

perspective

CONGRESS shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

(First Amendment to The U.S. Constitution)



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In County: 3 months \$15; 6 months \$28; 1 year \$50.

NC & SC: 3 months \$25; 6 months \$41; 1 year \$75.

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Law Enforcement: 1 year \$28.

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LETTERS POLICY

1. Each letter submitted must be an original — no photocopies. E-mails are also accepted if a name and phone number is included: editor@gaffneyledger.com
2. Letters should include the writer's name, address and day and evening telephone numbers.
3. Letters should be submitted exclusively to this newspaper.
4. Letters are subject to editing for length and clarity.
5. Letters submitted in all-italic or all-capital letters will not be accepted.

We will not print letters:

- That are unsigned;
- That contain questionable or undocumented facts;
- That contain inappropriate attacks on a person or persons;
- Regarding disputes between the writer and other parties;
- Endorsing a business.

Our mailing address is: P.O. Box 670, Gaffney, S.C. 29342.

IF YOU MISS YOUR PAPER

Here at The Gaffney Ledger, since 1894, our newspaper delivery goal has always been the complete satisfaction of our readers.

Despite our taking exhaustive measures to prevent it, a newspaper delivery will occasionally be missed. Papers are sometimes picked up by the wrong person or by a dog, or they are missed due to some other unavoidable occurrence.

With this in mind, we have developed the following standard policy for late delivery of your Gaffney Ledger.

— We guarantee same-day delivery of your Gaffney Ledger if the problem is reported to us by 5 p.m.

— You can call at any time after 5 p.m. to report a missing paper via our answering machine and your paper will be delivered the next day by noon.

— We will deliver your Gaffney Ledger on the following business day by 11 a.m. if the missing paper is reported by 9 a.m. on that day.

After that, you have the choice of:

- Having the paper delivered with the next day's paper, or
- Crediting your account for the cost of the missing paper.

If you have any questions about this policy or if you have any problems with the delivery of your newspaper, please let us know. We are here to serve our readers.

CORRECTIONS

The Gaffney Ledger makes every effort to ensure all information in this publication is accurate and thorough.

However, in the event an error is made, it is this newspaper's policy to correct the error as soon as possible.

If you find a mistake, please notify the editor by calling 864-489-1131. Please be ready to tell us the page number and story in which the error appears.

ATTENTION POSTMASTER

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THE MOSS REPORT

An update on where legislation stands

H.4400, is a bill that establishes comprehensive Immigration Reform and a companion bill H.4347 that directs the Attorney General to seek reimbursement from the Federal Government for the costs the State incurs for incarcerating illegal immigrants.

The House returned S.588 to the Senate, which is a bill that establishes requirements, powers, duties, and restrictions for a Small Employer Health Group Cooperative, which authorizes small employers to form cooperatives for the purpose of providing lower health insurance costs to their employees. The House returned S.452 to the Senate with amendments, which requires the Department of Natural Resources to establish an Alligator Management Program.

House Committees reported out the following bills, which will now come before the full House:

EDUCATION — H.4372 is a bill that creates the "SOUTH CAROLINA TECHNICAL COLLEGE ENTERPRISE CAMPUS AUTHORITY ACT" and provides a mechanism for technical colleges to respond to private sector initiatives and to work in tandem with local and state economic development efforts; H.4316 a bill that establishes criteria to award Palmetto Fellow Scholarships to students who attend Magnet Schools.

MEDICAL, MILITARY AND MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS — H.3950 to create the Chronic Kidney Disease Initiative Governing Board and H.3723, to create an automated External defibrillator program for high schools, and Senate bill S.775 relating to the creation of the Multiple Sclerosis Healthcare study committee.

WAYS AND MEANS — H.4520, is a bill



REP. DENNIS MOSS

that expands financing under the Higher Education Revenue Bond Act and allows the issuance of revenue bonds to finance educational, administrative, operations, and health facilities of colleges and universities.

Bills that were introduced in the House this week included:

H.4587 — This bill requires districts to consider the proximity of bus stops to residences of convicted sex offenders.

H.4609 — This bill reforms eminent domain procedures and outlines procedures required of a county before it may exercise eminent domain. Among other things, the bill provides that the owner of condemned property has the right of first refusal to redeem his property if the condemning entity does not use the property for the intended public use or it contemplates a sale to another party.

H.4620 — This joint resolution proposes to amend the State Constitution and would be submitted to voters at the next general election and would delete the Adjutant General, Commissioner of Agriculture, Secretary of State, and Superintendent of Education from the list of state officers which the constitution requires to be elected.

