

Title: **Haley says she has no regrets about campaigning against Republicans**
 Author: JEFFREY COLLINS ASSOCIATED PRESS
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Haley says she has no regrets about campaigning against Republicans

JEFFREY COLLINS
 ASSOCIATED PRESS

COLUMBIA - Only two of the seven candidates she endorsed won their races, and one of her best allies in the state Senate lost a run-off, but South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley said she still thinks her campaigns against fellow Republicans in this year's primaries were successful.

Haley said Thursday her main goal was to put enough pressure on lawmakers to pass ethics reform. The General Assembly did pass bills that require lawmakers and other public officials to reveal who pays their private salaries and have an independent panel investigate allegations of ethics violations against legislators.

The governor said just the pressure of her potentially campaigning — and the more than \$500,000

her political group raised for those campaigns — forced the Legislature to act.

"Every one of the incumbents had to talk about ethics for the first time. Even the ones who tried to kill it had no choice but to campaign on it," Haley said.

One of the lawmakers Haley targeted — Sen. Wes Hayes of Rock Hill — asked lawmakers to pass ethics reform after his loss. When Haley signed the bill, she went to Sen. Larry Martin's district, and endorsed him. Martin's 38-year legislative career is now ending after a runoff loss Tuesday.

"That hurts," Haley said of Martin's defeat. "It hurts from the standpoint that he was a true conservative statesman. He was very pro-business. He showed leadership."

Haley's campaigning could also hurt her agenda in her final two

years as two of the senators she targeted are likely to lead the Senate's two most powerful committees. Senate President Pro Tem Hugh Leatherman of Florence should remain over the Finance Committee, and Sen. Luke Rankin of Myrtle Beach is set to move into Martin's position as chairman of the Judiciary Committee.

Neither Rankin nor Leatherman returned messages seeking comment. Haley also dodged a question asking how she will handle the Legislature over the next two years before she must leave under term limits. "You win some, you lose some," she said.

Along with Hayes, the only other candidate Haley campaigned against to lose was Sen. Lee Bright of Spartanburg, who also was targeted by the Conservation Voters of South Carolina and the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce.

Title: **Critic: SC avoided meaningful fixes for poor school districts**
 Author: JAMIE SELF THE STATE
 Size: 45.10 column inches
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Critic: SC avoided meaningful fixes for poor school districts

JAMIE SELF

THE STATE

State lawmakers' efforts this year to improve public schools amounted to "tinkering around the edges without offering meaningful remedies," an attorney representing poor, rural school districts says.

Carl Epps, a Nelson Mullins attorney representing school districts that sued the state in 1993 for more support, was critiquing an update state lawmakers filed Wednesday with the state Supreme Court.

The report, outlining the steps that lawmakers took this year to improve public schools, cited more than \$100 million in new state spending in the districts that sued the state. That spending, in the state budget that starts Friday, includes more money for teacher pay raises, technology and technical assistance, and teacher recruitment efforts for rural districts.

State lawmakers agreed this year to spend more than \$300 million in added money on education for all school districts.

Gov. Nikki Haley, who backed the initiatives in her executive budget, also submitted an update to the court, outlining her push for more state spending on students living in poverty, technology and reading coaches, among other initiatives.

The Supreme Court ordered an update after ruling in 2014 that public schools did not provide children in poor, rural schools the quality of education guaranteed by the state Constitution. That ruling came in re-

sponse to a 1993 lawsuit brought by more than 30 poor, rural districts against the state.

In their update, House Speaker Jay Lucas, R-Darlington, and Senate President Pro Tempore Hugh Leatherman, R-Florence, also outlined meetings of task forces in the House and Senate to examine the state of public education.

The House panel produced a report with dozens of recommendations that led to eight bills, four of which became law this year.

Two of the newly passed laws redefined what a South Carolina high-school graduate should know and be able to do, and called for a survey aimed at identifying ways to entice new teachers to work in rural, low-income districts.

Two other new laws codify efforts already underway at the state Department of Education under the leadership of Superintendent Molly Spearman. The laws require the department to provide technical assistance to struggling districts and to maintain an office that reviews and assists lower performing districts.

But the bill that stood to make the biggest impact on poor schools did not pass.

First pitched by Haley in January, the proposal called for spending \$200 million in state money to help districts pay to renovate and rebuild aging school facilities. The House passed the bill, but it died in the

Senate as the clock ran out on the legislative session.

