

Title: **Senate overrides farm aid veto**
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Senate overrides farm aid veto

BY CHRISTINA CLEVELAND

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Joining the S.C. House of Representatives, the S.C. Senate voted Wednesday to override Gov. Nikki Haley's veto of a bill that would make \$40 million in aid available to South Carolina farmers who were affected by the October 2015 historic rainfall.

The Senate voted 39-3 to override the veto.

Senate President Pro Tempore Hugh Leatherman said in a statement after the vote: "I'm proud of the leadership shown by the Senate today in offering our farmers a lifeline that they desperately need. I was absolutely determined that the farmers devastated by this flood would be protected following this irresponsible veto."

The bill's text says the Farm Aid Fund will make grants to farmers who have experienced a loss of agricultural commodities of at least 40 percent.

Aiken County Legislative Delegation members Sens.

Shane Massey, R-Edgefield; Tom Young, R-Aiken; and Nik-

ki Setzler, D-Lexington, told the *Aiken Standard* on Tuesday they planned to vote to override Haley's veto.

Setzler, who was chairman of the Senate Finance Subcommittee, which dealt with the farm bill, said in a statement, after meeting with county farmers following the flood, he knows "firsthand the tremendous impact the flood had on them."

"The agricultural community and the farmers are a vital part of the economy of South Carolina and essential to the people of this state," Setzler added. "Therefore, I support the farm

aid bill and will vote to override the governor's veto."

On Tuesday, Aiken Delegation members in the House, with the exception of Reps. Bill Clyburn, D-Aiken, and Don Wells, R-Aiken, who were not present, also voted to override the veto.

Farmers across the state lost millions of dollars in crops ruined by last year's rains and some in the agricultural com-

munity said they are still recovering. A portion of eastern Aiken County near the Orangeburg and Lexington county lines also experienced damage.

The governor has called the farm aid bill a "bailout" and said in a Facebook post Monday that farmers, unlike most small businesses, have federally subsidized insurance that covers up to 85 percent of their losses.

"There were no winners during last year's 1,000 year flood, and we will continue doing our best to help all of our industries and property owners – fairly – through the recovery process," Haley wrote.

Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers also has opposed Haley's veto of the legislation, saying in a news release Monday, "even though farmers were among those hit hardest by the October floods, with more than \$376 million in losses, the governor is turning her back on the state's largest industry."

"The floods devastated many

who lost a year's income and are struggling to put a new crop in the ground."

Weathers noted farmers with at least 40 percent in losses are eligible for the one-time grants that are capped at 20 percent of total loss or \$100,000. The grants only cover production

costs not new debt or new equipment, he said.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA, has paid approximately \$375 million to homeowners through flood insurance claims and other assistance, with an additional \$157 million in aid included in the federal budget passed in December, according to Weathers' statement. Farmers, however, were excluded from this financial assistance, he said.

Christina Cleveland is the county government reporter at the *Aiken Standard*. Follow her on Twitter @ChristinaNCleve. **The Associated Press** contributed to this report.

With more than \$376 million in losses, the governor is turning her back on the state's largest industry.

Hugh Weathers, commissioner of agriculture



What do you think?

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Title: **House overrides Haley's veto of aid for farmers**
 Author: BY JEFFREY COLLINS Associated Press
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S.C. LEGISLATURE

House overrides Haley's veto of aid for farmers

BY JEFFREY COLLINS
 Associated Press

COLUMBIA

With dozens of farmers in the lobby and lawmakers cheering every speech, the S.C. House on Tuesday voted to override Gov. Nikki Haley's veto of a bill offering \$40 million in state aid to farmers who lost their crops in last year's massive floods.

The 112-2 vote in the Republican-dominated House was a sharp rebuke

of a rare veto by their GOP colleague and well beyond the two-thirds needed to send the veto on to the Senate. With a two-thirds vote in that chamber – which passed the bill originally 33-3 – the proposal becomes law.

More than a dozen House members spoke Tuesday, thanking farmers for their hard work in tough times.

