NEWS& REPORTER

Our View

Why a tax hike for roads won't fix your roads

By HANNAH HILL

We're hearing a lot of scary claims from the Department of Transportation and from legislative leaders: we have the highest rate of road fatalities in the nation, it will take billions to climb out of the hole our infrastructure system is stuck in, we have to pass some pretty significant tax hikes in order to truly address problems, and so on.

What are they not telling us? A lot, actually.

For instance, only last year the General Assembly passed a \$2 billion bond bill specifically to raise revenue for infrastructure. Surely that money went to fix repaving roads, right? Wrong. Three-fourths of the revenue raised by that bill was slated by the DOT during last year's debates for interstate widening.

But it gets worse. That bill didn't actually spend \$2 billion. Instead, it took an existing revenue stream (\$200 million) and sent it to the unaccountable State Transportation Infrastructure Bank for bonding purposes. So instead of fixing potholes and repaving roads, lawmakers authorized a huge amount of new debt through the legislatively-controlled Infrastructure Bank. Was paving mentioned at all in that plan? Only as an afterthought.

Let's put this in perspective. If this year's House road funding plan passes, DOT plans to spend roughly \$300 million of the new revenue on paving. That amount would (according to information from DOT) make a huge difference in the condition of our roads. So if fixing the roads were the primary concern, why didn't lawmakers last year simply send that annual \$200 million to DOT for paving rather than to the Infrastructure Bank for debt-funded interstate widening? That would have actually funded road repair and maintenance, no tax increase required.

This is a recurring theme. Of the infrastructure revenue increases passed since 2013, the majority of funds have been directed to capital projects rather than maintenance. This is not a funding problem, and it is not the DOT's fault. As Secretary Hall correctly pointed out in a Senate subcommittee meeting, much of this legislation does not give DOT flexibility in spending these funds. Those priorities come straight from the General Assembly.

Even if lawmakers refrain from dictating spending decisions in the legislation itself, Secretary Hall still does not have flexibility to prioritize road spending or even to follow plans proposed to the legislature. The DOT commission has final say on where and when road money is spent. Who controls the commission? Legislative leaders.

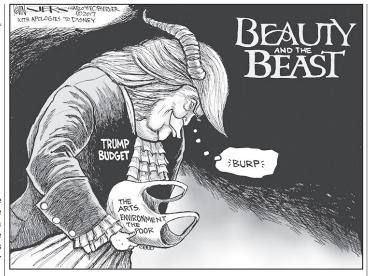
Perhaps that is why DOT's current plans dedicate only half of any new road funding to fixing potholes. If this is a matter of life and death as lawmakers are insisting, why not place a freeze on everything but maintenance and spend all the money on making the

And the cherry on top? In a new bond bill the House Ways and Means Committee is rolling out, the DOT is asking for over \$43 million - not to fix roads, but to renovate rest areas. Priorities

All of these things point to one conclusion: the road money we currently have is being misappropriated by lawmakers whose priorities are not fixing the roads. The current infrastructure system is deliberately insulated from taxpayer influence and controlled by legislators who are unwilling to give up power. And what is their solution for crumbling roads? Taking more of their constituents' money to perpetuate the current

If South Carolina's lawmakers think our roads need improvement, they should first ask why the existing stem isn't working and isn't accountable to citizen Only when they make it accountable should they even talk about taking more money from taxpayers

Hannah Hill is a policy analyst at the South Carolina Policy Council.



Why I support Gorsuch for SCOTUS

ast month, I had the oleasure of meeting Judge Gorsuch in my office. He was genuine, knowledgeable, and made it clear that he would exercise judiciary independence when interpreting the law. After our conversation, I walked away convinced that he has the right temperament to fill the ninth seat of the highest court in our nation.

During his opening statement at his confirmation hearing on Monday, Judge Neil Gorsuch said, My decisions have never reflected a judgment about the people before me, only about the law, facts, issue in each particular case. A good judge can promise no more than that, and a good judge should guarantee no less." This resonated with me. The statement alone exposes his commitment to be a fair defender of the rule of law. He understands the importance of our government's separation of powers and I know will enforce those same standards when confirmed.