Lucas and Leatherman did not promise to pass that bill next year.

But they did say the effort to improve public education is ongoing. "The Senate and the House are mindful of the mandate from the Court and are working diligently to improve the educational system for the benefit of all students."

The court ordered an update from state leaders after ruling in 2014 that the state's public schools did not provide children in poor, rural school districts the quality of education guaranteed by the state Constitution.

That ruling came in response to a 1993 lawsuit brought by more than 30 poor, rural districts against the state.

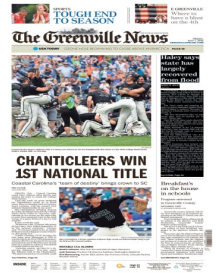
Epps said the update that legislative leaders filed with the court Wednesday "confirms what we already know."

"The Senate and the House held a number of committee meetings and received a lot of valuable information from highly qualified and talented people explicitly describing these children's plight and what needs to be done to offer them an education."

But, he added, the time for major reforms is overdue.

"A 7-year-old second-grader who was in one of the impacted schools is now 30," Epps said. "Another generation of children now takes their place."

Title: **Haley says state has largely recovered from flood**
 Author: AVERY G. WILKS THE STATE
 Size: 33.48 column inches
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Haley says state has largely recovered from flood

AVERY G. WILKS
 THE STATE

COLUMBIA - South Carolina suffered roughly \$741 million in losses to housing, \$137 million in damage to state roads and more than \$200 million in damage to other public assets during the historic storm last fall, Gov. Nikki Haley announced Thursday.

But fixed roads and ongoing repairs to storm-damaged homes highlighted Haley's rundown Thursday of the state's triumphs after record rain on Oct. 4.

"We saw devastation like we had never seen, and we quickly got to work," Haley said.

Just 36 of 541 state roads closed by the storm remain closed, and two-thirds of those are related to an unstable dam, Haley said.

Hotel revenue is up 7.8 percent from last year, meaning 2016 will be the fourth straight year of tourism growth, she announced.

And the Haley-backed One S.C. Flood Recovery Fund has received nearly \$1.65 million in donations and \$12.7 million in donated skilled labor, she said.

Those donations have helped volunteer organizations rebuild or begin

repairs to 1,100 homes statewide as S.C. officials await nearly \$157 million in federal flood recovery aid, she said.

"We weren't going to let people live like that. We knew that we had to fix it," Haley said. "The One S.C. Fund allowed us to go ahead and get these homes started. It's going to be several months, still, until we get the money that we need from HUD."

The storm left 19 dead and, at one point, 40,000 people without water, according to a release from the governor's office.

See FLOOD, Page 4A

Flood

Continued from Page 1A

Thirty-six dams failed, more than 20,000 S.C. residents were displaced and more than 1,500 residents were rescued from floodwaters, the release said.

South Carolina communities now are awaiting nearly \$157 million in aid from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

When it arrives, that money — about \$96.8 million will go directly to the state — can be used to meet remaining "unmet housing, economic development,

and infrastructure needs that resulted from thousands of homes and small businesses being damaged or destroyed" during the storm, according to HUD.

State officials have said they would use the money to ensure vulnerable residents have suitable housing. The state has scheduled several town halls starting next week to present its preliminary plan for the money.

Haley also announced Thursday that retired Army Col. Kevin Shwedo would return to his role as director of the state Department of Motor Vehi-

cles after an eight-month stint as the state's flood recovery director.

He will be replaced by retired Army Col. J.R. Sanderson, who has worked in Shwedo's recovery office.

"He has been with Col. Shwedo since day one, so this is not bringing in someone new," Haley said. "This is someone who has been doing all the work, and now we're just going to the next phase. And so that next phase is very much dealing with how we're going to deal with the housing grant money going forward and where we're going to go from there."

Title: **Myers one of 'America's Deadliest Prosecutors'**
 Author: BY MAAYAN SCHECHTER mschechter@aikenstandard.com
 Size: 57.50 column inches
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Myers one of 'America's Deadliest Prosecutors'

Prosecutor on Craven case named in Harvard report

BY MAAYAN SCHECHTER
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A new Harvard Law report has named the lead prosecutor in the case against former North Augusta police officer Justin Craven as one of America's deadliest prosecutors.