Haley's veto had stunned the farmers. Many voted for the governor twice. And they re-

member her saying more than once after earlier disasters that South Carolina was going to demonstrate that the state had the backs of its farmers.

"It broke my heart," Williamsburg County farmer Brian McClam said of Haley's veto.

McClam lost \$800,000 in 2015. The first blow came just before the October flood when drought withered his cotton, corn, soybeans, peanuts and peas. Then came 24 1/2 inches of rain in three

days. It took months for the water to finally drain from much of his 3,000 acres.

"I cannot understand how a governor who runs a whole state doesn't understand how agriculture drives this state," said McClam, who was just one of about 50 farmers and their families on hand for the vote.

In her veto message Monday, Haley said it wasn't fair for farmers to get help that wasn't available to all small businesses. She said farmers have crop insurance and federal aid to cover their losses.

"The governor got poor advice," said Republican state Agriculture Secretary Hugh Weathers.

Title: **Lawmakers approve restrictive abortion ban**
 Author: BY SEANNA ADCOX Associated Press
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S.C. LEGISLATURE

Lawmakers approve restrictive abortion ban

South Carolina becomes 17th state to pass the restrictive ban

Bill would prohibit women from getting abortion after 19 weeks

BY SEANNA ADCOX

Associated Press
 COLUMBIA

The S.C. Legislature passed a bill Tuesday prohibiting abortion after 19 weeks, becoming the 17th state to pass the restrictive ban.

The legislation will now head to Gov. Nikki Haley's desk. The Republican said in March she will almost certainly sign it, but wants to look at the details once it reaches her desk.

Similar laws are in effect in 12 states. They've been blocked by court challenges in three others, and the U.S. Supreme Court has yet to rule on the ban's constitutionality. A South Dakota law signed in March takes effect this summer.

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ABORTIONS

The ban allows exceptions only if the mother's life is in jeopardy or a doctor determines the fetus can't survive outside the womb. The measure's limited definition of "fetal anomaly" means it would be illegal to abort a fetus with a severe disability if the child could live.

Such anomalies are generally detected around 20 weeks.

That "fetal anomaly" exception was crucial for the bill clearing the Sen-

In Utah, a related law, also signed in March, requires doctors to provide anesthesia to a fetus at least 20 weeks in the womb.

The South Carolina bill is among several fronts abortion rights supporters say make having the procedure tougher. Abortion opponents have also passed laws in other states requiring clinics to get admitting privileges for doctors and banning a procedure commonly used in the second trimester, known as an evacuation method.

The S.C. House approved the bill 79-29. The Senate approved a compromise in March.

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ate, where Democrats had blocked the legislation for years.

Sen. Brad Hutto, a leading opponent, still believes it should be the woman's choice. But he called the compromise he's worked on since last year "the best we can get." As it initially passed the House, the bill gave an exception only for the mother's life.

Only four of the 16 states to pass the restrictions since 2010 allow a legal abortion if a doctor

determines the child will be stillborn or die upon birth. South Carolina legislators borrowed the wording for that exception from Georgia, where state

court blocked enforcement of Georgia's 20-week ban in 2012.

The South Carolina bill, like most of the similar laws, contains no exceptions for rape or incest.

Supporters believe a fetus can feel pain at 20 weeks. Opponents argue

such later-term abortions involve wanted pregnancies that go horribly wrong, and politicians should play no role in the difficult decision.

"They are wanted pregnancies, but they find out there is a terrible abnormality," Rep. James Smith, a Democrat, said Tuesday. "Wouldn't it be interesting if we take dollar-for-dollar the money we're going to spend litigating unconstitutional bills and put it into some-



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thing that makes a difference in South Carolina?”

On average, fewer than 30 abortions yearly are performed at 20 weeks gestation or beyond, according to data since 1990

from the state’s public health agency.

The ban would affect only hospitals. None of the

three abortion clinics in South Carolina provide abortions beyond 15 weeks. Most of the women are white, married and older than 24, according to the agency.

