

From: Symmes, Brian
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Governor Nikki Haley News:

Aiken Standard: Haley's education reform plans 'a pleasant surprise'

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/article/20140109/AIK0101/140109381/1004/haley-s-education-reform-plans-a-pleasant-surprise>

Rob Novit

S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley announced extensive plans for K-12 education reform Wednesday -- among them new reading initiatives, additional support for children in low-income communities and funds for technology. King Laurence, the Aiken County School District's associate superintendent for instruction, said he is pleasantly surprised by Haley's proposals. One plan would include the money to finance all or part of the cost of a reading coach in all the state's elementary schools.

Union Daily Times: Union Daily Times: Haley unveils public education reforms

http://www.uniondailytimes.com/news/home_top-news/3326190/Haley-unveils-public-education-reforms

Derik Vanderford

On Wednesday, Gov. Nikki Haley unveiled her new public education reform initiative, which will focus on providing more support for poorer school districts, increasing literacy levels across the state, increasing technology in the classrooms, and providing additional support for teachers. Haley said Wednesday afternoon that her biggest goal at the beginning of her campaign — the issue everyone talked about — was jobs.

Note: "I knew from growing up in Bamberg and living in Bamberg that the only way to really bring up South Carolina was to bring up all of South Carolina — and that meant rural South Carolina," Haley said, explaining that changes were then made to the business climate and also in commerce.

Note: "We are doing an unprecedented initiative in technology, and I am really excited about this," Haley said. "We are doing a multi-year commitment. This year, \$30 million — on top of the \$10 million that is already there — will go toward technology."

The State: SC legislators want to see details of Haley's \$160 million education plan before committing

<http://www.thestate.com/2014/01/09/3198623/sc-legislators-want-to-see-details.html>

Jamie Self

Legislators whose support Gov. Nikki Haley will need to ensure her proposed \$160 million education spending package is adopted were positive but noncommittal Thursday, saying they needed to take a closer look. "Education will be in focus," said House Speaker Bobby Harrell, R-Charleston, speaking at a legislative workshop for media Thursday. "I'm not sure about the amount of money they were talking about — we need to take a look at the plans," he said, adding he had not had time to review the proposal, which Haley announced Wednesday.

Associated Press: AG: Decision on Haley trip up to ethics commission

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

Seanna Adcox

A Democratic South Carolina state senator said Thursday an ethics reform bill up for debate when the Legislature returns next week should address the governor's trips to political functions. Sen. Brad Hutto said he will propose an amendment that ensures taxpayers aren't contributing to a political campaign through state cars or planes. His comments came after the attorney general's office left the matter to the state Ethics Commission.

Note: Haley spokesman Rob Godfrey said the letter confirms the campaign's position. "As we have always said, the governor and her campaign follow both the law and the direction of the ethics commission, and the attorney general's opinion simply confirms that," he said.

The State: SC senators can't agree who should hear ethics charges against lawmakers

<http://www.thestate.com/2014/01/09/3198660/sc-senators-cant-agree-who-should.html>

Adam Beam

Ethics reform – the thorny issue embraced by the state's candidates for governor but held at arms length by most rank-and-file legislators – will live or die on one issue when lawmakers return to Columbia next week: Enforcement. A bipartisan committee of seven state senators Thursday released its report on a House ethics bill, revealing it could not agree on who should investigate and prosecute lawmakers charged with ethics violations.

Note: A Senate amendment – endorsed by Haley and her Democratic challenger, state Sen. Vincent Sheheen – would overhaul the State Ethics Commission, giving it the power to investigate and prosecute lawmakers facing ethics charges.

Associated Press: Haley to visit Lowcountry on Friday

<http://www.abcnews4.com/story/24408408/haley-to-visit-lowcountry-on-friday>

Gov. Nikki Haley will stop in the Lowcountry on Friday. According to a release from her office, she will visit Forest Hills Elementary School in Walterboro. That appearance is set to happen at 9:30 a.m. After that, she will visit Marshall Elementary School in Orangeburg. Haley is expected to arrive around 12:30 p.m. for that school visit. On Wednesday, Haley released her education plan.

Times and Democrat: Gov. Haley to visit Orangeburg school to advance anti-bullying message

http://m.thetandd.com/news/gov-haley-to-visit-orangeburg-school-to-advance-anti-bullying/article_43a03756-798a-11e3-b349-0019bb2963f4.html?comment_form=true

Gov. Nikki Haley will be visiting Marshall Elementary School today to promote her anti-bullying message to students, teachers and administrators. She'll meet with a group of teachers and administrators at 12:30 p.m. for a round table discussion. She'll also be presenting an anti-bullying message to students in an assembly at 1 p.m. The governor has already taken her anti-bullying program to 25 schools across the state, including Bamberg-Ehrhardt Middle School and Felton Laboratory School.