If you have a comment or opinion concerning the matters discussed in this report, or if I may be of assistance to you at any time, please feel free to call your legislative office in Columbia (803-734-3073), office 422A Blatt Building, Columbia, SC 29211; or by e-mail at mossd@scstatehouse.net or my home in Gaffney (864-487-2121); or write 306 Silver Circle, Gaffney, SC 29340. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you in the House of Representatives.

INSIDE REPORT

Torts and terrorism

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A closed-door caucus of House Democrats last Wednesday took a risky political course. By four to one, they instructed Speaker Nancy Pelosi to call President Bush's bluff on extending the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) to continue eavesdropping on suspected foreign terrorists. Rather than passing the bill with a minority of the House's Democratic majority, Pelosi obeyed her caucus and left town for a 12-day recess without renewing the government's eroding intelligence capability.

Pelosi could have exercised leadership prerogatives and called up the FISA bill to pass with unanimous Republican support. Instead, she refused to bring to the floor the bill approved overwhelmingly by the Senate. House Democratic opposition included left-wing members typified by Rep. Dennis Kucinich, but they are but a small faction. The true cause for blocking the bill was the Senate-passed retroactive immunity from lawsuits for private telecommunications firms asked to eavesdrop by the government. The nation's torts bar, vigorously pursuing such suits, has spent months lobbying hard against immunity.

The recess by House Democrats amounts to a judgment that losing the generous support of trial lawyers, the Democratic Party's most important financial base, is more dangerous than losing the anti-terrorist issue to Republicans. Dozens of lawsuits have been filed against the phone companies for giving personal information to intelligence agencies without a warrant. Adm. Mike McConnell, the nonpartisan director of national intelligence, says delay in congressional action deters cooperation in detecting terrorism.

Big money is involved. Amanda Carpenter, a Townhall.com columnist, has prepared a spreadsheet showing that 66 trial lawyers representing plaintiffs in the telecommunications suits have contributed \$1.5 million to Democratic senators and causes. Of the 29 Democratic senators who voted against the FISA bill last Tuesday, 24 took money from the trial lawyers (as did two absent senators, Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama). Eric A. Isaacson of San Diego, one of the telecommunications plaintiff's lawyers, contributed to the recent unsuccessful presidential campaign of Sen. Chris Dodd, who led the Senate fight against the bill containing immunity.

The bill passed the Senate 68 to 29, with 19 Democrats voting aye. They included Intelligence Committee



ROBERT NOVAK

Chairman Jay Rockefeller and three senators who defeated Republican incumbents in the 2006 Democratic takeover of Congress: Claire McCaskill of Missouri, Jim Webb of Virginia and Sheldon Whitehouse of Rhode Island.

That opened the door for Pelosi to pass the bill with minority Democratic support. A Jan. 28 letter to the speaker signed by 21 House Blue Dogs (moderate Democrats) urged passage of Rockefeller's bill containing immunity. Democrats supporting it could exceed 40 in a House vote, easy enough for passage.

Instead, the Democratic leadership Wednesday brought up another bill simply extending FISA authority, this one for 21 days. Republicans refused to go along because it did not provide phone companies with the necessary immunity. It still could have passed with support from Democrats only, and the leadership surely thought that would happen when it was brought to the floor Wednesday. But it failed, 229 to 191, with 34 Democrats voting no despite pleas for support from their leaders. The opponents included three congressmen who signed the letter to Pelosi advocating immunity from lawsuits, but most were Kucinich Democrats who intuitively vote against any anti-terrorist proposal.

Clearly, opposition to the Rockefeller bill shown in the subsequent House Democratic caucus derived less from Kucinich's phobia to tough anti-terror countermeasures than obeisance to generous trial lawyers. Pelosi had to decide whether to pass the bill with a minority of her party, which can be dangerous for any leader of a House majority. In October 1998, Republican Speaker Newt Gingrich passed the Clinton administration's budget with 30 percent Republican support, less than a month before GOP losses in midterm elections forced his resignation from Congress.

Nothing will be done until the House formally returns Feb. 25, and the adjournment resolution was constructed so that Bush cannot summon Congress back into session. Last Friday morning, debating two backbench Republicans on a nearly deserted House floor, Majority Leader Steny Hoyer said there was no danger in letting the FISA legislation lapse temporarily. Democrats hope that will be the reaction of voters, as Republicans attack what happened last week.

