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Haley would listen to VP conversation

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WASHINGTON — Gov. Nikki Haley said Wednesday she would consider joining the Republican ticket next year if the party's nominee asks her to run for vice president.

Haley, in a high-profile appearance at the National Press Club in Washington, initially said she would not spend time or energy thinking about the 2016 GOP ticket. But when asked about her interest in becoming a running mate, she didn't dismiss the idea.

"If there is a time where a presidential nominee wants to sit down and talk, of course I will sit down and talk," she said.

Her speech focused mostly on promoting South Carolina. She touted its success in recruiting industry, expanding workforce training and avoiding violence in the aftermath of two racially charged shootings this year.

"Black lives do matter, and they have been disgracefully jeopardized by the movement that has laid waste to Ferguson (Mo.) and Baltimore," Haley said. "In South Carolina, we did things differently."

Haley's handling of the June mass shooting at Emmanuel Af-

rican Methodist Church in Charleston, in which white gunman Dylan Roof is charged with targeting nine black parishioners, launched her into the national spotlight. Within days she called for the removal of the Confederate flag from the Capitol grounds in Columbia, and she became the face of a state recovering from its segregationist past.

That helped fuel talk that Haley, 43, might be selected to run with whichever GOP candidate wins the party's presidential nomination. The child of Indian immigrants, Haley is South Carolina's first female, minority governor, an attractive biography to Republicans struggling to earn minority votes.

In her speech Wednesday, Haley addressed her party's shortcomings with voters of color.

"As a conservative Republican myself, I have no doubts that when it comes to jobs, education, health care, and many other policy areas, Republican principles are the right ones for lifting up all people," she said. "The problem for our party is that our approach often appears cold and unwelcoming to minor-

ities. That is shameful, and it has to change."

After complimenting GOP frontrunner Donald Trump as a smart businessman, she advised him not to "get mad" at his critics.

"Every time someone criticizes him, he goes and makes a political attack back," Haley said. "That is not who we are as Republicans. That's not what we do. That is not what I want my South Carolinians to do."

She also urged Republican candidates to celebrate the contributions of legal immigrants, and to offer more details about their plans to secure the Southwest border to reduce illegal immigration.

South Carolina Democratic Party Chairman Jaime Harrison said Haley's calls for improving opportunities for minorities in the state ring hollow while she refuses to expand Medicaid to more lower-income residents, as allowed under the Affordable Care Act.

"While Governor Haley chases the national spotlight, South Carolina's families continue to struggle to get ahead," Harrison said in a prepared statement.

Title: **State farmers market needs a subsidy diet**

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OTHER VIEWPOINTS

State farmers market needs a subsidy diet

A legislative audit turns up a number of concerns about the money-losing facility.

With intense statewide interest in eating locally grown products and supporting local businesses, the S.C. Farmers Market should be a huge success. Its operation shouldn't require a \$300,000 annual public subsidy.

But it does. And that was only one of the troubling findings in a review of the Farmers Market by the Legislative Audit Council released last week.

It was the second Legislative Audit Council audit of the market, which was moved from Columbia to Lexington County in 2013. Controversy has followed it ever since.

Soon after the move, the S.C. General Assembly's auditing agency uncovered some questionable business practices, including a land deal signed before the Joint Bond Review Committee had authorized funding; fees owed to the state Department of Agriculture, but not collected; and state money used to survey a portion of the market site owned by private developers.

The second audit revealed the operating shortfall, citing the

S.C. Department of Agriculture's vague lease agreements with tenants of the Farmers Market property. It also noted that some of the building space has not been used, and some tenants are in arrears — and should be expected to pay up.

Gov. Nikki Haley reasonably has insisted that the Farmers Market should become self-sustaining. The audit reported that the market has ended in the black only one year since its move to Lexington County.

The audit also found that the SCDA purchased land based on information provided by the seller of the land but not verified by the appraiser. The seller, Columbia businessman Bill Stern, had purchased the land in 2010. He sold it, with some improvements, in 2013 for more than \$7 million, \$4.5 million more than he paid for it.

Stern, who also chairs the State Ports Authority board, contributed to the 2010 election campaign of Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers, who filed that information with the Ethics Committee but did

not disclose it to the Joint Bond Review Committee when it was considering the purchase.

The audit said the donations broke no laws and did not appear to have affected the purchase of the land.

