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To: Adams, ChaneyChaneyAdams@gov.sc.gov  
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Subject: 7 News Story

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Hi Chaney,

We are following the Senate District 12 race (see below), and we were wondering if the Governor is endorsing any candidate.

Thanks for checking!



## Three challenging Bright in Senate District 12 primary

Amanda Coyne, The Greenville News 9:43 a.m. EDT June 7, 2016



(Photo: Staff/File/Provided)

Three Upstate Republicans want to unseat two-term state Sen. Lee Bright in the June 14 election.

Businessman David McCraw, Duncan Mayor Lisa C. Scott and former state Rep. Scott Talley all cited

Bright as one of the motivations for their campaigns for the Senate District 12 seat. The district straddles Greenville and Spartanburg counties and includes part of Greer.

This is McCraw's first run for public office, which he says sets him apart from Bright and the other two challengers. The Air Force veteran cites his two decades as a financial advisor and business owner as chief qualifiers to attack South Carolina's \$71 billion debt, which he said is one of his main concerns.

Talley served in the state House of Representatives from 2000 to 2008, when he lost a primary for Senate District 12 to Bright, who has held the seat since. Talley, a Spartanburg lawyer, said his eight years in the house would allow him to "hit the ground running" if he is elected, as he has maintained strong relationships with current members of the General Assembly.

Scott, who has been mayor of Duncan since 2013, wants to bring the successes she's seen on the local level to the Statehouse. Duncan has a balanced budget and a surplus, Scott also said that she would be able to help the Senate work with small town governments like hers and push to fully fund the state's local government fund.

Bright has been a polarizing figure for much of his eight years in the Senate. The conservative firebrand most recently stirred controversy with a bill that would bar people from using a restroom that does not align with their sex at birth. Bright argued that the bill was intended to prevent predators from pretending to identify as another gender in order to get away with assaulting people, but detractors pointed out that the bill would restrict bathroom access for transgender people and would be difficult to enforce.

Bright has stood by the bill, making it the centerpiece of a TV ad he released Wednesday. The campaign ad positions Bright as an opponent of President Barack Obama, who issued an executive order to allow transgender students to use the school restrooms that align with their gender identity. The bill did not make it to a full Senate vote. McCraw, Scott and Talley all said the bill was unnecessary, as did Gov. Nikki Haley.

"One of our biggest branding problems is Lee Bright," McCraw said.

The Greer businessman and financial advisor said Bright's use of the Confederate flag as a fundraising tool shortly after nine black parishoners were killed in a racially-motivated shooting by a white gunman at a historically black Charleston church was a strong influence on him to run. Bright was a vehement opponent of the removal of the Confederate battle flag from State House grounds and was one of three senators to vote against it. While he said he is "pro-flag in the historical sense," McCraw said Bright's "Keep your hands off my flag!" bumper stickers were "insulting" to the families of the people who died at the Emmanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church.

"To get national attention because of ignorance is something we have to change," McCraw said.

Bright also has been criticized by opponents for voting against the roads legislation that is headed to Haley's desk and filibustering a version of the legislation that would have raised the gas tax. Bright is opposed to an increase in the gas tax, saying "it's not prudent" to raise it when the state had a budget surplus this year and is projected to have future surpluses. Because of the state's current strong economic shape, Bright said, roads repair can be done with the gas tax staying where it is and using an annual sum of \$400 million from the general fund.

"He's voted no on both proposals that have come before the Senate this year but has not put forward a workable solution to this problem that people want addressed," Talley said.

While Bright has been a controversial figure in the Senate, he says what his opponents criticize are examples of his "strong conservative" credentials.

"I'm where the people are. The other three candidates are different than me on the gas tax, the Restroom Protection Act," Bright said, referencing the bill regarding bathroom use. "I think there are some definite distinctions. It's the voters' decision. If they want a more moderate representative or a strong conservative, it's their decision."