A doctor who performs an illegal abortion under the bill would face up to three years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

The nonprofit Guttmacher Institute, which tracks abortion laws, knows of only one person ever charged under the bans. In 2011, an Idaho woman was arrested after giving herself an abortion with pills she bought online. That charge ultimately resulted in Idaho’s law being struck down last

year by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals. The same court struck Arizona’s law in 2013.

Without citing a reason, the U.S. Supreme Court declined in January 2014 to hear an appeal from Arizona – which had banned abortion at 18 weeks past fertilization.

Title: **Sunbelt Rentals to expand Fort Mill headquarters site**
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YORK COUNTY

Sunbelt Rentals to expand Fort Mill headquarters site

State and county leaders hail equipment rental company's \$8 million expansion plans

Staff reports

FORT MILL

Sunbelt Rentals announced Tuesday it is investing \$8 million to expand its Fort Mill headquarters in York County.

The company has more than 550 locations in North America, making it one of the nation's largest equipment rental suppliers. The company supplies general construction equipment; industrial tools; scaffolding; remediation and restoration equipment; heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC equipment); pumps and power generation equipment.

In Fort Mill, the company is located at 2341 Deerfield Drive.

The decision came just a day after the York County Council rejected a temporary freeze on residential growth in booming Fort Mill Township. Many

in the business community, and York County Council chairman Britt Blackwell, have said a freeze would create a "negative business climate +

image" for York County.

"We are thrilled to have one of the largest equipment rental companies in North America expand their operations here in York County," Blackwell said in a statement. "Sunbelt Rentals' decision to continue to invest in our county makes us proud. We are excited about the significant job opportunities this announcement will provide for our community."

Brendan Horgan, Sunbelt CEO, said in a statement: "We are thrilled to continue our investment in the county and state of South Carolina with our expansion project and very much

appreciate all the support we have received."

Gov. Nikki Haley lauded the decision Sunbelt made to choose South Carolina.

"It's always exciting when a company like Sunbelt Rentals can choose to invest and expand anywhere in the country and they decide to do it right here in South Carolina," Haley said in a written release. "The fact that Sunbelt has decided to invest more than \$8 million in York County is a huge win for the people of our state and is a real reason to celebrate across South Carolina."

Tuesday's announcement did not address whether new jobs will be created along with the expansion. For Sunbelt employment information, visit the company's career page online: <http://careersatsunbeltrentals.com>.

Title: **Haley, Wilson attack federal directive on transgenders**
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Haley, Wilson attack federal directive on transgenders

TIM SMITH

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COLUMBIA - Gov. Nikki Haley and Attorney General Alan Wilson are attacking a directive by federal justice and education officials advising public schools to allow students to use bathrooms and locker rooms that align with their gender identity.

Haley and Wilson, in statements to *The Greenville News*, said they believe such issues should be decided at the state and local levels. Wilson said he is conferring with other attorney generals to see what action, if any, can be taken to fight the directive, which carries with it the implied threat of loss of federal education funding if schools choose to refuse to fol-

low the guidance.

When Sen. Lee Bright, a Spartanburg County Republican, introduced a measure last month to require those using public bathrooms and locker rooms choose the facility of their gender at birth, Haley said publicly she had no interest in such legislation, which ultimately died in committee.

"As I said when North Carolina passed its law, I don't think we need that type of law here," Haley said. "But we also don't need President Obama imposing a one-size-fits-all policy from Washington. We have always been proud of the fact that we handle issues such as this

one in our school districts, and I trust South Carolinians to decide this issue, community by community, at the school district level."

Wilson argued the administration is acting improperly.

"The president does not have the legal authority to force this federal mandate on South Carolina schools, parents and children," he said. "This matter should be left to state and local governments, not a one-size-fits-all mandate. The threat of lawsuits as well as the withholding of education funding for all of our children is not the proper

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Directive

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approach. All children have a right to a safe and respectful environment where they can focus on their education."

Wilson said last year, he filed a brief in a case before the U.S. Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals "to reject the federal government's legal authority in this area."

"I am currently working with other state attorneys general to determine what actions should be taken," he added.