2014 Campaign Cycle News:

The State: MORNING BUZZ: Who's ahead in the money race?

<http://www.thestate.com/2014/01/10/3199396/morning-buzz-whos-ahead-in-the.html#storylink=cpy>

Jamie Self

For politicians, it's kind of like opening a belated holiday gift: finding out just how well or poorly candidates fared at fundraising in 2013's final quarter. Today is the deadline for filing, and eyes are on the race between Gov. Nikki Haley, R-Lexington, and her likely Democratic challenger state Sen. Vincent Sheheen, a Camden attorney who bested Haley's second-quarter fundraising receipts, before Haley pulled ahead, finishing the third quarter with \$3.2 million on hand to Sheheen's \$1 million. Running for lieutenant governor are Democratic state Rep. Bakari Sellers, and Republican and Haley ally Pat McKinney, a Charleston developer.

Opinion / Editorial Roundup:

Post and Courier (Editorial): Tackling key school problems

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20140110/PC1002/140119983/1022/tackling-key-school-problems>
Editorial

The transition from "jobs, jobs, jobs" to education reform was a natural for Gov. Nikki Haley. As she recruits businesses to come to South Carolina, the first question she usually is asked is about primary schools in the state. Gov. Haley says businesses know about the state's anti-union stance, its business-friendly outlook and its generous incentives, but they're concerned about the quality of education here.

Island Packet: Overhaul funding formula for S.C. universities, colleges

<http://www.islandpacket.com/2014/01/09/2882860/overhaul-funding-formula-for-sc.html#storylink=cpy>
Editorial

Blame state lawmakers for the University of South Carolina Beaufort receiving so little state funding. Economic downturns in the early 2000s and the subsequent Great Recession rattled the state's 33 colleges and universities that were dealt "across-the-board" state funding cuts by lawmakers. As the state has recovered from the financial crises, the General Assembly abandoned its long-relied-upon funding formula that objectively determined the amount of state funding each school should receive.

Rock Hill Herald: Keep unemployment benefits coming

<http://www.heraldonline.com/2014/01/09/5567177/keep-unemployment-benefits-coming.html>

Editorial

Tuesday's vote in the Senate to allow a bill to restore jobless benefits for 1.3 million Americans to move forward without threat of a filibuster was a promising first step. Unfortunately, the measure still faces serious opposition in the House even if it passes in the Senate. As of Dec. 28, federal benefits expired for the nation's long-term unemployed, many of them in desperate financial straits. While some Democrats had supported including an extension of benefits in the recent congressional budget compromise, party leaders decided to try to restore the benefits later in separate legislation.

Greenville News: Reject bill inviting out-of-state trash

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2014301100001>

Editorial

There is a growing chorus of opposition to a cleverly titled bill in the South Carolina Legislature that, contrary to its name, wouldn't give most businesses greater freedom, but would make it easier for major trash-hauling companies to dump out-of-state garbage in South Carolina. The legislation also would strip away a measure of control from local governments and could jeopardize local garbage collection if opponents' worst fears are realized.

S.C. Federal Delegation News:

The Hill: GOP takes last shot at repealing light bulb ban

<http://thehill.com/blogs/floor-action/energy-environment/194908-gop-takes-one-last-shot-at-repealing-light-bulb-ban#ixzz2pvjdqZpg>

Pete Kasperowicz

Rep. Jeff Duncan (R-S.C.) on Wednesday proposed legislation to repeal the ban on incandescent light bulbs, just weeks after a ban on the most common traditional bulbs took effect. The Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 phased in a ban on bulbs that don't meet new energy efficient standards. As a result of that law, the 100- and 75-watt bulb is already banned, and the 60- and 40-watt bulb was banned as of this month. Stores can continue to sell off their stock, but after that, they're gone.

South Carolina News:

Greenville News: Lawmakers call for changes at DOT

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2014301100015>

Tim Smith

Some House lawmakers say they will only vote for increased road funding this year if the agency that spends the money is restructured and the distribution of the money is made more equitable. Their comments came less than a week before lawmakers return to work, with a major infrastructure funding bill pending on the Senate calendar. Lawmakers approved a funding plan last year that is expected to result in more than \$600 million in road and bridge repairs, most of it on six interstate projects.