Solicitor Donnie Myers placed third in the Harvard Law Fair Punishment Project report, "America's top five deadliest prosecutors: How overzealous personalities drive the death penalty."

Myers is widely known in Aiken County as the attorney who prosecuted Craven, the former North Augusta police officer who fatally shot Edgefield County resident

Ernest Satterwhite Sr., 68, on Feb. 9, 2014, following a high-speed chase that started in North Augusta and ended on Satterwhite's dirt driveway in Edgefield County.

The Harvard Law report analyzes the records of five prosecutors: Myers; Joe Freeman Britt, of North Carolina; Bob Macy, of Oklahoma; Lynne Abraham, of Pennsylvania; and Johnny

Holmes, of Texas.

"These men (Myers, Britt and Macy) shared an obsession with winning death sentences at almost any cost," the report states.

Please see **MYERS**, Page 10A

ONLINE

Find the full report with this story online at aikenstandard.com

MYERS

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The Fair Punishment Project – a joint initiative of Harvard Law School's Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice and its Criminal Justice Institute – uses legal research and educational initiatives to ensure that the "U.S. justice system is fair and accountable," the study states.

Of the five prosecutors named in the report, Myers, of the 11th Circuit which covers portions of Edgefield, Lexington and Saluda counties, is the only individual

still in office.

Myers announced his retirement earlier this year following stiff criticism from S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley that he should resign following his third alcohol-related arrest.

Myers, or Donnie "Dr. Death" Myers as he's been referred, has obtained approximately 39 death sentences, according to the report.

That's more than any other prosecutor in the state of South Carolina, according to the report.

The report states Myers used his "charging discretion" to seek the death pen-

alty for some of the most vulnerable defendants.

The study uses the example of Kevin Mercer, whose "cognitive deficiencies" included a neurological dysfunction, learning disabilities and post-traumatic stress disorder.

In a 2012 profile of Myers that was featured in *The State* newspaper, Myers told reporter Adam Beam he is "annoyed" with the "Dr. Death" reputation, and he hates prosecuting death penalty cases. He does it, though, because it's the right thing to do, Myers told the newspaper.

The Harvard Law report

also takes into account misconduct during the time of Myers' tenure.

Courts have found Myers committed misconduct in 18 capital cases, or 46 percent of the cases he's pursued, according to the report. Six of the death sentence cases he pursued were overturned due to explicit misconduct.

As an example, the report uses the case against Robert Northcutt, who confessed to killing his young daughter after she wouldn't stop crying, *The State* reported.

The report said Myers wheeled a crib draped in a

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black shroud in front of the jury to stage a fake funeral, even crying during his closing argument and telling the jury that not returning a death sentence would be like declaring "open season on babies in Lexington County."

Myers also wiretapped confidential communications between defendants and their lawyers and was often accused of excluding jurors based on race, according to the Harvard report.

Ron Kaz, board chair of the advocacy group South Carolinians Abolishing the Death Penalty, hadn't read the report on Thursday, as he was

in Washington, D.C., with others protesting by hunger strike against the death penalty.

When asked what he thought of Myers' name on the list, Kaz said, through his

career, Myers has frequently sought the death penalty against people of color who have murdered white people, but never sought the death penalty when white people have murdered people of color.

Kaz fights to abolish the death penalty because it's morally wrong, he said.

"Even if you believe it's just, in some cases ... the way

the death penalty is practiced, it's racist, it's classist, it's expensive," he said. "It costs more than life without parole does."

Myers did not respond to repeated inquiries by press time.

Sister Helen Prejean, who was portrayed by actress Susan Sarandon in the Oscar nominated film "Dead Man Walking," quoted a Tweet on Thursday referencing the Harvard report, calling it, "Very disturbing."

The Harvard Law report includes the consultation of legal database Westlaw for court opinions, legal briefs and motions, according to the report. The report also includes information from newspaper archives and federal and local public defender offices.

For more information about the Fair Punishment Project, visit www.fairpunishment.org.

Maayan Schechter is the digital news editor with the *Aiken Standard*. Follow her on Twitter @MaayanSchechter.

About the Harvard report



Myers

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 Author: BY CHRISTINA CLEVELAND ccleveland@aikenstandard.com
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Farmers can apply for farm aid

Money is 'life line' for those affected by October floods

BY CHRISTINA CLEVELAND

ccleveland@aikenstandard.com

WEST COLUMBIA — South Carolina farmers could be months away from receiving money to help them recover from last year's flooding, in a measure that has been called a "life line" for the agricultural community.

