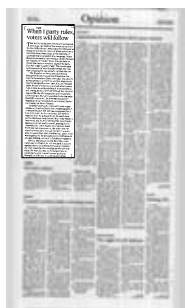




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148 When 1 party rules, voters will follow

THE RACE FOR SENATE DISTRICT 34 inspired less than 5 percent of the voters to turn out for the GOP primary, which doubled this year as the general election. Many of those voters were left scratching their heads at the odd mix of alliances that emerged in the campaign. Some Republican leaders said the race shows the need for "closed primaries," those that are held in states that require voters to register by party. But that really wouldn't help. The Senate race is an example of what happens when the dog that's chasing the car actually catches the car.

The Republican Party now dominates Georgetown County and South Carolina the way the Democratic Party once did. The idea of a party primary as the first and last stop on the road to taking office isn't new. It's just changed sides. Senate District 34 is a result of one-party rule. It runs from Myrtle Beach to Mount Pleasant, taking in the waters of Winyah Bay but leaving out the city of Georgetown and its pockets of Democrats. The only question to decide after the 2020 census will be whether the district should pick up more Republicans from Charleston County or Horry County.

Stephen Goldfinch, a two-term state representative, benefited from similar demographics in House District 108. He was unopposed for a first term, just like his successor, Lee Hewitt, was this year. As a Republican, he easily beat back a challenge from former Rep. Vida Miller, a Democrat. Ms. Miller endorsed Mr. Goldfinch's opponent in last week's runoff, putting her in line with Gov. Nikki Haley. One said Mr. Goldfinch was too conservative, the other that he wasn't conservative enough. In fact, it was an unwitting anybody-but-Goldfinch alliance. That was augmented by the opponents of offshore oil and gas drilling, which Mr. Goldfinch supports.

Ideally, Democrats would have their own candidate in District 34, but the deck is stacked against them. So some did what good citizens do: they voted for the candidates who are running: the Republicans. A closed primary in a one-party system won't ensure purity of thought. It will only blur the lines further.

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The Coastal Carolina University Chanticleers baseball team is celebrating their College World Series NCAA National Championship win. This 2016 College World Series Championship is the first for Coastal Carolina University.

Governor issues proclamation recognizing team

Gov. Nikki Haley issued a proclamation last week recognizing the Coastal Carolina University Chanticleers for winning the College World Series NCAA national championship.

The proclamation designated Friday, July 1, 2016, as "Chanticleer Baseball National Champions Day" throughout the state of South Carolina and encourages all South Carolinians to join to-

gether in congratulating the Chanticleer baseball team and head coach Gary Gilmore for their outstanding performance in the 2016 College World Series.

Last Thursday, the governor ordered a Coastal Carolina University flag be flown over the statehouse to honor the Chanticleers and issued the following statement:

"Michael and I are proud

to congratulate Coastal Carolina University on winning its first national championship in school history. This team embodied so many of the things we love about our state and the fact that the Chanticleers are bringing the College World Series championship trophy back to South Carolina is something we can all celebrate. Cinderella is a Chanticleer!"



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It is a¹⁴⁸ great day in South Carolina

Governor Nikki Haley has made it's another great day in South Carolina her go to catch phrase that she uses to start meetings and press conferences. She instructed agency heads to inform state employees to use this phrase in agencies all across our state. The Governor has been involved with a Political Action Committee named A Great Day SC that participated in spending huge amounts of money in State House and Senate races in South Carolina

The verdict is in and the Governor won one race and lost all others. She helped defeat long term serving Senator Wes Hayes a Rock Hill Republican. She supported Senator Larry Martin (R) Pickens and he lost in a runoff. She visited Florence to campaign for the challenger facing Senator Hugh Leatherman. She has had several conflicts with Leatherman over the state budget and fiscal matters pertaining to several agencies. Leatherman won re-election over two challengers including the one Haley endorsed. Haley endorsed the Republican challenger that was opposing Senator Luke Rankin (R) Myrtle Beach. She claimed Rankin held up Ethics reform over the past 4 years. Ethics reform passed this year and she signed the bill into law effective July 1. Rankin won easily his re-election

bid. House member Stephen Goldfinch of Murrells Inlet was running for the Senate seat vacated by retiring Senator Ray Cleary. She supported the challenger to Goldfinch. Goldfinch won the Senate seat in a runoff. Her record in Senate races was one victory, four losses.