A graduate of Columbia University, Harvard Law School, and Oxford University, Judge Gorsuch has a decade of experience at the Tenth Circuit. He is known for being a "textualist" and has received the highest ranking from the American Bar Association –

ʻunanimously well-qualified." His record on the

bench is even more impressive. He has participated in about 2,700 cases, and has only been overruled once. It is hard to argue against factual evidence that shows Judge Gorsuch will work on behalf of the American

However, despite his

phenome nal record and unani mously confirmed by the Guest

Senate Editorial in 2006 Senator Tenth Tim Scott

U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, Senate Democrats are doing everything within their power to attempt to block his nomination. In fact, President Trump picked Judge Gorsuch because he is considered to be mainstream and will bring a fair and impartial perspective to the court.

After the passing of the great Justice Antonin Scalia, we naturally asked ourselves the question: Who is qualified enough to follow and continue his legacy of upholding the Constitution as it was written and defending our

country's principles?

Judge Gorsuch, who says Justice Scalia was a "lion of the law" and a

mentor to him, is the right man to fill such an important seat. Gorsuch once said to "mark [him] down too as a believer that the traditional account of the judicial role Justice Scalia defended will endure." And I believe he will do iust that - interpret the law as it was written.

Since nominated, we have seen liberals, independents, conservatives and folks from different backgrounds come out in strong support of Judge Gorsuch, because he has proven that he is a judge committed to all people. He is someone who can help bring back faith in the court and law

Neil Gorsuch deserves the 60 votes needed to be $\,$ confirmed, and at a time when our country is experiencing some uneasiness concerns here in Washington, we should all agree that Judge Gorsuch is a brilliant judge, who will do exceptionally well as Justice Scalia's successor. Judge Gorsuch is a balanced jurist who under stands the importance of an independent judiciary, and I respect him greatly.

I trust that he will

interpret the Constitution as it was intended by our founding fathers. I have the deep belief that Judge Gorsuch will make the best decisions for our country. I am excited about his nomination and look forward to voting to confirm him as our next Supreme Court justice.

Copydog

Do you ever give any thought to where com mon, everyday phrases come from? Some of them, just taken on their literal meaning, don't make any sense. Why is "break a leg' considered a good luck wish?

"Hey pal, I sincerely hope you fracture your femur," is basically what you are saying. Or when someone says they have to "bite the bullet." We mean it as "I had to make a tough decision and go with it" but literally it means you're chomping down on a lead projec

probably breaking your teeth. I mention this the term "copycat." I have no clue who coined the

term or

why it



Travis

Jenkins

means what it means, but I don't think it's accurate. In my recent experience, copydog would be much more appropriate

Tucker the Wonder Dog has now been living in the Jenkins household for almost four years. He's a very large, very sweet, very smart dog that looks like a Muppet, Last July, Tucker got himself an adopted sister when Gracie moved in. He didn't think highly of the new addition for quite a while. If he saw her playing with a little doggie toy, he'd get up, walk over to Gracie and take it from her for no reason other than it was his toy and who was the girl to think she could play with it? They growled and fought a good bit at first...mostly play-fighting I think, but if Tucker tired of dealing with her, he would basically pick her up and toss her aside, or pin her to the floor and just hold her there. He was used to getting all the attention, all the food and all the toys and wasn't keen on sharing anything. They now actually get along and seem to like each other, which has been a very welcome development.

I don't mean this in a bad wav at all, but when we first got Gracie, we felt like maybe she wasn't quite as bright as Tucker. For one thing, she didn't seem to have much selfawareness, constantly walking headfirst into chairs, couches and our legs. She was sweet and cute and it isn't that she wasn't intelligent, but Tucker is really top percentile smart, so maybe she just suffered a little by comparison. It's amazing to watch the way he figures things out. I can take a toy that he's playing with and sit it on top of his crate. He'll stand up on his back two legs, put his front paws on the end of the crate and try to reach the toy. If he can't, he will walk around, use his nose to open the crate door, go inside it, jump upward and knock the toy closer to the edge. Then he'll exit the crate, go back around, stand up again and retrieve it. Even as a puppy when he was being housebroken, he wet on the carpet once when he was kind of getting to the point that he knew he shouldn't do that. My wife saw him do it and went to get a rag and the can of carpet-cleaning spray. When she walked back into the room where he'd done his business, she saw that Tucker had grabbed his little bed and dragged it over the wet spot in an attempt

The Third Industrial Revolution

"Humans must merge with machines or become irrelevant in Al age."

- Elon Musk, Billionaire Entrepreneur - creator of PAYPAL

"When our leaders promise to Make America Great by promoting the THIRD INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION and the Internet of Things – you are being set-up to be backed into a corner where your only choices are: take the chip implant or starve."

