volvo and BMW and all these tire companies in South Carolina," said Bethea, an 8-year veteran of the Marine Corps who fought in Vietnam. "They require good, dependable, reliable workers. Someone who has been in the military for 30 years makes an ideal employee."

"Keeping those people here strengthens our workforce," he said. "It also brings in a replacement stream of income

that exceeds their retirement income."

The bill's passage would also help cement South Carolina as one of the most military friendly states in the nation. That's a distinction which will bolster the state's standing with the Pentagon when new rounds of base closings and realignment, called BRAC, kicks in, perhaps in 2019.

The Military Officers Association of America rates South Carolina yellow — or average — when it comes to military issues. The rating is not green — the highest — primarily because of the income tax issue. Red is the lowest rating.

At present, 26 states have no state income tax at all or exempt military retirees from paying state income taxes, according to the S.C. Department of Commerce.

"Every retiree looks at that when they are making their decision to retire," said Robillard, who is a state vice president of the national officers association. "And that extends to enlisted retirees as well as officers. This legislation benefits all retirees."

Boosters said another benefit of the bill is that it would say "thank you" to retirees for their lengthy service, which often includes combat.

"These are people who for 20 or 30 years moved every two years, lived like gypsies, put their lives on the line and weren't able to put down roots," Bethea said. "We feel this is a way that South Carolinians can give back to those veterans for the sacrifices they made for our freedom."



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**Domestic violence
resource website now up**

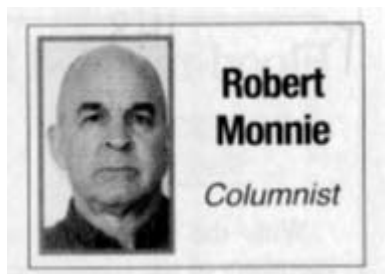
COLUMBIA — A new website intended to help both victims and perpetrators of domestic violence in South Carolina get resources needed to curb the crime has launched.

At a summit on Friday, Gov. Nikki Haley announced *www.SafePlaceSC.sc.gov* would help people suffering from abuse and offenders get information to help themselves.

Haley's office says the site has a 24-hour crisis hotline and safety checklists.

148 Obama's outrageous Orwellian overreach

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"The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people" - Tenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution as ratified in 1791.

When the vocabulary of American Standard English does not suit his totalitarian agenda, President Barack Hussein Obama has a propensity to redefine words that have stood the test of time. During his first term, he changed the definition of adult to anyone 26 years and older when Obamacare decreed that "children" 25 and under may be carried on their parent's health insurance policies.

On Friday the 13th, Obama once again proved that he has a careless disregard for 100,000 plus years of human existence on this planet when he tried his best to change the biological definitions of male and female.

Signed by officials of the Departments of Justice and Education in the Obama administration, a letter was sent to the superintendents of all public K-12 school districts across the country two weeks ago dictating that all public schools allow transgender students use the bathroom of their choice.

Although the letter does

not have the force of law because courts have not settled the question of whether the nation's laws apply in matters of arbitrary gender identity, schools that do not obey the Obama administration's interpretation of gender discrimination statutes may face lawsuits or loss of federal aid.

The 14,000 school districts nationwide have a total enrollment of 45 million students and receive about \$500 billion in federal tax revenue annually. Chesterfield County School District with its 16 schools and 7,300 students receives about \$17 million in federal tax revenue each year.

When a child's parent or legal guardian declares a gender identity for the student that differs from his biology at birth, the letter says, the child is to be treated accordingly, without any requirement for a medical diagnosis or birth certificate to be produced. It further states that schools may — but are not required to — provide other restroom and locker room options to students who seek "additional privacy" for whatever reason.

However, what is not addressed in Obama's school bathroom ukase is the common practice of hundreds of adults using school bath-

rooms during extra-curricular activities, such as sporting events, hosted by a school that has crowds of up to several thousand people.

"What's to stop a grown man who attends a Friday night football game from declaring himself female and using bathrooms with young girls present?" asked a Chesterfield County resident who wishes to remain anonymous to avoid any repercussions from the LGBT movement. "In addition to providing the opportunity for a good education, schools are tasked with keeping our children safe."

Indeed! Whether they realize it or not, in addition to ignoring the Tenth Amendment, Obama and his mindless minions have put children in harm's way by opening bathroom doors to anybody and anything.

Fortunately for the Palmetto State, both S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley and Attorney General Alan Wilson are standing firm on Obama's outrageous Orwellian and dictatorial overreach.

Acknowledging she does not necessarily agree with North Carolina's law regarding bathroom use by transgender people, Haley said. "But we also don't need President Obama imposing a one-size-fits-all policy from Washington. We have al-





ways been proud of the fact that we handle issues such as this one in our school districts, and I trust South Carolinians to decide this issue, community by community, at the school district level.”

The ball is now in the

court of the school boards that set policy for the 82 districts in South Carolina. Prior to the June 13 board meeting, I strongly encourage all concerned citizens to contact their respective trustees on the Chesterfield

County School Board and remind them of their constitutional oath of office, in addition to the safety of all 7,300 students under their charge.

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148 Flood-ravaged farmers receive additional \$40 million

ROBERT MONNIE
Staff Reporter

With the support of all members of the Chesterfield County legislative delegation last week, both chambers of the General Assembly overwhelmingly overrode Gov. Nikki Haley's veto of a \$40 million measure to assist farmers whose crops were damaged by last fall's severe flooding.

The vote in the House of Representatives was 112-2, while the tally in the Senate was 39-3, resulting in the bill becoming law.

To qualify, a farmer must have lost at least 40 percent of a crop with, soybeans and cotton suffering the lion's share of the damage. The

grants cover 20 percent of that loss, not to exceed \$100,000. Combined with crop insurance, which most farmers possess, the additional assistance is expected keep hundreds of family farms solvent.

In other business last week, by a margin of 101-2, the House passed a bill to require independent investigations of allegations of state legislators that are currently investigated solely by those same legislators. Voting for the measure were Speaker of the House Jay Lucas (R-Hartsville) and

State Rep. Richie Yow (R-Chesterfield), while State Rep Pat Henegan (D-Bennettsville) did not vote due to her excused absence.

Under the proposal, a restructured eight-member state ethics commission would investigate allegations against state lawmakers. The governor would appoint four members, while the House and Senate would select four members.

The bill has proceeded to the Senate, which is slated to take it under consideration this week.