In the Fourth Circuit case, a panel ruled 2-1 that a lower court should rehear a Virginian student's claims that his school's policy violates federal law. The school board has a policy directing transgender students to use unisex bathrooms.

The U.S. Education Department argued in that case as well as in last week's issuance, that transgender students should be allowed to use bathrooms that align with their gender identities instead of being forced to use those that correspond with their biological gender. To do otherwise, department officials argue, amounts to a violation of Title IX, which bans sex discrimination at schools receiving federal funding.

In hearings over Bright's bill, opponents, including former State Education Superintendent Inez Tenenbaum, argued that enacting the bill would violate Title IX and jeopardize federal education funding to the

Current State Education Superintendent Molly Spearman did not challenge last week's federal directive in a statement issued afterward.

"The South Carolina Department of Education and school districts throughout the state are dedicated to ensuring a safe and respectful climate for all students," she said in a statement. "We continue to monitor and advise schools and districts on discriminatory issues to ensure compliance with Title IX and all other federal requirements."

Greenville County Schools spokeswoman Beth Brotherton said the district is monitoring the Fourth Circuit proceedings.

"At this moment we do not intend to create a broad policy regarding the matter or change the designations associated with bathrooms or locker rooms," according to a statement released by the district. "Instead, we will continue to monitor the legal proceedings in the Fourth Circuit, and maintain our current practice of considering and responding to each individual situation when a request is made by a student being considerate of the privacy concerns of all of our students."

Obama said this week that the new directive is aimed at protecting transgender students from bullying.

"They are vulnerable and I think it's part of our obligation as a society to make sure everybody is treated



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fairly, and our kids are all loved and protected, and that their dignity is affirmed," he told the website BuzzFeed.

Various political leaders around the nation have taken issue with the directive, as have some citizens, arguing that allowing transgender students to use the bathroom of their gender identity opens the door for sexual predators to visit bathrooms.

Texas Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick called the new directive "blackmail," while other leaders said the federal gov-

ernment needs to stay out of state and local issues.

"This issue is a lot more than transgender individuals getting 'cart blanche access' to public restrooms," said Stan Plowden of Greenville. "If allowed to proceed, the degradation of societal norms on this issue will 'throw the doors open' to allow anyone who 'feigns' transgender identity to have unfettered access to areas where women and small children have always traditionally been assured were 'safe havens.'"

"The South Carolina Department of

Education and school districts

throughout the state are dedicated to

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MOLLY SPEARMAN

STATE EDUCATION SUPERINTENDENT

Title: **Farmers applaud as House overrides Haley veto**
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Farmers applaud as House overrides Haley veto

TIM SMITH

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COLUMBIA - The House on Tuesday overwhelmingly overrode Gov. Nikki Haley's farm aid veto to the thunderous applause of watching farmers and lawmakers.

The 112-2 vote came the day after Haley announced her veto of the legislation that will offer a total of \$40 million to farmers affected by last year's flood.

In doing so, lawmakers said they were paying homage to South Carolina's top industry that was badly damaged by October's record rains.

"The South Carolina House recognizes the unprecedented loss our farmers experienced last October and understands the economic impact at stake if these concerns are ig-

nored," House Speaker Jay Lucas said afterward. "Gov. Haley's factually inaccurate justification for vetoing the Farm Aid bill is inconsistent with South Carolina values."

Haley, in her veto message, described the bill as an "unprecedented bailout" of a single industry. She listed various federal resources available to farmers and said she did not believe taxpayers should help farmers just because they are vocal.

"Farms like any other small businesses, have access to public and private programs that help them access capital, recover from emergencies and find markets for their goods," Haley wrote. "Unlike most small businesses, farmers are eligible for feder-

ally subsidized insurance that covers up to 85 percent of their business losses with the taxpayer covering an average of 62 percent of the insurance premium costs."

Lucas argued that the bill offers aid to farmers just as homeowners and small businesses were aided by the federal government last year.

"When Governor Haley petitioned the federal government for flood relief assistance last fall, she included homeowners and small businesses but intentionally ignored our farmers' plea for help by leaving them out of the request," he said. "Because of the governor's refusal to advocate on

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Farm aid

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behalf of our state's largest industry, the General Assembly was forced to take action.