Near the end of each legislative session, members not seeking re-election can give a farewell speech. In a future article, I will share my entire comments with you. During my comments, I reflected on how nice it would be if it was truly a great day in all of South Carolina. Rural SC has not enjoyed the successes of the more urban and coastal areas of our state. If you look at the last census, ten counties or approximately 20 percent of the state lost population or populations were stagnant. These counties are in rural SC. Rural counties don't have the tax base, amenities, and resources for public schools like other more well to do areas of our state. Further the House and Senate has shorted local governments by not fully funding the Local Government Fund. One of the biggest challenges for the General Assembly in 2017 is to provide more resources for rural governments and schools. By doing that, we will be much closer to saying, "it's a great day in South Carolina."



WayneGeorge
Update from the House



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The Times and Democrat of Orangeburg on the moped safety bill:

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Nikki Haley's libertarian leanings should not have prevented her from signing a moped safety bill.

The Republican governor said the legislation is government overreach, specifically the requirement that reflective vests be worn for nighttime driving and helmets be worn by those under age 21.

In a veto letter to the General Assembly, Haley said the restrictions for mopeds would exceed those for motorcycle drivers, although existing law does require helmets for bikers under age 21. People over 18 "should decide for themselves what they should wear for their personal safety," she wrote.

The Haley veto was among those upheld by lawmakers when an override vote was blocked by a single senator after the House voted 69-33 to overrule the governor. In sending the bill to Haley two weeks earlier, the Senate approved 41-1.

Supporters of the legislation contend mopeds are among the most dangerous vehicles for people to drive, partly because there are no regulations. Moped drivers are dying because people can't see them.

As passed by lawmakers, the bill would require people to register mopeds and attach a license plate. Mopeds would still be exempt from property taxes and insurance.

The bill would bar moped drivers from traveling faster than 35 mph. It would require them to drive in the farthest right lane on multilane roadways and make it illegal for mopeds to be driven on highways where the posted speed limit is 55 mph or greater.

As important as the rider requirements are, an even more crucial aspect of the legislation is closing a loophole that means moped drivers at present cannot be charged with driving under the influence.

Mopeds for the first time would be defined as motor vehicles. For too long, drivers who have lost a license because of DUI have been able to drive mopeds legally because they require no license. And they can be drunk while driving the vehicles.

Sen. Greg Hembree, R-North Myrtle Beach, a bill proponent, told The Associated Press: "Literally, you can be stinking drunk on a moped and can't be arrested."

The bill would create a special moped license. People who lose their regular license, for whatever reason, could get the separate license, starting the point system over. But, importantly, a moped license could be suspended too.

Fifty people died on mopeds in South Carolina in 2015, more than double the number from just two years before in 2013. Already in 2016, 16 moped drivers and/or passengers have died.

If mopeds increasingly are going to be a reality of the road, there must be sensible regulations. When they return to Columbia in January, lawmakers should move swiftly to reintroduce the moped legislation and work with the governor to determine what it will take to get her signature.

148 + 234 Farmers learn about applying for aid

BY JOE PERRY
jperry@florencenews.com

KINGSTREE — Brown's Bar-B-Q was packed Friday morning as farmers gathered to learn from officials about how to apply for S.C. farm aid.

The meeting was the first of 19 that will be held over the next few weeks as the agricultural sector looks to rebound following last fall's historic flooding, which wiped out an estimated \$400 million in crops.

Farmers who incurred a 40 percent loss of agricultural commodities are eligible for grants up to \$100,000 under a \$40 million aid package passed by the legislature in late May.