– David Beverley Sr. – A guy working three jobs to get by

here are times when I actually wish that I wasn't right. Seriously - I wish I wasn't right. But the truth of the matter is staring me right in the face and I cannot ignore it. I am also compelled to tell everyone that will listen. We cannot change the outcome. We cannot avoid what is coming. But we should know, because it is the truth.

I wrote a while back in outlets published a piece a piece titled "Upgrading the Human Computer" that we will demand our transhuman upgrades. because they will be wildly popular and cool – much like the latest iPhone upgrade or Galaxy Tab is cool.

I didn't mention the part NOT BEING ABLE



Computer Geek David Beverley

EAT if you

don't get the upgrades. I didn't mention that part because it would require a lengthy explanation (I thought) as to how I could come to that conclusion. That explanation would require another column: THIS

It was only two days after this newspaper published my piece on how we will upgrade ourselves, that all of the major news

titled: "Elon Musk: Humans must merge with machines or become irrelevant in AI age" - Elon Musk is a billionaire futurist (he created PAYPAL) who believes, as many other technology and scientific leaders do, that we will be merged with technology in a permanent fashion; more permanent than our current. inability to put down or look away from our iPhones or Tablets. "Over time we will see a closer merger of biological intelligence and digital intelligence" and he added, "It's mostly about the bandwidth, the speed of the connection between your brain and the digital version of yourself, particularly output." What he means by this is that the only hindrance to getting our selves PERMANENTLY PLUGGED IN - is that we cannot take in the information fast enough and we can't (currently)

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See JENKINS, Page 5-A

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JENKINS

Continued from Page 4-A

to hide it. Then he casually walked away like nothing had happened.

"Nothing to see here Mommy," he seemed to be

saying.

I think, though, that Gracie had just not been trained much and hadn't interacted with other dogs very much before we got her. She is starting to show off a lot of smarts and I think it's come from watch-

ing and copying Tucker. For starters, Tucker is an expert at begging for food. If you are eating anything, it doesn't matter what. Tucker will sit as close to you as he can and just stare at you with his big brown eyes. Who can say no to that big, furry Muppet? Well, I can, but some others can't...no need to name names here. Gracie, who is a little piggy when it comes to food, used to try to jump on you and take food straight off your plate. That never got her much of anything except stern reprimands. Now, though, she's more subtle She'll try to ambush your plate if you aren't looking. but she's getting to where she more often sits near you and stares at you. She, like Tucker has also realized that it's a waste of time to sit and stare at me, so she focuses on Ashley and any visitor who might be eating in our house.

Gracie was only kind of house-trained when we got her and seemed a little hardheaded about learning the proper way to do her business. Sometimes she would go to the back door and do her thing right there. Sometimes when she was let out, instead of going to the back yard, which is sort of a big doggie bathroom, she'd take a step or two onto the deck and relieve herself there. Now, though, following her big brother's lead, she's learned to go to the back door when she has to use the bathroom, quickly goes into the vard, leaves her deposit, then quickly comes back to the door and taps it with her paw to be let back

Even once she learned the finer points of bathroom etiquette, Gracie didn't go about doing it properly. When she had to poop, she'd just stand there and do it, meaning it got on her hind end and sometimes her back legs. I had no idea how to go about teaching her to hunch over a little bit, but she recently, out of nowhere, started doing so, I guess by watching Tucker. When I take them for walks, she'd often end the digestive cycle in people's yards or in the middle of the road. Tucker had learned, over time, to go in a little strip near a cow pasture that is approved for doggie business. Now she does the

Gracie has even adopted some of Tucker's temperasitting in the floor is perfectly acceptable behavior and that constant moving, yelping and flitting around isn't necessary. She formerly did not cry or whine to get her way, but now she does. She's even copied the way Tucker sits, with one front leg outstretched and the other semi-folded and tucked up. I guess dogs are a lot like people in that they need someone older to teach them and show them

the right way to do things. It should also be noted that Tucker is as devoted to my wife as anyone or anything I've ever seen. He follows her around, he always wants to be near her, he cries and carries on if she's on the other side of a shut door from him and so on. Gracie seemed to take more of a liking to me initially, but following Tucker's lead, she's at least as interested in and attentive to Ashley as she is me, maybe more so. Someone would rather be around my wife than me? Wow. Those are two really smart dogs.