Commissioner Weathers took strong objection to much of the report, charging that the auditors were on a witch hunt and showed "an alarming lack of basic working knowledge of business principles that should concern members of the General Assembly and the public."

Nevertheless, the audit provides ample evidence that the S.C. Department of Agriculture failed to oversee the market's business adequately.

The department should ramp up its efforts to grow revenue and interest in the market so taxpayers won't be expected to continue subsidizing its operation. The agency needs to use best business practices to ensure the Farmers Market is a success — and that the taxpayers' interests are protected.

The (Charleston) Post and Courier

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2016 Presidential Race

Local Democrats feel the 'Bern

BY HAL MILLARD

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For the first time, Midlands Democrats got to experience the man shaking up the Democratic race for president.

Around 2,700 folks last Friday night congregated in Columbia as Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders made a rousing campaign swing through the Palmetto State, drawing nearly 10,000 people in a series of four campaign stops statewide.

In a sweltering conference center off Interstate 77, an overflow crowd whooped and hollered for the upstart candidate, who brought his fiery message of economic populism to the state in a maverick bid to upset party front-runner Hillary Clinton.

In front of a crowd heavily populated by white, college-aged supporters, Sanders railed against "the billionaire class" he claimed is ruining the country, and vowed to bring power back to the middle-class and working poor.

"We need a political revolution in America," Sanders said to thunderous cheers.

While the top 1% get richer, Sanders said, "something is wrong" when working families, children, students, and others continue to fall behind.

"Their greed is going to end because we're going to end it for them," he thundered.

Sanders said income inequity is a real problem in South Carolina, and also chided Gov. Nikki Haley and the state's leaders for not expanding Medicaid under Obamacare, which he said has left too many people in the lurch.

"It's wrong to let thousands of beautiful people in your state die or get sicker," he said.

Sanders, more than any other candidate of either major party, has been packing in crowds nationwide. He said that the outpouring of support is not a fluke, but underpins a yearning among Americans to level an economic playing field tilted in favor of the nation's elite.

"It seems to me these ideas we are talking about are not fringe ideals, they are the ideals of the Ameri-

can people," he said. "This is a campaign that's going to win here in South Carolina and all across the country."

Sanders platform includes breaking up the nation's big banks and reforming Wall Street, universal health care, expanding the minimum wage, campaign finance reform, and greater attention to women's issues and racial equality.

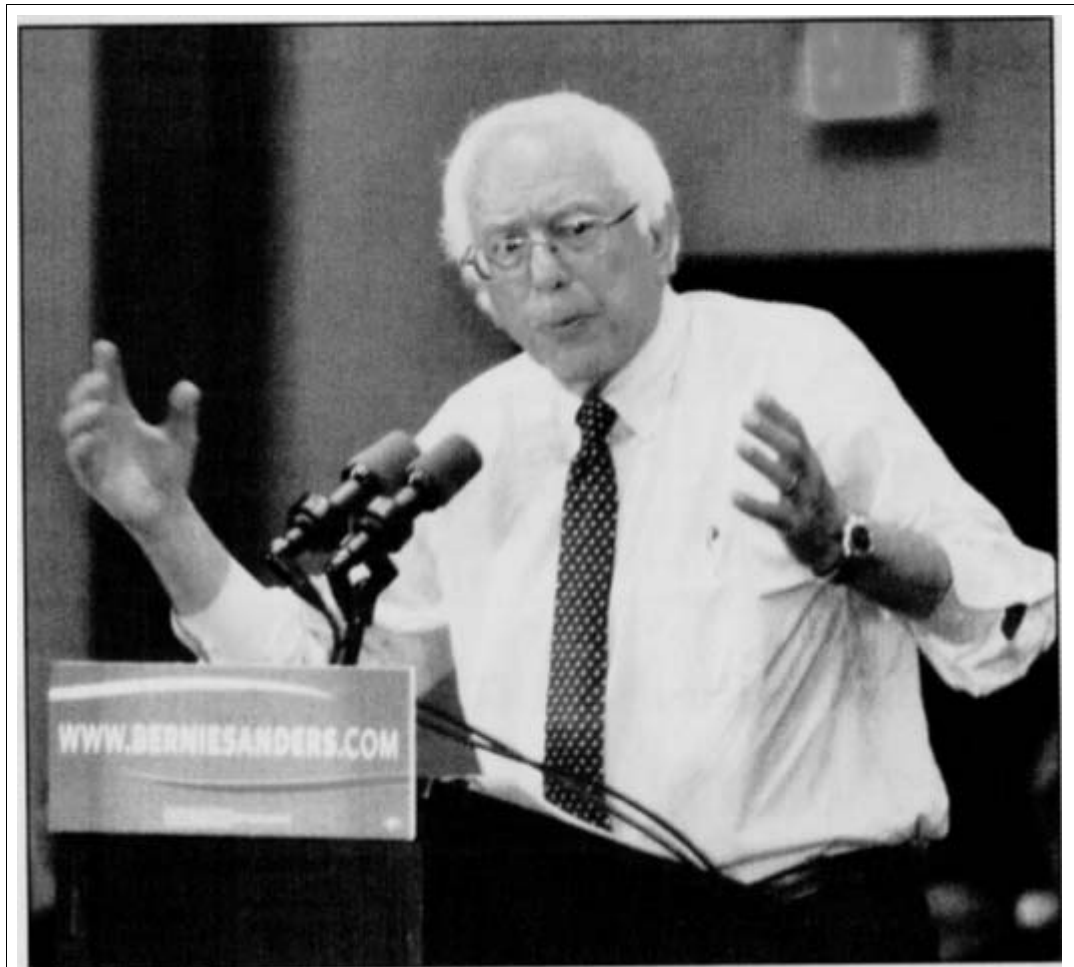
Currently leading Clinton in the early primary state of New Hampshire, it remains to be seen how well he can do in South Carolina, which helped propel Barack Obama to the nomination in 2008.