Rep. Roger Kirby, a Democrat from District 61, cosponsored the legislation and said he came to the meeting as "my whole district is ag. This is an important thing for a lot of my constituents."

Kirby was glad the first meeting was held in what

he called "the heart of the farm belt in the Pee Dee."

"The intent is not to make every farmer whole. We wanted to help as many as we could with limited resources," he said. "It's more intended to help small family farms that are on the brink of disaster."

While taking a mid-meeting break, Cliff Barron

said "probably about 70 percent" of his row crops were destroyed by the October flooding. Cultivating about 1,000 acres in Johnsonville, the 36-year-old farmer focuses on corn, beans and wheat. Drought conditions last year had already taken a severe toll on his corn before the historic deluge.

"All our hopes were on the beans and next thing you know, we got 27 inches of rain in three days," he said. "It was frustrating — we had good crops in the field."

Once he gets all his documentation squared away, he'll apply for aid.

"Things look better" this

year, said Barron, who's farmed for 15 years. "A good-looking corn crop — beans looking pretty average. Things look up a little bit."

Bill Wallace isn't sure he'll apply until he plugs his numbers into the formula that determines his actual losses vs. expected revenue.

"I'm borderline," said the 61-year-old, who farms about 140 acres of corn and soybeans near Turbeville.

He knows several farmers with heavy losses who had to quit. He hasn't had to borrow money to purchase equipment and has been able to finance seed purchases, whereas fertil-

izer and chemicals have to be paid for up front.

"It's just hard. It's a struggle and will take awhile to bounce back," he said. "Sometimes you want to throw your hands up and walk away."

Still, he knows farmers like himself "have to keep on going."

"Right now there's a bumper crop of corn," he said, "but my fields are still wet and we can't plant beans. We've put down some but not much."

Hugh Weathers showed up at the well-known barbecue restaurant toward the end of the meeting.

"I want to hear what's on our farmer's minds," said Weathers, the state's

secretary of agriculture. "I'm going to go to as many meetings as I can."

Though the entire program has been launched fairly quickly — the legislature overrode Gov. Nikki Haley's veto on May 24 — Weathers hopes for as little bureaucracy as possible.

"This whole thing took about 45 days," he said, referring to the agriculture department planning for implementation of the aid. "In another 45 days we hope to be writing checks but it depends on meetings like this."

For more information about S.C. Farm Aid, check out <https://agriculture.sc.gov/>.

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Commentary Hey Y'all, E Pluribus Unum

By Phil Noble

E Pluribus Unum or out of many, one. This 13 letter phrase became an official part of the Seal of the United States by an Act of Congress in 1782. It was the de facto motto of the United States until Congress officially made In God We Trust the national motto in 1956.



But beyond being simply our unofficial motto, since even before 1782, E Pluribus Unum embodied the very spirit of us as a new country. This simple but profound idea is that we are all many – many different people of different origins, different histories, different religions, different colors, and different races – but all one, the People of the United States.

If you think about how things have been over the last few thousand years, E Pluribus Unum is a pretty radical concept. For most of human history, we have been dividing people into two groups – us or them – and to have a country that recognizes that all of the “thems” are all part of “us,” well, that’s a big idea.

Various religions, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, etc. all recognize some sense of ‘one in the spirit’ as the old hymn says, but E Pluribus Unum is about secular institutions – a government and a country – and that’s a fundamentally different thing.

These types of musings about our national origins and aspirations always seem to obligatorily come forth in newspaper columns such as this one around every July 4th holiday but there have been several things in the news of late that add poignancy.

So, this week when so many of us are relaxing at the beach or on the lake or by the pool, eating and drinking all the appropriate patriotic food items – and as Old Glory gently waves nearby in the breeze – here are a few things to ponder.

There are some new Pluribus in South Carolina these days. There is a new study out this week about who are the new people moving to South Carolina and the results might surprise you. The fastest growing group of New South Carolinians is Asian.