The bill would offer grants to farmers, who sustained \$376 million in crop losses as a result of the flood. Lucas said after deducting crop insurance, the losses still total \$250 million.

The state has more than 25,000 farms over 5 million acres, Lucas said, helping to make agriculture the state's top industry.

Lucas said in order to apply for a Farm Aid grant, a farmer must have a loss of at least 40 percent of total agricultural commodity. Grants awarded would be equal to 20 percent of the total loss, with a maximum grant of \$100,000. Grants could only be used for agricultural production expenses and losses due to October's flood and excludes the purchase of new equipment.

The House vote came after a parade of lawmakers came to the podium to ask for the body to override Haley's veto by 100 percent, as farmers sat in the balcony overhead.

"Without farmers, we would all go hungry."

Brian White

HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Norman said an uncle, who is a chicken farmer, asked him to support the bill, saying \$40 million did not amount to much in the state budget.

"It's not until you add it all up," Norman said. "It's like a credit card. Until we as a General Assembly have the stamina to say no to some things."

But other lawmakers implored the House to help farmers.

Rep. Mac Toole, a Lexington County Republican

Rep. Ralph Norman, a York County Republican and Haley ally, was the only lawmaker to come to the well to speak in favor of the veto.

He said the money would not be enough to save some farmers from bankruptcy and that the state needs to set priorities.

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and one of several farmers in the House, cited the case of a Barnwell County farmer who he said has had to sell his equipment and land, leaving him unemployed at 54.

He said crop insurance “is just about a joke.”

“These people are the salt of the Earth,” he said. “They need our help.”

House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Brian White of Anderson, who initiated the bill, said some of Haley’s arguments were “disingenuous” and “exaggerated.”

He said the state is good at giving incentives to persuade industry to locate in South Carolina and should be equally good at helping those who put food on tables.

“This is an industry that already exists,” he said of farmers. “Without farmers, we would all go hungry.”

Rep. Justin Bamberg, a Bamberg Democrat, said Haley’s veto message, in effect, told farmers to go back to their crops and “kick rocks.”

Rep. Joe Neal, a Richland County Democrat, said areas of his district in Lower Richland flooded that never flood and some remain wet today.

“It’s difficult to watch people who have put everything they own, their whole lives, into their farms and watch it be washed away and lost because of this catastrophe,” he said. “We have an opportunity to make this right.”

The vote was cheered by watching farmers who

applauded lawmakers, who then applauded the farmers.

Among the farmers watching Tuesday were Jeffrey Axson and Jim Ulmer, both from Orangeburg County.

Axson said crop insurance was not designed to cover such a loss. He said it has become almost as important for him to help set the record straight as it is to win funding for farms.

“I have not waited on any money to plant right now,” he said. “We haven’t been waiting on government funding. Just to hear the comments she makes implying anybody who did not have enough crop insurance, it was a poor business decision, that is not the case.”

He said the decline of commodity prices, the increase cost of production on top of weather events have made crop insurance not much of a factor in offer relief from disasters.

Ulmer said in addition to farmers, many businesses who rely on farmers such as fertilizer and seed companies and a myriad of other small businesses are affected by the farmers’ plight.

“I know of some companies who had to write off a lot of debt owed by farmers because they didn’t have the funds to pay their bills last year,” he said.

The Senate must now take up the veto. The bill passed there by a vote of 33-3.

Title: **House gives final approval to abortion bill**
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House gives final approval to abortion bill

TIM SMITH

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COLUMBIA - The House gave final approval Tuesday to a bill banning abortions at 20 weeks but not before a string of Democrats fought against it, arguing the legislation was unconstitutional and an unnecessary invasion of a woman's privacy.

The 79-29 vote was approval of a final compromise between the House and Senate on the bill, which was first passed by the House last year.

Alyssa Miller, a spokeswoman for Planned Parenthood South Atlantic, called the legislation a "dangerous bill" for South Carolina women.