BEVERLEY

Continued from Page 4-A

feed out information from our brains fast enough to interface with AI (Artificial Intelligence/ Intellect) – There is also a concern about the need for humans to "evolve" so that we can interface ourselves via a "new layer of a

You may think to yourself, "No need to worry humans have not and do not evolve – we don't believe in evolution." That may be well and good but the scientists and engineers who are intent on making these technologies work - DO BELIEVE IN HUMAN EVOLUTION. And we have now come to a point where our knowledge enables us to DIRECT OUR EVOLUTION. That directed evolution will be in the form of DNA modifications (Triple Helix and CRISPR - genetic modifications) and BCI – the Brain Computer Interface that has been in use for years. (President Obama announced a couple of years ago the plans to add additional funding for BCI - in an effort to help PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) sufferers get relief by inserting a 'chip" into the brain and using that chip to turn off negative emotions and feelings that might otherwise overwhelm an individual. At first blush – that probably sounds like a GREAT idea.

But pause and consider for a moment, the kinds of things that could go wrong unintentionally and otherwise. If such a device is to be used to control emotions and "bad thoughts" how is it that it cannot cause such things to increase? OH! That would never happen... but, as

usual, I digress We were supposed to be talking about how and why you might not eat, without getting a transhuman upgrade. More and more – private companies and government institutions are moving to using AI in their daily operations. AI is used in decision making and for controlling manufacturing processes. You may have seen the recent H&R Block commercials proudly proclaiming how they

are now using IBM's WATSON (an Artificial Intelligence technology) to do your taxes? Did you also know that the U.S. Military is using AI to make targeting decisions instead of regular 'ol humans? Here's a piece on that called "Artificial Intelligence giving weapons greater autonomy" https://defensesystems.com/ articles/2017/02/09/chinait. aspx - according to DARPA - China and Russia are creating weapons that are autonomous - meaning – that they pick who they will kill or destroy without human intervention! McDonald's is promising to "make ordering fun" by moving to a "self-serve" industry: http://kioskindustry.org/ mcdonalds-makes-ordering-fun/ --- The delivery company DHL – is migrating to using automated fork-

ply chain will be automated by AI (We have driverless $cars\ now-remember?)$ http://fleetowner.com/fleetmanagement/dhl-artificialintelligence-will-remold-logistics-world -SO-In the past few sentences we have eliminated jobs in the tax services industry, military, fast food and supply chain industries all by leveraging the much faster and efficient ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE technologies. And don't think that other jobs will be created to repair the newer AI

lifts and much of its sup-

related technologies. AI is being used to repair AND CREATE the newer technologies. Computers are making computers. Seriously. I heard one engineer state that not even the computer engineers understand how the latest chips work because they were all made by an AI digital algorithm. It seems that we cannot keep up with the technological advances being created by AI – as the old adage goes: If you can't beat 'em - join 'em. It seems that the only way to remain competitive in the work-force is to be digitally enhanced - there fore giving you the edge over the competition which is a world-wide, interconnected computer that has instant access to all knowledge. Unless you

industrial revolution and "plug-in" – vou won't eat.

Important note:

While I was drafting this column, a piece was published on a BAYLOR SCHOOL OF MEDICINE website titled; "Of Man and Machine: The Evolution of Transhumanism" - https:// blogs.bcm.edu/2017/03/22/

transhumanism/ And another piece on the Huffington Post by Zoltan Itsvan (ves - that is really his name)

man-machine-evolution-

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/zoltan-istvan/cantranshumanismovercom b 7433108.html

I can imagine that many of you are thinking that I copped my information from one of the new TV series like "HUMANS" (on AMC) or "West World." It's just way, too

over-the-top. Learn more by checking out my YOUTUBE channel: www.youtube.com/jesusfreakcg - I welcome emailed comments at jesusfreakcomputergeek@





News in Brief

Farm and Food Coalition expo

The Catawba Farm & Food Coalition will host a free expo from 10 a.m. to noon Wednesday, April 12, at the Market Building, 116 Columbia St., Chester. Farmers will learn from and network with service providers (Clemson Extension, FSA, NRCS, Soil and Water

Conservation, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, AgSouth, S.C. Farm Bureau and more) located in the Catawba Region. Register online at www.catawbafarmandfood.org/workshops send an e-mail to catawbafresh@gmail.com with your name, number attending and phone number.

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6 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

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