Starting today, farmers across the state who experienced losses due to last October's historic rains can now apply for South Carolina Farm Aid grants

from the South Carolina Department of Agriculture, or SCDA.

The application period will be open for up to 45 days as directed by law. The deadline is Aug. 15.

In a news conference held at the State Farmers Market on Thursday, Agriculture Commissioner Hugh Weathers said the goal is that after 45 days of

receiving applications and working with farmers, in another 45 days, dollars could go out to the farming community.

To be eligible for the grant, farmers must:

- Demonstrate at least a 40-percent loss as a result of the October 2015 flooding
- Be in a farm located in the USDA flood-disaster

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FARMS

CONTINUED from 1A

declared counties in the state (all except Pickens, Cherokee, Jasper and Oconee)

- Have a farm number issued by the Farm Service Agency
- Sign an affidavit, under penalty or perjury, certifying that the loss information is accurate
- Sign a W-9 form or complete vendor registration
- Have the ability to demonstrate an intent to continue the farming operation.

Acceptable documentation of loss varies based on each crop, according to SCDA.

Weathers said the 40 percent threshold of affected crops is defined as a crop in the ground on Oct. 1.

The commissioner noted the U.S. Department of Agriculture threshold is 30 percent. The one-time grants are capped at 20 percent of total loss. The maximum amount is \$100,000.

If a person is an owner in several applications, the \$100,000 maximum applies to him or her individually, as well as the entity, Weathers said.

Farmers cannot purchase County: Aiken

new equipment with the application. The grants also do not cover new debt.

"It is simply designed to give them a life line, not a bailout, to help bridge from the flood damage of 2015," Weathers said.

Last year's rains resulted in millions of dollars in losses for the state's agriculture community. The damage also could be felt in Aiken County,

primarily in the eastern portion near the Orangeburg and Lexington county lines.

A bill establishing the South Carolina Farm Aid Fund, a one-time \$40 million grant program, became law in May after the General Assembly voted to override S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley's veto of the legislation.

Haley followed through with her promise to veto the bill, referring to the measure as a "bailout" and saying the state should do its best to help all industries and property owners affected by last year's flood fairly through the recovery process.

In a statement in May, Weathers said farmers were the hardest hit by the flooding. The commissioner said the

total impact was just less than \$400 million.

"A bailout — we did that for the banking industry, the car industry," Weathers told the *Aiken Standard* on Thursday. "Twenty percent, I don't think is a bailout."

If people rode through South Carolina right after the flood, he said they would've seen part of the state had come to a standstill.

"They would understand that in the rural counties of South Carolina, agriculture still makes the fabric of Aiken County or Edgefield County," Weathers added.

Farm Bureau President Harry Ott called the flooding a "bittersweet moment" for agriculture in South Carolina. The bitterness, he said, is that farmers experienced a disaster of that magnitude, but the sweet part "is agriculture was recognized in the General Assembly as the No. 1 industry" in the state.

"... You know, partisan politics comes out a lot of times in South Carolina, but in this case, when it came to helping agriculture and farms and agriculture in the state of South Carolina, partisanship didn't

play a role at all," Ott said.

"And Democrats and Republicans both came together as a team and said, 'We're going to help agriculture.' And they did it, and I'll be always be thankful to them."

To help farmers apply for assistance this summer, the Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service and SCDA are conducting several regional educational workshops across the state.

For a full list of workshops and registration information, visit agriculture.sc.gov/sc-farm-aid/educational-sessions/.

Clemson Extension Director Thomas Dobbins said the funds are critical to the state's agriculture community.

"We will work directly with farmers throughout the application period to ensure this much-needed assistance is put to good use," Dobbins said.

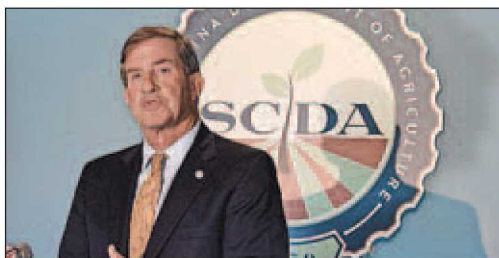
Also starting today, a farm aid section will be available on the department of agriculture website.