Despite the heat generated by his campaign, Sanders may struggle next winter against Clinton in the state's party primary. Clinton currently leads here, especially among black voters who make up more than half of primary voters.

And Sanders task could be made even harder should vice president Joe Biden, who over the years has built a network of support across the state, decides to run.



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HAL MILLARD | CHRONICLE

Democratic Presidential hopeful Bernie Sanders speaks to more than 2,700 people in Columbia recently as part of a

campaign tour. A collective estimation of 10,000 people showed up to Sanders' four campaign stops in the Palmetto State.



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Gov. Haley's star shining after Confederate battle flag debate

BY HAL MILLARD
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Gov. Nikki Haley's political star appears to be back on the rise.

Haley, of Lexington, has seen her national political stock rebound after this summer's tumultuous events in Charleston with the murders of nine black churchgoers and the ensuing debate that saw the state's Confederate flag quickly and ceremoniously removed from the Statehouse grounds.

Many contend the divisive flag came down only after Haley's heartfelt pleas for the state to move forward and remove the flag after the racist murders allegedly perpetrated by former Lexington resident Dylann Roof.

With no higher office left to attain South Carolina, many are now wondering if Haley can now parlay her rediscovered national popularity into a higher office — perhaps even a GOP vice presidential slot.

With Haley's high profile address, "Lesson from the New South," coming up before the National Press Club on Sept. 2, many national political pundits are speculating on the next chapter of Haley's political life.

The flag narrative is a strong one. So, too, is her legacy of being the first woman elected governor in the state, not to mention her ethnic status as an Indian-American.

"The governor has learned a lot through this process — and she's trying to share our lessons learned, our successes and where we go from here," Haley's deputy chief of staff Rob Godfrey told the website Politico about her upcoming address. "There's a lot of good that's come out of South Carolina over the last five years, and she's looking forward to talking to the state and the country about it."

Haley's National Press Club address comes after several other recent out-of-state events in which the governor has spoken to

receptive GOP crowds.

While South Carolina is a solid red state that doesn't need courting with general election GOP voters, Haley's status as a solidly conservative ethnic woman in a party seen as overly White and struggling with women's issues could make her an attractive VP candidate nonetheless.

Haley has downplayed her rising popularity. She has maintained that her politically risky stance to call for the Confederate flag's removal was not motivated by a thirst for attention or higher office, but rather out of respect for the Charleston victims, which included S.C. Sen. Clementa Pinckney.

"It's too painful to think about. I say that because nine people died," Haley said earlier this month. "I'm not ready to think about that (a VP slot). I'm not ready to look into that. Because I've got a state to heal."

Though she was against the flag's removal before the tragedy, the Charleston massacre made a lasting imprint on Haley, seemingly lifting a veil from her eyes.