Aiken Standard: South Carolina legislators discuss infrastructure, ethics reform

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/article/20140110/AIK0101/140109363/1004/south-carolina-legislators-discuss-infrastructure-ethics-reform>

Derrek Asberry

State infrastructure was a main topic of discussion on Thursday at the S.C. Statehouse during the Legislative Workshop for Media, a one-stop shop for media to interview key members of both the House and Senate about the upcoming legislative session. Legislators said one of the biggest problems they've faced with infrastructure is dealing with the S.C. Department of Transportation. The department has been negligent toward improving roads in rural areas of the state, according to Todd Rutherford, D-Richland, minority leader of the S.C. House.

Sun News: Legislators: Fix South Carolina transportation department before thinking tax

<http://www.myrtlebeachonline.com/2014/01/09/3948314/legislators-fix-south-carolina.html#storylink=cpy>

Jason M. Rodriguez

Several state Representatives and Senators said they will not support a gas tax increase or additional fees for roads statewide until the S.C. Department of Transportation is restructured to allow for a more equitable

distribution of funding throughout the state, especially coastal counties like Horry. Horry County has long been the poster child of pumping money in the state's overall economy due to its attractiveness to tourists.

Florence Morning News: South Carolina legislators preview what's on their 2014 table

http://www.scnow.com/news/politics/article_0bde17b0-79a4-11e3-ab6c-001a4bcf6878.html

Gavin Jackson

More than a dozen state legislators gave reporters a glimpse of the issues facing them and others before the South Carolina General Assembly reconvenes next Tuesday. Speaking during a legislative workshop for the media Thursday, state budget director Les Boles and legislators discussed funding, education, infrastructure, health care and other upcoming issues. "A lot of our statewide formulas sort of went to a new formula once the Great Recession hit," Boles said about the \$30 million Local Government Fund.

The Item: Obamacare, Medicaid spark debate

http://www.theitem.com/news/local_news/obamacare-medicaid-spark-debate/article_bca5fb28-32a2-5620-81b7-af1071ff6b0f.html

Bristow Marchant

Almost four years after it was passed and a year after the General Assembly declined to expand the state's Medicaid program, health care reform still raises partisan passions at the Statehouse. "Obviously, it's going to be another big issue this year," said Rep. Murrell Smith, R-Sumter, at a legislative panel that met with members of the press Thursday to preview the upcoming session of the Legislature. While the Affordable Care Act will continue to dominate political discourse in the aftermath of the website rollout and the individual mandate, Smith predicted last year's failed push to expand Medicaid to cover an estimated 300,000 uninsured adults would not be repeated this year.

The State: Private school-choice on hold in SC (+map)

<http://www.thestate.com/2014/01/09/3198656/private-school-choice-on-hold.html#storylink=cpy>

Jamie Self

Some of the seven students attending the private school, located in an old house on the Columbia College campus, likely will be eligible to receive scholarships through the state's first private-school choice program, said the school's head, Gillian Barclay-Smith. But that program is on hold as a state education agency evaluates four nonprofit organizations – called scholarship-funding organizations – so that they can accept donations and offer private-school scholarships to special-needs students. Last year, the General Assembly approved the program, offering up to \$8 million in tax credits for donations made to the scholarship organizations.

The Item: Prisons fail mentally ill, judge says

http://www.theitem.com/news/local_news/prisons-fail-mentally-ill-judge-says/article_c50f1d6c-ecd5-5128-9ce2-7617dd3e818f.html

Raytevia Evans

The S.C. Department of Corrections plans to appeal the ruling on a 2005 lawsuit after a judge ruled Wednesday that the state's prison system is failing to properly care for its mentally ill inmates. Sen. Thomas McElveen, D-Sumter, said he expects the corrections department to respond with a report as to how it will address the issues regarding the prison system.

Post and Courier: Cold snaps S.C. farms: 'It's going to be tough'

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20140109/PC1610/140109435/1177/cold-snaps-sc-farms-its-going-to-be-tough>

Robert Behre

It will take a few more days to assess how much damage Lowcountry and South Carolina farmers suffered from this week's deep freeze. Some local farmers already have reported some damage, but a manageable amount. They said their greater pain was the time and effort involved in preparing their crops and livestock for the freezing temperatures. As the weather warms, more farmers will learn exactly how much damage they face.

Anderson Independent: S.C. education department building without heat

<http://www.independentmail.com/news/2014/jan/09/sc-education-department-building-without-heat/?partner=RSS>

Workers at the South Carolina Education Department have been shivering as the heat went out at the Rutledge Building in Columbia. The power went out shortly after Christmas in the 12-story building near the

Statehouse. State officials have brought in large, portable space heaters for each floor on the building. Employees are being allowed to bring in personal heaters.