"The reality is that abortion later in pregnancy is extremely rare and often takes place in complex and difficult situations where a woman and her doctor need every medical option available," she said. "In states that have passed similar abortion bans, some women and their families have been put into unimaginable situations — needing to end a pregnancy for serious medical reasons but unable to do so. These bills are simply part of an extreme political agenda to chip away at access to safe and legal abortion."

The bill, called the Pain Capable Unborn Child Act, was originally authored by Rep. Wendy Nanney of Greenville and was passed last year in the House by a vote of 80-27. Abortion foes contend that fetuses can feel pain by the age, which is where the bill received its name.

The House version banned abortions in cases in which pregnancies are at 20 weeks or more with an exception for medical emergencies. The Senate added exceptions for rape, incest and severe fetal anomalies, meaning the fetus could not survive outside the womb. A conference committee made up of three House members and

three senators agreed to drop the exceptions for rape and incest.

When a conference committee wants to do something that neither body passed, they have to come back to each

chamber and ask permission. The Senate gave its approval two weeks ago and then approved the compromise by a vote of 36-9. The House voted twice but failed to grant permission until Tuesday.

Similar laws are in effect in 12 states and have been blocked by courts in three others, according to the Associated Press.

After Republicans in the House voted to limit debate on the issue, six Democrats spoke against the bill. No supporters of the bill spoke in the debate.

Rep. James Smith, a Columbia Democrat, said the bill would be challenged in the courts and would be overturned. He

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Bill

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challenged supporters to produce one case in which a woman had an abortion after 20 weeks in a situation that could be considered wrong. He said most are situations of wanted pregnancies in which something goes wrong.

"All of these bills that have been challenged have been struck down on the simple notion that 20 weeks violates the precedent set in Roe (Versus Wade)," he said. "No matter how much we think of ourselves as all powerful in the state of South Carolina, we are not and this will be struck down."

Rep. Todd Rutherford, leader of House Democrats, told the House that by removing exceptions for victims of rape and incest, supporters of the bill were offering a "middle finger to women who have been raped."

He said lawmakers are violating their oath to the Constitution by passing the bill.

"I simply believe that just like that business owner, it is not our place to stand between a woman and her doctor," he said, "no matter how old she is, no matter how she ended up standing there. We ought to do better than that. We ought to be better than that. We ought to read our own laws, know what they say and abide by

them."

He and other Democrats also criticized Republicans who cheered and applauded earlier when the House agreed to give the conference committee the authority to deviate from the House and Senate versions.

"We ought not pretend, just because it gives us the opportunity to beat up on little girls or women that are victims of rape or incest, we ought not clap because we've made it possible to impact their lives by telling them that though the Supreme Court says one thing and the law of the land says one thing, we think something else and we are able now to stand in your face and tell you different."

The bill now heads to Gov. Nikki Haley, who is expected to sign it.

The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals struck down both Idaho's and Arizona's versions, AP has reported. Georgia state court blocked enforcement of that state's 20-week ban in 2012, according to the institute.

Without citing a reason, the U.S. Supreme Court declined in January 2014 to hear an appeal from Arizona — which had banned abortion at 18 weeks past fertilization.

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'148 -- Letters and Opinion --

Opinion— Incentives won't fix SC's economy

April 28, 2016 by Staff Reports @
carolinaledger @thecarolinaledger

A sprinkler company will locate in Pickens County, leading to the creation of approximately 100 jobs there.

A local technology firm expanding in Georgetown County, slated to create 152 jobs. That was the employment news this week.

I get a press release or two stating similar news every other week from the Governor's Office. What I don't



Jessica Cross, Carolina Ledger

see in my inbox on a weekly basis is news of layoffs.

Like the news that Boeing would be offering voluntary layoffs to 200

employees at its North Charleston plant—one of the Commerce Department's crown jewels—ahead of Wednesday's news the company's quarterly earnings had dipped nine percent compared with the previous year.

Or the news that construction equipment manufacturer, Caterpillar would close two of its Midlands facilities, consequently cutting 400 jobs in



File photo: Commerce Secretary, Bobby Hitt. Back row (l-r) Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster, Workforce Investment Board chairman, Mikee Johnson and former Lt. Gov. Yancey McGill.