Though in absolutely numbers they are still small and only make up 2% of our state’s population, in the last five years the number of Asians in the Palmetto State has grown to over 20,000 – an increase over this period of 26%. The largest group of Asians came from India. By comparison, Hispanic growth has been 14%, American Indians 10%, whites 6% and blacks 4.4%.



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It's worth noting that Gov. Nikki Haley comes from an Indian immigrant family.

E Pluribus Unum has never been easy; there have always been tensions between new and old South Carolinians. Beginning in 1670 and for the next 100 years or so, the white folks who settled in South Carolina were largely similar. The Colony was founded from the Atlantic coast and the original white settlers were mostly from England, Episcopal, and the families of second (or third or fourth) sons of aristocratic families.

The first sons inherited the manor house and estate, the title and the seat in the House of Lords. Many younger sons came to the New World because their opportunities were limited in the Old.

When the Upcountry was founded beginning in the mid-1700, it was largely by Scots-Irish who came overland down through the Shenandoah Valley and tension grew almost immediately. These new Pluribus were hard scrabble, small farmers and Presbyterians. A prominent newspaper in Charleston called these Scots-Irish 'the scum of two nations.'

E Pluribus Unum has always been about an aspiration of our greatest hopes over our darkest fears and from our earliest history (see S.C. and Scots-Irish above) there have always been politicians such as Donald Trump fanning the flames of suspicion, paranoia and fear.

It is nothing new in South Carolina, U.S. or even global history. Throughout U.S. history we have had politicians who scorned the Germans, Irish, Poles, Jews, Chinese, and Mexicans, and every other 'fill in the blank' immigrant group. These voices blame all of 'our' problems on 'them' and preach that if we could go back to how it 'was' – then everything would be OK again. (Make our Colonies Great Again.)

It's ironic that a nation of immigrants would be so susceptible to periodic convulsions of anti-immigrant prejudice ... but we are.

This campaign season – both in the U.S. with Trump and in the UK with the anti-immigration hysteria that led to a vote to leave the EU – there is legitimate reason for concern about the rising fears over hopes.

But, although the fears never totally go away, the hopes do seem to usually win out. Somehow we always seem to be able to rise above our deepest fears and listen to our better angels – at least up until now.

In his short-lived presidential campaign, former Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley had perhaps the best line of the year when he said, "The enduring symbol of America is not the barbed wire fence, it's the Statue of Liberty."

And indeed it is.

O'Malley said it in 16 words; our forefathers said it in 13 letters – E Pluribus Unum.

We as a people, South Carolinians and Americans, must never forget this – nor forsake this.

Phil Noble is a businessman in Charleston and President of the SC New Democrats, an independent reform group started by former Gov. Richard Riley to bring big change and real reform. phil@philnoble.com

148 Bringing Mexican political ethics to S.C.

Now the most reasonable response to this headline is "Are you nuts? Isn't Mexican politics riddled with corruption? What could we possibly learn from them?"

The answers to these three questions are – no, yes and a lot.

I suppose there are some who would argue that the answer to the first question is yes, but I haven't been locked up yet, so give me the benefit of the doubt on this one and let's skip to the more important questions.

Yes, Mexican politics is shot through with corruption at most every level. The ethical history of politics in this country is not something that the League of Women Voters would want us to emulate, but it has only been with the recent flood of drug money that politics has gone from shady to utterly corrupt.

How bad is it? Really bad.

There is a popular saying that most folks take as an article of faith that says: "He who doesn't cheat does not get ahead." (I've heard the same sentiment expressed around the State House in Columbia.)

What has happened in Mexico is that the corruption in government has now spilled over into violence and dirty tricks that would make even George Wallace and Richard Nixon recoil. The whole political system is in the process of breaking down.

So, you might ask, what does this have to do with South Carolina, and why would we possibly want to import any of this to our state?

Well, the answer is that we would certainly not want to import any of this political disease, but we might want to consider importing some of the political cure that is starting to bubble up from the grass roots.