Local News:

Sun News: Work begins at Horry County's first firearms manufacturer

<http://www.myrtlebeachonline.com/2014/01/09/3948593/work-begins-at-horry-countys-first.html#storylink=cpy>

Steve Jones

Firearms manufacturer PTR Industries started moving in its new 58,000-square-foot plant near Aynor this week with the help of the first 12 employees it has hired locally. Roughly six months after the company announced it would move its headquarters and operations from Connecticut to Horry County, the new employees began their careers setting up work stations and unpacking supplies in preparation for the gun assembly that will be their steady work beginning Jan. 20, said John McNamara, PTR's vice president of sales and administration. Another 13 who have been newly hired will start their jobs the first and second weeks of February.

Island Packet: Area legislators to help pitch Hunting Island lifeguards plan to state parks and recreation director

<http://www.islandpacket.com/2014/01/09/2885072/attorney-to-make-case-before-legislative.html#storylink=cpy>

Zach Murdock

Lifeguards could be posted on the beach at Hunting Island State Park as soon as this summer, state Sen. Tom Davis said Thursday night. The Beaufort Republican, among the 13 state and federal lawmakers who represent Beaufort County in Columbia and Washington, said the next step in the process is to meet with S. C. Parks, Recreation and Tourism Department director Duane Parrish.

Island Packet: Beaufort schools hires firm to find best teacher programs

<http://www.islandpacket.com/2014/01/09/2885605/beaufort-schools-hires-firm-to.html#storylink=cpy>

Sarah Bowman

How does a school district find the best teachers? That's a question the Beaufort County School District doesn't feel it can answer on its own. To help it find the most effective teachers -- and the programs and universities those teachers come from -- Beaufort schools recently brought on a nonprofit group to study district teachers. Although the district always has emphasized quality teaching, bringing in an outside group to lift the bar is new, and raises some questions: Why does the district need an outside firm to do the work?

Post and Courier: Size and quick pace of development biggest concerns about Cainhoy Plantation

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20140109/PC16/140109406/1006/size-and-quick-pace-of-development-biggest-concerns-about-cainhoy-plantation>

Diane Knich

Residents, conservationists and others with a stake in the proposed Cainhoy Plantation worry about size of the 9,000-acre development, and how quickly it appears to be moving forward, Charleston city officials say. About 200 people attended a public meeting at Cainhoy Elementary/Middle school Thursday to hear a presentation sponsored by the city on the latest plans for the development that many residents have described as "massive."

National News:

Associated Press: NJ's Christie looks to recover after staff shakeup

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268798/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=SgG08kOa

Angela Delli Santi and Steve Peoples

A wounded Chris Christie is working to move beyond the most challenging test of his political career, a traffic scandal that rocked his administration this week and threatens to tarnish his national image ahead of the next presidential contest. Allies of Christie, New Jersey's Republican governor and a possible candidate for president in 2016, suggest the worst is behind him. But critics promise to keep probing what happened, federal prosecutors are examining the case and thousands more internal documents were scheduled for release Friday.

Associated Press: GOP-led House again targets Obama health care law

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268798/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=j3GdeHza

Donna Cassata

President Barack Obama's health care law is back in Republicans' legislative crosshairs as the GOP-led House weighs a bill that would impose new requirements on the administration. Despite White House opposition, the House was expected to approve the measure on Friday as emboldened Republicans kick off an election-year challenge to the troubled 4-year-old law. The GOP's laser-like focus on "Obamacare" reflects the party's certainty that the law's well-known problems will pay political dividends in November's midterm contests.

Associated Press: Jobless benefit claims drop to 330,000

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/viewart/20140110/BUSINESS/301100026/Jobless-benefit-claims-drop-330-000>

Josh Boak

The number of Americans seeking unemployment benefits fell 15,000 last week to a seasonally adjusted 330,000, signaling fewer layoffs and steady job growth. The Labor Department said Thursday that the less volatile four-week average dropped 9,750 to 349,000. A Labor spokesman said there was no indication that snow and freezing weather around much of the country caused the drop in applications.

Associated Press: Doctors say cutting food stamps could backfire

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268798/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=iB436aKn

Lauran Neergaard and Mary Clare Jalonick

Doctors are warning that if Congress cuts food stamps, the federal government could be socked with bigger health bills. Maybe not immediately, they say, but over time if the poor wind up in doctors' offices or hospitals as a result. Among the health risks of hunger are spiked rates of diabetes and developmental problems for young children down the road. The doctors' lobbying effort comes as Congress is working on a compromise farm bill that's certain to include food stamp cuts. Republicans want heftier reductions than do Democrats in yet another partisan battle over the government's role in helping poor Americans.

Brian Symmes

Direct Line: (803) 734-0304

Cell: (803) 673-9437