For complete application instructions and to access the application PDF form, visit agriculture.sc.gov/SC-farm-aid/. For more information about Farm Aid or to be put in

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contact with Farm Aid staff,
call Megan Heidkamp with
SCDA at 803-734-2210.

Christina Cleveland is the
county government reporter
at the *Aiken Standard*.



STAFF PHOTO BY CHRISTINA CLEVELAND

**South Carolina Agriculture Commissioner
Hugh Weathers speaks about the South Caro-
lina Farm Aid grant program Thursday.**

Title: **No solutions yet on Confederate flag display**
 Author: BY AVERY G. WILKS awilks@thestate.com
 Size: 24.64 column inches
 Myrtle Beach, SC Circulation: 61238



No solutions yet on Confederate flag display

Flag remains in environmentally secure storage container

BY AVERY G. WILKS
awilks@thestate.com
 COLUMBIA, SC

The Confederate flag removed from the S.C. State House grounds last July remains in limbo.

Members of the S.C. Confederate Relic Room and Military Museum Commission acknowledged Wednesday that lawmakers didn't act this year on a proposal to expand that museum and display the flag. Lawmakers also sustained Gov. Nikki Haley's veto of a proposal to study moving the flag – and the museum – to Charleston from Columbia.

For now, the \$52 nylon flag – one of many that flew over the State House grounds through the years –

remains wrapped in acid-free tissue paper in a white, acid-free textile storage box. The box is stored on a stainless steel rack in a locked, climate-controlled room with an alarm in the back of the museum.

"We're really where we were last year," said commission chairman George Dorn of Lexington. "You've got to go back and regroup."

The museum's staff will work on a solution but, ultimately, need lawmakers' approval to move forward with displaying the flag, museum director Allen Roberson said. Lawmakers also could offer their own plan and funding solution, he

said.

The flag was removed July 10, less than a month after the June 2015 racially motivated massacre of nine black parishioners in a Charleston church.

Roberson said the museum, tucked away in the back of the S.C. State Museum, doesn't have the budget or space to display the flag. Cramming the flag display into the existing programming space could jeopardize the museum's national accreditation, he said.

"Our collections area is overflowing right now," Roberson said.

That's why the Relic

Room and Military Museum late last year proposed a \$3.6 million expansion to the museum, including opening a new wing to display the flag.

Lawmakers had balked at an earlier version of that proposal because of its \$5.3 million price tag. Roberson said Wednesday he hasn't received feedback on the most recent proposal.

Roberson said his staff and the commission are willing to work with lawmakers and the governor's office on a solution.

"We do want to do something with it, but we want to do it right."

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 Author: BY JAMIE SELF jself@thestate.com
 Size: 54.25 column inches
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Lawyer: 'Tinkering' not helping schools

Update to S.C. Supreme Court highlights more than \$100 million in added spending on school districts that sued the state

S.C. House, Senate leaders pledge 2017 will bring renewed efforts to improve schools

BY JAMIE SELF
 jself@thestate.com

State lawmakers' efforts this year to improve public schools amounted to "tinkering around the edges without offering meaningful remedies," an attorney representing poor, rural school districts said.

Carl Epps, a Nelson Mullins attorney representing school districts that sued the state in 1993 for more support, was critiquing an update state lawmakers filed Wednesday with the S.C. Supreme Court.

The report, outlining the steps that lawmakers took this year to improve public schools, cited more than \$100 million in new state spending in the districts that sued

the state. That spending, in the state budget that starts Friday, includes more money for teacher pay raises, technology and technical assistance, and teacher recruitment efforts for rural districts.

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Gov. Nikki Haley, who backed the initiatives in her executive budget, also submitted an update to the court, outlining her push for more state spending on students living in poverty, technology and reading coaches, among other initiatives.

The Supreme Court ordered an update from S.C. leaders after

ruling in 2014 that public schools did not provide children in poor, rural schools the quality of education guaranteed by the state Constitution. That ruling came in response to a 1993 lawsuit brought by more than 30 poor, rural districts against the state.

In their update, House Speaker Jay Lucas, R-Darlington, and Senate President Pro Tempore Hugh Leatherman, R-Florence, also outlined meetings of task forces in the House and Senate to examine the state of public education.