Let me explain. In the midst of

all this corruption, something happened – the people began to take matters into their own hands. Mexican law requires that if

enough citizens sign on to a legislative petition, the National Con-

gress has to take up the measure. The law requires 120,000 signatures, and to date over 630,000 citizens have signed on to a measure that would make lawmakers report their personal finances.

The initiative is called "3 out of 3" and it requires government officials to reveal all of their financial assets, report any conflicts of interest and prove they are paying their taxes.

As would be expected in a system as averse to ethics reform as is Mexico, the legislation is stalled and going nowhere. (Sound familiar?)

But, as a result of this citizens' initiative, something has happened in Mexico that would go a long way toward providing ethics reform in South Carolina. Some Mexican politicians have begun to voluntarily divulge their financial information even before any legislation is passed requiring them to do so.

Thus far, 560 public servants have disclosed this information, including 13 percent of the national Senate and 21 percent of the Chamber of Deputies (like our House of Representatives), 12 state governors and one member of the president's cabinet.

So now let's get back to ethics reform in South Carolina. For the third year in a row, the legislature has refused to pass any meaningful ethics reform. (And even the measures they are considering are really "Swiss cheese reform" – more holes than cheese.)

We have seen lots of self-righteous posturing and speeches by Gov. Haley and some State House politicians about the need for ethics reform. They always blame someone else for the failure of reform efforts to pass.

So, I'd say to these S.C. politicians, follow the Mexican example and voluntarily disclose 1) your income and assets – how much and from whom, 2) conflicts of interest – what deals are you and your family in, and 3) your state and federal tax returns – for all the years you are in office.

Yes indeed, let's bring Mexican political ethics to South Carolina.

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Guest column



Phil Noble is a businessman in Charleston and president of the S.C. New Democrats

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148 Coleman secures \$75K for City of Chester sports complex

BY BRIAN GARNER
bgarnier@onlinechester.com

The dream of a City of Chester sports complex at the Chester fairgrounds is one step closer to reality because of the work of state Sen. Creighton Coleman and Chester City Councilmembers Angela Douglas and Carlos Williams.

Douglas reported to Chester City Council at their last meeting in June she and Councilman William "Budda" Killian had discussed the sports complex. Killian expressed the wish to see the sports complex at the fairgrounds renovated according to the plans the city had previously worked on.

Douglas said she promised Killian to get \$100,000 towards the project, but that didn't happen. Then Douglas and Councilman Carlos Williams attended the S.C. Municipal Association meeting in February and met there with state Sen. Creighton Coleman.

"We gave him a list of

the projects we were looking at here and working on, and a few days later, he called me and asked if there were any particular projects we could get started on right away?

"I gave him a laundry list of projects, because I thought we could get started on any of them. Sen. Coleman chose to focus on the recreational opportunity and the capacity we could build in the Chester fairground sports complex that featured the Joe Collins Stadium and the Jeff Brown softball field," Douglas reported.

Sen. Coleman dedicated \$100,000 towards this project in the state budget in February. The funding for that project was rejected and then Coleman reintroduced it. Following that, Gov. Nikki Haley vetoed the budget. But the project funding wasn't quite dead yet.

"I am excited to announce between 11:30 p.m. and 1:30 a.m. on June 15, the legislature overrode the veto, and we were able to get \$75,000 to go

towards this project," Douglas said.

Douglas said there are some restrictions on the money and it will be made available in mid to late September.

City Administrator Sandi Worthy said the city has been using some of their allotment of the penny sales tax money to basically stabilize the property.

Some of the features of the Sports Complex plan include an indoor recreation center. If that is built the parks and rec department plans to move their offices out to the site. There would also be an indoor gymnasium in that building.

Some of the other features being considered are an update to the existing football field and the stadium seating, more parking spaces, a softball complex with three fields, a garden and seating area, picnic and play areas and a regulation size athletic track for track and field events.