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response to a decreased demand for construction and mining equipment. According to the New York Times, South Carolina gave Caterpillar a \$200,000 incentive in 2012, the same year the business pledged a \$20 million investment that was expected at the time to create more than 80 jobs at its Sumter hydraulic facility.

Naturally, officials don't advertise the details of incentives packages awarded to corporations like Caterpillar.

These super-secretive packages are tied to a Closing Fund, which can be used at the governor's discretion to attract economic development. The House included in its version of next year's budget \$15 million for the fund, even as the business community told officials crumbling infrastructure hurt business growth in the state.

But who can blame Republican Gov. Nikki Haley for using the fund to lure business that would otherwise locate elsewhere?

When she took office in 2011, the whole country was still shaking off the effects of the Great Recession. Haley, in conjunction with the Commerce Department, and the Department of Employment and Workforce has used every weapon in her arsenal to fight joblessness in South Carolina. And, as governors do, she's championed every job and every investment won.

But incentives aren't a panacea. Just ask the 600 or more people facing unemployment this month. Unemployment ticked up to 5.7 percent in March up from 5.5 percent in February, the first increase since September 2014. The increase was due to a record number of people entering the labor force, according to the Department of Employment and Workforce.

But if businesses continue layoffs even as South Carolina lures corporations with taxpayer-funded incentives, we can expect unemployment to continue to grow.

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Robert Hart of Timken Tyger River is recognized as an Ambassador for Economic Development. Hart is joined by Gov. Nikki Haley and Secretary of Commerce Bobby Hitt.

Timken plant manager honored as Ambassador for Economic Development

COLUMBIA - As part of the 25th Annual Industry Appreciation Week, the South Carolina Department of Commerce last week announced the 2016 Ambassadors for Economic Development. Recognized for their exceptional efforts to bolster community and economic development activities in South Carolina, the ambassadors were honored in a ceremony held on Thursday, April 28 at the Governor's Mansion Complex. This year, 46 individuals - one from each county - were selected.

Bob Hart, plant manager at Timken's Tyger River facility, was named as Union County's economic ambassador.

"In South Carolina, growing our state's economy and creating jobs truly is a team effort, and the individuals recognized as ambassadors at last week's ceremony are proof of that. These local business leaders from all corners of our state are what really make South Carolina such a special place to live, work and play," said Gov. Nikki Haley.

Each year the Department of Commerce joins local communities to thank businesses for their vital contributions to South Carolina's economy during the state's Industry Appreciation Week. As part of the celebration, the state recognizes individuals throughout South Carolina as Ambassadors for Economic Development. These individuals include local leaders from the private sector, representing a variety of businesses committed to advancing their communities.

"Businesses don't locate to a state or a region. They locate to a community. So, it's important to recognize the local leaders in communities all across this state that help move South Carolina and its communities forward," said Secretary of Commerce Bobby Hitt.

The state also presented three businesses with the South Carolina Export Achievement Award and recognized five students as Young Entrepreneurs of the Year.



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148 Local primary candidates stump during women's group luncheon

BY JENNA-LEY HARRISON
jharrison@journalscene.com

The GOP primary is less than two months away and candidates are hitting the campaign trail hard in Dorchester County. Many in contested races took time Monday at the Summerville Republican Women's Club meeting at Oscar's restaurant to reiterate the focus of their individual platforms and convince members why they deserve their votes.

The primary election is June 14.

Anyone wishing to vote in either the Republican or Democratic primary must be registered to vote by May 14.

Sheriff L.C. Knight opened up the forum. He was unable to attend last month's meeting when his opponents, former sheriff Ray Nash and former sheriff's Lt. Robert Biddle, both spoke.

Knight urged voters to review the county crime stats on the FBI website. Both he and Nash have spent the last several weeks in a back-and-forth verbal match about the accuracy of local crime trends.

"Don't take my word; don't take my

opponents' word," Knight said.