"The biggest reason I asked for that flag to come down was I couldn't look my children in the face and justify it staying there," said Haley at the time, whose own Indian Sikh family encountered racism when they moved to South Carolina.

"She saw an opportunity and saw a spotlight on South Carolina and saw that there were going to be real significant problems for the state and the Republicans if they couldn't bring it down," Katie Packer Gage, a Republican consultant, told CNN. "She stepped up and it didn't take her weeks or months, even though she could have punted. She is a smart politician."

Even state Democrats lauded her.

"I know people say it was political, but she did what was right and for that I can't be mad at her. I'm very appreciative of her," said state Democratic Party leader Jai-



me Harrison.

Said Republican strategist Bruce Haynes of Haley's upcoming speech: "She has a chance to speak to issues of race, issues of color, issues of gender in a way that no other Republican candidate can because of the combina-

tion of all those things she represents."

Haynes said the Charleston shootings "put the spotlight on something about her that I think is true and powerful – and that is that she is the face of the 'New South.'"

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Haier breaks ground on \$72 million expansion

By **GARY PHILLIPS**

C-I (Camden, S.C.) assistant editor
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Haier America, with help from Gov. Nikki Haley, officially broke ground on the \$72 million expansion to the company's existing \$40 million Camden manufacturing facility Thursday afternoon. The project will increase the square footage of the plant from the current 365,000 to 550,000 and is expected to add 410 new full-time jobs during the next five years, growing the plant's production by approximately 50 percent.

Haier America President of Research and Development Joe Sexton welcomed the dignitaries, audience and especially

Haier employees to the event.

"For all the members of the local community, whether you're from Camden, Kershaw County or the Midlands area, we thank for being with us today," Sexton said. "I've saved the best for last. For the Haier America employees ... thank you for your hard work and dedication. Together we've endured many challenges through the years. I'm honored to work with you and I feel very blessed to have this day with you."

Haier America CEO and President Adrian Micu made the announcement of the expansion official.

"I am very pleased to officially at this time, I know this has come out before, but to announce the expansion of our

operation here and our manufacturing footprint in America. What you have read is true. We will be investing \$72 million in the next few years. We will be creating 410 new jobs," Micu said, drawing a standing ovation. "This is just the beginning. There are many reasons we made this decision. Our company has recognized the key to success is being local. The people in blue here who have been with us for 15 years and have worked hard and really made us proud, enhancing this capability, leveraging this capability, growing it, is a great reason for us to be here."

See Haier, Page A5



Gary Phillips/C-I

Speaking during Thursday's ceremony were (clockwise from top left) S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley, Haier America CEO and President Adrian Micu, Haier America President of Research and Development Joe Sexton and Kershaw County Council Chairman Julian Burns.

Haier

From Front Page

S.C. Secretary of Commerce Bobby Hitt said the state is becoming steadily more attractive to international companies.

"Foreign direct investment continues to be a critical component of our economic development success. With more than 100,000 South Carolinians employed by international companies, it's clear that the reputation we've earned for our workforce and business-friendly environment has made its way around the world," Hitt said. "Today, we celebrate Haier's decision to expand its already robust South Carolina operations and look forward to continuing this extraordinary partnership for many years to come."

Haley said Haier's choice to expand the Camden facility is a feather in the cap for the entire state.

"It's a great day in South Carolina. It's a great day in Kershaw County. What we're seeing across the country now is a lot of companies are saying, 'if ever there was a time to move, now's the time to do it.' You look at the European markets, you look at the Asian markets and you look at the states, the economies are all different in every state so they are looking at their business plans, saying 'should we move or should we stay?'" Haley said. "Haier went through that decision, 'should we move or should we stay and expand?' They didn't have to stay here. So what made them stay here? They have a very clear vision ... they want (their products) to be quality and consistent. They very much care about their customer and they very much care about their name brand and their reputation."

Haley said her administra-

tion also cares about quality and wants that caring to show in the industries the state attracts.

"We only want companies that care about their reputation because their reputation is South Carolina's reputation. We have always been fans of Haier because quality matters to them and customer service matters to them," Haley said, adding the employees at the Camden facility are responsible for the expansion. "You are the absolute reason they stayed and expanded and I want to personally thank you. The reason 410 more people are going to get jobs is because of you. It's because of the work you did."