BY BRIAN GARNER/THE N&R
Chester City attorney Megan Gaston shows the audience the proposed Sports Complex plan at the June city council meeting.



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GRAPHIC PROVIDED
This is the initial design for the Old Fairgrounds Sports Complex as envisioned by the City of Chester.

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148 Dr. Brian Hughes awarded South Carolina Chiropractor of the Year

On Friday, June 24, Dr. Brian Hughes of Hughes Chiropractic Clinics of Rock Hill and Chester was named South Carolina's Chiropractor of the Year by the members of the South Carolina Chiropractic Association. Dr. Hughes was presented with this honor at the annual SCCA convention that was held in Myrtle Beach from June 23-26.

Dr. Hughes attributes much of his success this year to his active board members and supportive family. His wife, Dr. Iva Hughes, served as the SCCA convention chairperson and has done so for the past three years. This year was one of the most successful and well attended conventions in recent years, and continues to grow each year due to her hard work in attracting world class speakers. Dr. Brian was honored to award his father, Dr. Douglas Hughes, one of the Presidential Pillar awards, and his wife with the Presidential Cup.

These awards represent their tireless efforts in supporting Dr. Brian during his tenure as SCCA president this past year.

During the convention, speakers from around the country presented over 30 hours worth of continuing education for doctors that came from around the state and southeast to attend. Dr. Brian Hughes was also presented with a copy of a South Carolina Senate Resolution in his honor that was proposed by Senator Wes Hayes on May 31. Dr. Hughes is the first doctor from his district (York, Chester and Lancaster Counties) to be awarded the South Carolina Chiropractor of the Year in almost 30 years.

The last doctor to be bestowed this honor, was his father, Dr. Douglas B.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Dr. Hughes is South Carolina's Chiropractor of the Year.

Hughes Jr., who was awarded SC Chiropractor of the Year for three consecutive years from 1986-1988.

Prior to receiving this year's SC Chiropractor of the Year award, Dr. Brian Hughes had previously been awarded the South Carolina Young chiropractor of the Year in 2008 and 2011. He is only the second chiropractor in the history of South Carolina to receive this award more than once.

When reflecting on his year as president, Dr. Hughes said that the thing that he will remember most, is his efforts to organize and execute a successful flood relief effort.

Dr. Hughes commented, "I was able to travel around the state and see first hand the damage that was caused by the flood. I was very humbled to represent all of the doctors that donated to the SCCA C.A.R.E.S. program, and be able to hand a check to some of the flood victims, as well as be one of the representatives that was able to present Governor Haley with a check at the Statehouse."

The name SCCA C.A.R.E.S stands for "Chiropractors Aiding Relief Efforts Statewide." Through this effort, the SCCA was able to



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assist chiropractors whose offices were destroyed by the 1,000-year flood, as well as contribute to Governor Haley's SC One flood relief fund.

To this day, SC One continues to raise funds in an effort to get people back to their homes that were destroyed by the flood. As of last month, there were still an estimated 1,400 families that were still unable to return to their homes that were deemed unlivable due to flood damage.

Dr. Hughes is a 1996 graduate of Northwestern High School, a 1999

graduate of Francis Marion University and a 2005 graduate of Palmer College of Chiropractic in Davenport Iowa. Today he practices along side his wife (Dr. Iva Hughes) and father (Dr. Douglas Hughes Jr.) in the the longest continual running chiropractic practice in South Carolina, which was started by his late grandfather in 1939.

Dr. Hughes will continue to sit on the board of the SCCA for one year as past president and looks forward to continuing to serve his profession in other capacities for years to come.

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More than 10,000 spectators cheered as the Confederate flag was removed for the final time from the South Carolina State House on July 10, 2015.
Photo by Kevin Kyzer

How S.C. African-Americans Feel Uneasy Even After Confederate Flag's Removal

By Rodney Welch

The removal of the Confederate flag from the South Carolina State House grounds a year ago after the racially charged shootings in the Charleston area has done little to make African-Americans feel safe in South Carolina.