### **Lee Bright**



Lee Bright (Photo: provided)

**Age:** 46

**Family:** Married to wife Amy with two daughters

**Education:** Dorman High School

**Career:** S.C. Senate, 2009 to present; Owner, The Bright Agency; Spartanburg District Six School Board, 1999 to 2003

**Why are you running?** To continue serving the district as a strong conservative

**What is the best path to a sustainable, long-term solution to infrastructure repair?** Allocate \$400 million annual recurring funds out of the general fund

**Would you be in favor of raising the gas tax to fund road improvements?** No

**Should legislators be required to disclose their income?** Yes

**What are two other issues important to your district?** Returning some funds designated for road repairs to counties; Focusing on long-term infrastructure needs

**David McCraw**



David McCraw (Photo: David McCraw)

**Age:** 49

**Family:** Married to wife Catheryn

**Education:** Bachelor's degree from the University of South Carolina Spartanburg (now USC Upstate)

**Career:** Financial advisor; Owner, Palmetto Restaurant and Ale House; U.S. Air Force veteran

**Why are you running?** To put a priority on addressing fiscal and infrastructure issues; to bring the perspective of a financial advisor and treat state government like a business

**What is the best path to a sustainable, long-term solution to infrastructure repair?** Use the entirety of the revenue from the gas tax and cover remaining expenses with revenue from the general fund

**Would you be in favor of raising the gas tax to fund road improvements?** Not in the formula previously proposed, but if it was earmarked only for use on roads

**Should legislators be required to disclose their income?** Yes

**What are two other issues important to your district?** Paying down the state's \$71 billion debt and preventing the state from incurring more debt; Improving K-12 education and technical training

**Lisa Scott**



Duncan Mayor Lisa Scott, 53, is running for the S.C. Senate District 12 seat. ALEX HICKS [JR/alex.hicks@shj.com](mailto:JR/alex.hicks@shj.com) (Photo: ALEX HICKS [JR/alex.hicks@shj.com](mailto:JR/alex.hicks@shj.com), ALEX HICKS [JR/alex.hicks@shj.com](mailto:JR/alex.hicks@shj.com) (Provided by Lisa Scott))

**Age:** 53

**Family:** Three children

**Education:** Bachelor's degree, Clemson University; Master's in social work, University of South Carolina

**Career:** Mayor of Duncan, 2013 to present; Owner, Lisa Scott Properties LLC; Former Duncan Town Council member.

**Why are you running?** Frustrated with district's current representation; To take successes on town level and translate them to state level

**What is the best path to a sustainable, long-term solution to infrastructure repair?** Reforming the process of awarding contracts by the Department of Transportation; Increasing the gas tax and committing all of its revenue to infrastructure repair

**Would you be in favor of raising the gas tax to fund road improvements?** Yes, if that raise was tied exclusively to funding infrastructure repair

**Should legislators be required to disclose their income?** Yes

**What are two other issues important to your district?** Workforce development to help fill jobs coming to the district; Fully funding the local government fund and funding schools appropriately

**Scott Talley**



Scott Talley (Photo: Scott Talley)

**Age:** 39

**Family:** Married to wife Kelly with three sons

**Education:** Bachelor's degree, Wofford College; Juris doctor, University of South Carolina School of Law

**Career:** Attorney and owner of Talley Law Firm; State representative, 2000 to 2008

**Why are you running?** To address important issues facing the district and the state from a long-term perspective; Because there is no leadership in this seat currently

**What is the best path to a sustainable, long-term solution to infrastructure repair?** Addressing current infrastructure deficiencies with long term solutions to prevent further damage; A possible gas tax increase that would go solely to infrastructure repair

**Would you be in favor of raising the gas tax to fund road improvements?** Yes, if that raise was tied exclusively to funding infrastructure repair

**Should legislators be required to disclose their income?** Yes

**What are two other issues important to your district?** Streamlining government function so reforms like ethics and roads can be passed more quickly; Changing the way the budget is written