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# Capitol Consultants Government Affairs Week in Review

January 27, 2017



"I will always be your right-wing brotha' from anotha' motha'"

*--Newly sworn-in Lieutenant Governor Kevin Bryant (R-Anderson) thanking former Senator Joel Lourie during his farewell to fellow senators.*

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## **"Musical Chairs"**

Late Tuesday, the U.S. Senate confirmed Haley's UN ambassador appointment by President Donald Trump, leaving McMaster to succeed as governor. Nikki Haley and Henry McMaster made their way to the State House along with S.C. Supreme Court Chief Justice Don Beatty in a ceremonial transfer of power.

On Wednesday, Sen. Kevin Bryant (R-Anderson), who openly lobbied for the role of lieutenant governor, was voted in as the new senate pro tempore. Then shortly afterward, as the state constitution mandates, he became lieutenant governor.

After Bryant was sworn in, Hugh Leatherman (R-Florence) won re-election to the pro tempore slot, in a 28-16 vote over Sen. Harvey Peeler.

Sen. Leatherman had immediately resigned his post on Tuesday to avoid becoming the lieutenant governor, a part-time position considered politically weak. This allowed Senator Kevin Bryant to assume the role as lieutenant governor. Many senators argued the Florence Republican had a constitutional duty to become lieutenant governor, but in the end those arguments couldn't change the swell of support for Leatherman. Now the question becomes, who will fill Bryant's vacant senate seat.

## **School Superintendent**

A proposal that would have the governor appoint South Carolina's schools chief instead of the public electing it has reached the state Senate and House floors. Both the Senate and House Education Committees advanced a proposed constitutional amendment to make the Education Superintendent an appointed position. If passed by both the Senate and House, the question would go to voters in a referendum next election. Supporters say the change would give the governor more control over education policy while other lawmakers worry about the potential for political appointees.

## **Dam Woes**

The House agriculture committee approved a bill Wednesday that gives dam owners two months to say whether they will rebuild or repair the dams burst by the 2015 flood. In some cases, owners may choose to abandon the structures. A House committee has acted to address the problem of roads closed since the flooding. The issue is that owners have not moved to repair the dams, which state roads often cross. Owners of future dam breaches must come up with a plan within a

year.

### **A Look Ahead**

Next week we can expect the Senate and House to hold a joint session to elect judges. USC, MUSC and SC State will be making budget requests in House subcommittees, while DSS will be reporting to a Senate subcommittee.

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## **Numbers to Know**

### **\$4 billion**

Projected cost to widen I-95 to six lanes in SC.

### **1**

Katrina Shealy (R-Lexington) became the first Republican woman to chair a standing Senate committee.

### **2**

Number of deaths in 2015 gone unreported by DJJ, according to a state audit released on Thursday.

### **3**

Senate district three is now vacant with potential candidates names already being circulated.

### **85**

Age of Senator Hugh Leatherman, who some say is the most powerful SC elected official.

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