SEE SCHOOLS, 5A

SCHOOLS

FROM PAGE 1A

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But the bill that stood to make the biggest impact on poor schools did not pass.

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Carl Epps, a Nelson Mullins attorney critiquing an update state lawmakers filed Wednesday

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CONFEDERATE BANNER

No solutions yet on flag display

BY AVERY G. WILKS
awilks@thestate.com

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SEE FLAG, 7A

ONLINE

THESTATE.COM: Relic Room director Allen Roberson discusses options for the Confederate flag.

FLAG FROM PAGE 3A

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The museum's staff will work on a solution but, ultimately, needs lawmakers' approval to move forward with displaying the flag, museum director Allen Roberson said. Lawmakers also could offer their own plan and funding

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The flag was removed July 10, less than a month after the June 2015 racially motivated massacre of nine black parishioners in a Charleston church.

Roberson said the museum, tucked away in the back of the State Museum, doesn't have the budget or space to display the flag. Cramming the flag display into the existing programming space could jeopardize the museum's national

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"Our collections area is overflowing right now," Roberson said.

That's why the Relic Room and Military Museum late last year proposed a \$3.6 million expansion to the museum, including opening a new wing to display the flag.

Lawmakers had balked at an earlier version of that proposal because of its \$5.3

million price tag. Roberson said Wednesday he hasn't received feedback on the most recent proposal.

Roberson said his staff and the commission are willing to work with lawmakers and the governor's office on a solution. "We do want to do something with it, but we want to do it right."

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TIM DOMINICK, tdominick@thestate.com

S.C. Highway Patrol Honor Guard members take down the Confederate battle flag from the State House grounds for the final time during a ceremony last July 10.

Title: **No solutions yet on future home of Confederate battle flag display**
 Author: AVERY G. WILKS THE STATE
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THE STATE

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Lawmakers had balked at an earlier, \$5.3 million version of that proposal.

Roberson said Wednesday his staff and the commission are willing to adjust that proposal after hearing from lawmakers and the governor's office. He said he has gotten no direct feedback on the proposal so far.

"We do want to do something with it, but we want to do it right," Roberson said.

Title: **Martin's runoff loss may hurt Upstate's influence**
 Author: RON BARNETT RBARNETT@GREENVILLENEWS.COM
 Size: 79.20 column inches
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Martin's runoff loss may hurt Upstate's influence

RON BARNETT

RBARNETT@GREENVILLENEWS.COM

State Sen. Larry Martin's re-election bid got caught up in "a perfect storm" of circumstances that blew away much of the Upstate's political clout in one blast Tuesday, a Greenville political consultant said.

Former House member Rex Rice defeated Martin in a runoff for the Republican nomination for the state Senate District 2 seat. No Democrats filed to run in November.

Martin, the affable Pickens lawmaker who had risen to the chairmanship of the powerful Senate Judiciary Committee and was one of the most senior members of the upper cham-

ber with 24 years, fell victim to a national anti-incumbent sentiment, a virulent attack from a "dark money" group and a local school issue that he didn't even have anything to do with, said Chip Felkel, founder of the Felkel Group in Greenville.

"People don't like Columbia, they don't like Washington, and so they don't care about committee assignments," Felkel said. "But the region is going to miss the seniority that Martin had achieved."

About 40 percent of legislation that goes through the Senate comes out of the Judiciary Committee, giving the

chairman a powerful voice in setting the agenda.

Martin had the momentum in his favor, with backing from everyone from Gov. Nikki Haley, the Senate Republican Caucus and the South Carolina Jobs Coalition to the Friends of the Farm Bureau and Conservation Voters of SC.

But Rice, who disavows any connection to a political action group, was heavily pushed by an organization called Better Future for our Community.

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Martin

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These so-called "dark money" groups don't have to file any disclosure statements, so the public has no way of knowing who they are.

But Felkel said he has reason to believe the group that campaigned for Rice is a trial lawyers group that wanted Martin out of the chairmanship of the Judiciary Committee because he's not a lawyer.

Sen. Luke Rankin – a lawyer – is next in line to chair the committee.

Rankin, from Horry County, couldn't be reached for comment Wednesday.

"That's about as far as you can go off the other end of the state and not go off into the ocean," Martin said of his successor's district.

Martin, who works for Alice Manufacturing Co., was the first

non-lawyer to chair that committee when he took over in 2012, and the first chairman from this end of the state.