State Sen. Vincent Sheheen said business success starts at the local level.

"The key to economic success starts at home and what makes this so special is that we know if we are to be successful in Kershaw County, in Camden and in South Carolina, we have to take care of our own and Haier, we claim you as our own. We claim you proudly," Sheheen said. "I remember 15 years ago when you came to Kershaw County. I remember about 10 years ago out here dedicating the street to Haier, because we believed you would be a part of our community for a very long time. I'm extremely proud to come back yet once again to stand with you as you announce this incredible expansion and this, incredible project."

State Rep. Laurie Slade Funderburk said Thursday's event was the result of a collaborative effort between Haier, several levels of government and many individuals, including Haier employees.

"This good news would not be possible if it were not for the high-quality work by the employees, who I am so glad

to see here today and the quality of the workforce in Kershaw County, who will benefit from the jobs and opportunities that Haier is creating with this new investment," Funderburk said. "Thank you to all the

people here in blue, for making Kershaw County and the state of South Carolina proud. Since day one, Haier has been a terrific community partner, making a positive difference in the lives of the citizens of Kershaw County and surrounding areas."

Kershaw County Council Chairman Julian Burns, who ran on a platform of economic development, said Haier's decision reflects well on the entire county.

"You bring good things to our county. You bring jobs to our county and we are proud we build here in Kershaw County your fine products," Burns said. "We will prove to you in Haier the wisdom of your decision to locate here and expand here. This is absolutely the right place."

Haier America COO Kevin Dexter had the last word and said Haier's presence and expansion is a joining of the local and the international.

"When you think about the great state of South Carolina and you think about Kershaw County and all the way down to the city of Camden and then, just as importantly, the folks in blue sitting out here how we're all coming together locally and connecting with a global power, we're going to really make some great things happen here," Dexter said.

Dignitaries then donned hard hats and took up shovels for the ceremonial groundbreaking near a corner of the existing factory. Haier originally broke ground on the Steeplechase Industrial Park plant in April 1999 and began operations in March 2000, marking the company's first entry into North America.

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Construction of the expansion is anticipated to be completed in the second quarter of 2018 with hiring for the 410 new positions expected to begin in the summer of 2016. Those interested in joining the Haier America team should visit www.aieramerica.com/careers. For more information on Haier Group, visit www.haier.com.

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S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley (third from left) joins other dignitaries and Haier officials at Haier America's \$72 million expansion announcement to ceremoniously "break ground" Thursday afternoon. Other VIPs included (from left) State Rep. Laurie Slade Funderburk, State Sen. Vincent She-

hen, S.C. Secretary of Commerce Bobby Hitt, Haier America President of Research and Development Joe Sexton, Haier America CEO and President Adrian Micu, Haier America COO Kevin Dexter and Kershaw County Council Chairman Julian Burns.

Gary Phillips/C-I



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Also starting Jan. 1, employees who smoke will pay nothing for prescription medicine to help them quit, such as Chantix.

The goal is that helping them quit will ultimately cut

down on health care costs paid by taxpayers, said Peggy Boykin, executive director of Public Employee Benefit Authority.

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

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

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

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

The state Supreme Court overturned the decision, ruling in 2013 that the board overstepped its authority.

Before a government restructuring law that took effect July 1, the State Fiscal Accountability Authority was named the Budget and Control Board.

148 Governors say 'no' to terrorist detainees

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

"We will not be part of any illegal and ill-advised action by this Administration, especially when that action relates to importing terrorists into

our states," Govs. Nikki Haley and Sam Brownback told Defense Secretary Ash Carter.

"Please know that we will take any action within our power to make sure no Guantanamo Bay detainees are transferred to South Carolina or Kansas."

At a news conference last week, Haley said Defense Department officials were "wasting their time" in evaluating the Naval Brig near Charles-

ton as a potential site to house detainees and that she would not "allow South Carolina to be a magnet for terrorists."

The Pentagon has said it will send a survey team to the military prison in South Carolina by month's end, and a similar assessment was conducted

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DETAINEES

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earlier this month at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

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

The remaining 64 have been deemed

too dangerous.

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

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

The Navy brig has previously held an al-Qaida terrorism plotter before he was convicted. Jose Padilla, a U.S. citizen, was held there for more than three years without charge as an enemy combatant before he was in-

dicted in Miami. A jury found Padilla guilty in 2007. He's serving a 21-year prison sentence.