To find out more about Robert D. Novak and read his past columns, visit the Creators Syndicate web page at www.creators.com.

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We have different ideas about kitchen remodeling

Me and my big mouth. Several months ago, while making small talk with my wife, I observed that it might be about time to remodel our kitchen.

I really don't know what I was thinking. Maybe that it would probably never happen.

When I said something in the fall of 2006 about getting some new carpet, nothing ever came of it, so maybe I was reasoning that she'd never actually get around to redoing the kitchen.

Wrong. And my idea of remodeling the kitchen and her idea are nowhere close.

My idea: reface the cabinets and drawers, new countertops, maybe some new flooring and a coat of paint.

Her idea: all new cabinets, new countertops, new appliances, new flooring, new window treatments, new breakfast table and chairs, new television — new everything except maybe pots and pans and that's probably because she hasn't thought of it.

But what Sherry doesn't think of, I'm sure her interior design consultant will. That's right. My wife didn't think she could put all of this together without the help of a 'professional.'

I tried to convince Sherry that she has exquisite taste and it wasn't necessary to hire someone to help her coordinate cabinets with countertops and such.

After all, she had hundreds of magazines to look through and find something she liked. And what about all those great ideas we saw at the home show? Speaking of which, that's a great way to spend a Saturday.

I lost that battle.

I also lost out on the idea of just replacing the fronts of our cabinets.

I pretty much lost out on all of the money-saving aspects of remodeling.

We (the interior design consultant, the cabinetmaker, my wife and I) had a meeting in our kitchen about a week ago and the more they talked, the more money it was costing me.

Literally.

The cabinetmaker gets paid by the job. The interior design consultant gets paid by the hour — "How much do you charge?," was the first thing I asked her. The longer we talked, the higher her bill went.

Just when we were about to wrap things up, she looked at the ceiling. "What about that?"

"What about it?" I asked, not knowing that sprayed ceilings are no longer in vogue.

"We'll have to do something about that."

And then Sherry chimed in.

"I never have liked that ceiling. It looks like popcorn."

That was news to me. I never heard any complaints before. Who looks at the ceiling anyway, unless you're in the Sistine Chapel?

And since that ceiling has been painted a couple times (not bad for 30 years, huh?) the 'popcorn' probably cannot be scraped off, I found out. "We can put sheet rock over it," the interior design consultant said.

That's something I could probably do to save some money, because I don't want to spend the next several weekends scraping my kitchen ceiling. But I definitely can't hang sheet rock on a ceiling.

A friend of mine recently added a sunroom and a dressing room to his home.

He figures it cost him about half as much to do that as it did to build his house.

The way things are going, my 'little' kitchen job is going to easily meet that percentage.

And that's not counting the new carpet in the rest of the house and the new bedroom furniture my daughter wants when she moves upstairs.

Oh, about that move. She and her mother say the bathroom upstairs needs to be remodeled.

While we're on bathrooms, the wife would like to add on a new one off our bedroom so she won't have to share with me. (She already has her own sink, for Pete's sake.)

Did I mention the screened-in porch she wants to redo and put tile on the floor, among other things?

How about the storage building I've got to move because, since I cut down some trees, it's too visible from the kitchen?

Just a couple of months ago I was jumping for joy after making my final house payment — after 28 years of mortgage payments, I was FREE!

And then I made a casual comment about how maybe we ought to spruce up the place since we had it paid for.

Cody Sossamon (cody@gaffneyledger.com) is publisher of The Gaffney Ledger.

THEIR VIEW

Something we need to change

The proposal before the House ... to let the governor appoint several of the state's constitutional officers would not give Mark Sanford any additional power, because he would be out of office before any changes are made.

It would not take any power away from the Legislature, even indirectly. ...

The legislation would authorize a series of constitutional referendums, asking voters whether they want to let the governor appoint the director of the state Education, Agriculture and military departments and to let gubernatorial candidates pick their running mates, as presidential candidates do, rather than having the governor and lieutenant governor run independently. ...

If voters approve all those questions, they still would elect the governor, attorney general, treasurer and comptroller general. We'd prefer to see at least one of the financial officers appointed as well, but House leaders aren't ready to fight that fight. ...

Letting the governor put his team in place won't magically transform our state. But here's what we keep coming back to: Despite all we have going for us, our state remains far behind the rest of the country on measure after measure. There are a handful of things that we do very differently from the rest of the country — things that experts inside our state have said for decades make it difficult for us to run our government as well as we could. This is one of those things. And we need to change it.

The (Columbia) State