Holding that position has had benefits for the Upstate and Pickens County, Martin said. For example, his ability to get legislation passed quickly this year that had the effect of stopping a company from building a coal ash landfill near Liberty.

"I would never say that but for the fact that I was chairman that it wouldn't have gotten done," Martin said. "All I can say is that it was tremendously beneficial that it happened when it did."

But he downplays the Upstate's loss of clout in Columbia.

"I don't want it to appear that I'm in some way suggesting that they've lost something enormous," he said.

And he said he hopes for Rankin to be successful in the chairmanship.

"We've got some really talented, strong folks on the Judiciary with lots of experience. The committee's going to be in good hands," he said. "I think Sen. Rankin will do a good job."

As to why he lost the runoff after being the leading candidate in a field of four two weeks earlier, Martin said he doesn't believe it was any one thing.

His vote to remove the Confederate battle flag from the Statehouse grounds, "obviously was a hot vote," he said.

But there were undercurrents that contributed, including the belief by many that he was partly to blame for the Pickens County School Board closing two elementary schools.

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"I've got folks in the A.R. Lewis area and Holly Springs area that are convinced that I had something to do with closing those schools," he said.

It wasn't because they believe the state didn't give enough money to the school district but simply because of his position.

Many of them believed, "that when push came to shove I could have saved those schools if I had wanted to because I'm the state senator."

The vote totals bear that out.

Some of Martin's biggest margins of loss came in the rural northern part of the county that was served by those schools.

His biggest precinct loss was by 134 votes out of a total of 342 cast in Pumpkintown, which is in the Holly Springs Elementary area.

Voters responding to a query on the Pickens County News Facebook page mentioned the Confederate flag and a distrust of career politicians among the reasons they chose Rice over Martin.

"I feel Martin had a lot of power and it is a loss, but when you asked him to wield that power he wouldn't -- unless it was an election year or he didn't think the fallout would be too great," Rus Smith said.

"Yes, there were benefits to having a senior member in his position, but when they're no longer serving the will of the people there's no benefit to the people," Josh Morgan said.

Haley's support -- she came to Easley to stand with Martin and

other legislators when she signed the ethics bill last week -- hurt him with some voters.

"Martin sided with Haley to remove our Confederate Flag. They had already moved it off the Capital building and said no further action would ever be taken to remove it," Laura Courtney said. "Lies."

Attempts to get a comment from Haley were unsuccessful Wednesday.

Martin won in just 16 of 61 precincts, and half of those by single digits.

That was despite having a huge advantage in campaign contributions.

Martin drew in more in individual contributions in the final quarter of the race -- \$62,598 -- than Rice had in his war chest total of \$53,175. And that included \$7,000 of Rice's own money and a \$39,000 loan. Martin's contributions for the cycle totaled \$149,000, according to the state Ethics Commission.

Felkel said the two candidates who were eliminated in the June 14 primary -- Don Joslyn and Allan Quinn -- each drew a subset of voters who had been caught up in "this angry populism" that has characterized this political season.

Both encouraged their supporters to vote for Rice in the runoff.

"It was death by a thousand cuts," Felkel said.

And Felkel said the political action committee that was supporting Rice was paying people \$250 a day to knock on doors in the days leading up to the runoff.

They sent out mailers accusing him of not being supportive of the Second Amendment because of his bill taking gun rights away from convicted domestic violence abusers, and they "manipulated and misinterpreted" his position on personhood, Felkel said.

Rice, who focused on his background as a family man, businessman and former legislator in his campaign, had marshaled his own forces in canvassing the county. He set up his pickup truck on the side of busy roads and invited passers-by to stop and talk about their concerns.

"I think people appreciate that," he said.

Rice, an equally affable Pickens County native who liked to tell people to remember his name as "Rex, like a dog, and Rice like you eat," will start at the bottom rung in the Senate but is no stranger to the Legislature, with more than a decade in the House under his belt.

Most people he talked to said they liked Martin, Rice said, "but they just wanted to see something a little different."

"I had a lot of people talking about me and praying for me to win," Rice said. "So I had a lot of help from a lot of directions."

Martin said he looks forward to spending more time with his grandchildren -- with two more on the way -- and wishes the best for Rice.

As for Rice, "We'll let the dust settle a little and we'll be ready to hit the ground going."