Despite black and white South Carolinians generally agreeing that race relations are either good (41.4 percent) or at least fair (38.2 percent) since the incidents last year, they remain split on the handling of the flag and perceptions about public safety and criminal justice, according to a recent survey by USC's Institute for Public Service and Policy Research.

Positive communitywide reaction to the handling of last year's racial incidents — the Emanuel AME Church mass shooting by an alleged white supremacist and the shooting death of unarmed African-American motorist Walter Scott by a white North Charleston policeman — has clashed with the state's deep-rooted and complicated history.

"The public conversation is not exactly unified on the point of resolving race relations and police community relations," says Seth Stoughton, a former police officer who is an assistant USC law professor. "Resolving what has historically been poor police community relations is going to take a long, long

time and a tremendous amount of effort."

The Confederate flag at the State House became part of the racial debate in the Emanuel shootings last June when Gov. Nikki Haley called for the Civil War banner's removal five days after the killings.

Protesters from both sides descended on the north lawn of State House and huddled around the flag flying behind the Confederate Soldier Monument at Gervais and Main streets.

The Legislature spent a week in contentious debate before voting to remove the flag that had flown at the State House for five decades. The flag came down for the last time on July 10 last year with a crowd of 10,000 cheering.

As the anniversary of the flag's removal draws close, a smaller share of white South Carolinians (52.1 percent) favored removing the flag than black residents (68.1 percent), the USC poll finds.

Not everyone is willing to move on. Haley continues to receive sharp criticism for her decision on social media. A group that supports South Carolina seceding from the United States plans on raising the Confederate flag at the State House in a ceremony Sunday, the anniversary of the banner's removal.

Haley's call to remove the flag and the Legislature's vote to send it to a museum did



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not help the state's racial climate, the poll finds.

More South Carolinians said they thought the handling of the Confederate flag worsened rather than improved race relations. More African-Americans believed the controversy over the flag hurt relations than white respondents, the USC survey says.

The flag controversy ranked second behind the media in worsening race relations in the state after the Charleston-area shootings. More white South Carolinians blamed the media than African-Americans by a wide margin.

The unease about race relations continues with interactions with police and the criminal justice system, the poll finds.

While nearly 60 percent of white South Carolinians believe the criminal justice system treats blacks fairly, a wide majority of blacks (82.3 percent) believe just the opposite.

While a majority of black and white respondents said the police presence in their communities made them feel safe, blacks were much more likely to add that the police also made them feel anxious.

Most black South Carolinians (78 percent) in the poll "reported feeling that police officers are too quick to use deadly force," while most whites (77.5 percent) "thought that police officers only use deadly force when necessary."

Likewise, the overwhelming majority of black respondents (83.1 percent) believed "that police are more likely to use deadly force against a black person," while a majority of whites (73.1 percent) felt that race was not a factor.


Most African-Americans (82.3 percent) also believe "the criminal justice system in the United States is biased against black people," while most whites (59.5 percent) think blacks are treated fairly.

The disparity of opinion may have a lot to do with the experience of those involved, says Todd Shaw, a USC political scientist and associate director of African American Studies at the school.

"From issues of health and education to criminal justice, African-Americans would simply have race confront them more directly than white counterparts," he says. "Whites wouldn't interpret it as a matter of race, and there's good reason for them not to, whereas African Americans will see those racial differences more directly. Thus it will shape their experience about American fairness and equal opportunity and equality."

Columbia community activist Kevin Gray says he believes police focus too much on dealing with "low-hanging fruit" of arresting poor African-Americans: "Sometimes it's hard for them to differentiate between who they think are the bad guys."

Gray believes community policing — where officers are residents of the places they serve — could be the answer.

"It's not just about the sheriffs or the police chiefs saying all the right things," he says. "It's about the cop on the beat actually knowing the community that he serves." 

Free Times Editor Andy Shain contributed to this story.