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

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





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148 Gov. Haley will fight bringing detainees to S.C.

BY SEANNA ADCOX

The Associated Press

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

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

The Pentagon has said it will send a survey team to the military prison in South Carolina by month's end. A similar assessment was conducted last Friday at Fort Leavenworth.

"They are wasting their time," Haley said. "We are absolutely drawing a line. We are

not going to allow South Carolina to be a magnet for terrorists."

The Republican governor said moving the detainees to any state would violate a law passed by Congress, but she doesn't trust that will prevent their transfer to South Carolina. President Obama has "skirted the law" before, she said.

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

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

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

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



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148 Haier bringing 410 jobs to Kershaw

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CAMDEN — Appliance manufacturer Haier America announced plans Thursday to expand its Kershaw County refrigerator manufacturing operations with a project expected to create 410 new jobs during the next five years.

The New Jersey-based Haier America, a subsidiary of the Haier Group, will contribute \$72 million more to its existing \$40-million Camden facility. Hiring for the new jobs is expected to begin next summer.

Haier broke ground on the Kershaw County Haier Industrial Park in April 1999 and opened its doors in March 2000, making it the first Chinese company to establish manufacturing operations in the U.S.

As part of the expansion, Haier will invest heavily in

state-of-the-art equipment and tooling, as well as construct a 250,000-square-foot addition to the existing 365,000-square-foot facility, **al-**
WANT TO APPLY?

Those interested in joining the Haier America team should visit the company's careers page online. For more information on Haier Group, visit www.haier.com.

lowing the company to increase its annual refrigeration production up to 500,000 units.

"Foreign direct investment continues to be a critical component of our economic development success," said S.C. Secretary of Commerce Bobby Hitt. "With more than 100,000 South Carolinians employed by international companies, it's clear that the reputation we've earned for our

workforce and business-friendly environment has made its way around the world. Today, we celebrate Haier's decision to expand its already robust South Carolina operations and look forward to continuing this extraordinary partnership for many years to come."

Gov. Nikki Haley, who joined company officials and local leaders Thursday to break ground, agreed with Hitt.

"It's a great day in South Carolina as we celebrate Haier's latest decision to expand in Kershaw County. We couldn't be prouder of the partnership our state has with Haier, and this \$72 million investment and the 410 jobs it will create is a huge win for the company and for the citizens of South Carolina."



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Post and Courier, Charleston on coastal opposition to offshore drilling:

The South Carolina coast is virtually solid against offshore drilling, with Tuesday's "no" vote by Myrtle Beach City Council. In the face of ever-growing local opposition, the continuing support of state leaders for a risky enterprise is ever more perplexing.

Myrtle Beach Council voted 6-1 against seismic testing for oil deposits offshore and for the drilling that could follow. The council, like its counterparts up and down the coast, recognizes the hazard of offshore oil drilling to the state's booming tourism economy and its natural resources.

The Grand Strand wouldn't be quite so grand with tar balls washing up on shore. And an oil spill would have disastrous consequences for coastal South Carolina.

Coastal "no" votes recognize that the normal operations of the oil industry are incompatible with coastal South Carolina. And seismic testing is incompatible with the well-being of whales and dolphins that abound in coastal waters.

Myrtle Beach is the 20th local jurisdiction in South Carolina to join the effort to stop offshore drilling before it starts. That number includes Hilton Head, Beaufort, Edisto Beach, Charleston County, Folly Beach, the city of Charleston, the Isle of Palms, Sullivan's Island, McClellanville, Georgetown and Atlantic Beach. Even Columbia, though far inland, has joined in.

It is hard to recall a grassroots effort that has advanced a cause so rapidly.

So it is reasonable for coastal residents to ask why so many of those who represent them in Congress, the Legislature and the governor's office aren't opposing offshore drilling, too.

The only members of the state's congressional delegation to oppose offshore drilling are 1st District Rep. Mark Sanford, a Republican, and 6th District Rep. Jim Clyburn, a Democrat.

Gov. Nikki Haley, so far a cheerleader for the drilling plan, should reconsider her position. State leaders should recognize that coastal residents have insight into the comparative value of offshore drilling vs. tourism.

Coastal communities understand the fundamental incompatibility of the oil industry with the thriving coastal environment.