



***“Disagreement does not have to mean division. We are more than just members of warring political tribes, but brothers and sisters and fellow South Carolinians.”***

*Governor Nicki Haley during her State of the State Address on Wednesday, January 20th.*

Volume 2, January 22, 2016

## **Governor Haley Gives Her State of the State Address**

On Wednesday, Governor Nikki Haley gave an emotional State of the State address and broke down into tears as she talked about the Emanuel shooting and the difficult year South Carolina has endured. As she did in her response to President Obama's State of the Union Address, Governor Haley called for a softer tone in the political rhetoric as the state looks to make big decisions this year on roads, education and moving the state forward. She highlighted many of her priorities from her executive budget proposal, including the importance of passing road infrastructure reform and a tax neutral solution to fund it. She also reiterated that lawmakers should focus on K-12 and not colleges by saying, “No one can look at the tuition hikes parents and students have seen over the last decade and tell me that higher education doesn't have enough money, but if we don't focus on K-12, and focus on it now, higher education won't even be a possibility for far too many South Carolina children.”

## **Mixed Reaction to the State of the State**

While Governor Haley called for unity and a softer tone in her speech, it didn't take long for lawmakers to weigh in and begin ramping up the rhetoric. House Minority Leader Rep. Todd Rutherford (D-Richland) called her message of unity followed by calling out the Senate on ethics reform "a bit disingenuous and looked like a childhood trick." House Speaker Jay Lucas (R-Darlington) applauded the Governor for calling out the Senate on ethics reform and wondered why the Senate has had ethics bills for almost a year and they haven't received hearings or even been debated. On the Senator floor Thursday, Senator Larry Martin (R-Pickens) took exception with the Governor and Speaker's comments and pointed to the number of hours the Senate dedicated to hearing both Senate and House ethics bills and the time they spent debating them on the floor last year.

## **Senate to Take Up Roads Tuesday**

Senator Cleary ended Thursday's session with the floor and the intent of debating a road-repair bill when Senate session resumes on Tuesday. He explained senators need to find common ground on a funding formula based on the state's gas tax, a tax refund formula for making a bill tax neutral, and a government reform to fix the Department of Transportation. Senators have been working behind the scenes and many believe they have

made more progress in a week than was made all of last year. However, many still believe a solution is still a ways off. Senate Transportation Chairman Larry Grooms (R-Berkeley) stated that "odds are greater of winning the Powerball than Senators coming together on what restructuring of DOT should be." Next week will give us our first glance at just how close we are to having a roads bill passed.

## **Presidential Candidates Flock to South Carolina**

The First-in-the-South primary is quickly approaching and most presidential candidates found themselves in Charleston, South Carolina last weekend between both Republican and Democratic debates, as well as Martin Luther King Jr. Day rally at the State House. Democratic candidates Hillary Clinton, Bernie Sanders and Martin O'Malley all attended the civil rights rally at the State House and delivered remarks celebrating the removal of the Confederate battle flag. Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz made guest appearances in the Senate chambers on Tuesday, and Donald Trump called out for "Nikki" during the Republican debate to try and find the governor in the crowd and let her know he wasn't offended by her speech. The presidential politics will continue to increase over the next month and continue to put the state in the spotlight.

803.252.1087  
[www.capconsc.com](http://www.capconsc.com)