While he agreed that the 2015 county homicide rate skyrocketed, he said the statistic is one no law enforcement official can dictate. But, he said, his investigators have locked up 12 of 13 suspects connected to the cases.

Knight also touched on his ability to balance the budget, build a new jail and work well with council during the last eight years.

"We needed to get some things accomplished, and we did. ... We have given you an honorable, professional police agency," he said.

In response to his opponents' claims that the agency has low morale, with deputies leaving at a high rate over the last year "losing good people" to other agencies, Knight said he's the one with low morale. He blamed the issue on pay and said council has helped solve the problem earlier this year by approving pay raises for entry-level officers and LE-1 officers up through the rank of lieutenant.

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GOP

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State Senate

Evan Guthrie, a local attorney, boasted about his self-funded campaign and his goal to have perfect attendance in the state legislature, should he be elected to Senate District 38.

"People want to write me checks, and I have to turn them away," he told Monday's crowd. "I want to have perfect attendance up there...and also come back and grow the party...getting younger people involved."

But first he'll have to prove victorious over incumbent Sen. Sean Bennett, R-Summerville, also on hand at the women's

meeting. Bennett opened with his passion for job growth, which he said initially prompted him to run for state office three years ago.

"Our people need and deserve better career opportunities," Bennett said.

Bennett credited his hard work and focus on the job sector since taking office as helping lower the unemployment rate locally and statewide from 2013 until now.

State House

Education was a top talking point for County Councilwoman Carroll Duncan, who's running against Department of Defense worker Katie Arrington for House District 94, currently held by state Rep. Jenny Horne, running for Congress against U.S. Rep. Mark Sanford.

Duncan told voters she favors lower taxes and "less government intrusion" and has nothing to hide since she's been



Photos by Jenna-Ley Harrison/Journal Scene

S.C. House District 94 candidate Katie Arrington reveals her campaign platform during her three-minute time slot at the Summerville Republican Women's meeting.

a consistent voter during the course of her political career.

"I am a strong conservative, consistent Republican," she said. "I have a record...you don't have to guess how I'm going to vote."

Arrington echoed a similar GOP message, calling herself "a patriot" and strong supporter of the Constitution. She wants to fix the "broken" General Assembly and stay "communicative" with the constituents she's serving, should she win office.

For Arrington, life wasn't handed to her on a silver platter. Because she didn't graduate college, she said, dedication to her goals and dreams through the years is why she's successful in her career today.

"I am the poster child for the American Dream. I had to work twice as hard, twice as long to get to where I'm at," Arrington said.

County Coroner

TWO OF the three coroner candidates, sheriff's Sgt. Mike Giglio and Wayne Reeves, also spoke. A third GOP candidate, Paul Brouthers, offered the group his platform during last month's meeting. A fourth candidate, Democrat Randy Brown, is also running for the county seat.

Giglio said he wanted to restore integrity to the office, after Gov. Nikki Haley removed former coroner Chris Nisbet

from the role in October.

He was indicted for misconduct in office after serving the county nearly 20 years.

As for Reeves, who said he's been in the county 63 years and even established a local 911, the coroner role is meant for someone with compassion and people skills.

"If you don't have people skills you cannot operate this office," he said. "I'm not looking for a career; I'm here to serve."

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Dorchester District Two Vice Chairman Tanya Robinson chats with county coroner candidate Wayne Reeves while awaiting the Summerville Republican Women's meeting on Monday.



Dorchester County sheriff candidates Ray Nash and Robert Biddle discuss politics at a table inside Oscar's of Summerville Monday while they wait for the Summerville Republican Women's meeting to start.



Dorchester County L.C. Knight talks with DD2 Board Member Barbara Crosby before speaking during a candidates' forum Monday at the Summerville Republican Women's meeting at Oscar's in Summerville.





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Local attorney Evan Guthrie, who's running against Senate District 38 Incumbent Sean Bennett, R-Summerville, told a crowd at Oscar's Monday why he would be a good fit for the General Assembly.



Dorchester County Councilwoman Carroll Duncan talks about her experience as a former educator and administrator during her pitch for S.C. House District 94.