

reconnaissance plane collided, and when the SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) infection spread inside China, write Bates Gill and

Martin Kleiber of the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Diplomats now believe, they say, that the Chinese Ministry of Foreign

Affairs was simply not informed of the test, raising questions about China's reliability as a global partner in more fields than just space.

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

A Low-Wage Dead End

THE SOURCE: "Economic Development and Globalization in South Carolina" by Lacy K. Ford Jr. and R. Phillip Stone, in *Southern Cultures*, Spring 2007.

FEW SOUTHERN STATES WERE more successful in the economic development derby of the 20th century than South Carolina. Its per capita income rose almost fivefold between 1950 and 1980. Its population increased by half. And its economy underwent the most remarkable growth since the cotton boom of the early 19th century, as officials pursued a low-wage, low-tax policy that lured heavy industry to the nonunion state. But now the jig may be up, write historians Lacy K. Ford Jr. of the University of South Carolina and R. Phillip Stone of Wofford College, Spartanburg, South Carolina. The state's "staggering" educational shortcomings leave it straining to compete in a knowledge-based world economy.

South Carolina's great leap forward ended more than 25 years ago, and relentless tax cutting, government shrinkage, and industry courting ever since have served only to stabilize its position as one of the 10 or 11 poorest states. The state dodged the dot-com economic meltdown only because it had never par-

ticipated in the dot-com boom. "Smokestack chasing" stopped working long ago. "Neither labor costs nor overall business expenses are lower in South Carolina than in Mexico or China," Ford and Stone write.

For a while many officials preached protectionism, but when foreign-owned BMW located its roadster assembly plant in the state in 1992, politicians could no longer easily rail about imports and the perils of foreign competition, according to the authors. The Palmetto State relies on foreign investment capital, and by 2004 China was the state's sixth-largest foreign customer.

Two recent studies have fingered education as the weak link in South Carolina's development. The state has the largest share of urban adults without a high school diploma and ranks near the bottom nationally in the percentage of all adults who have finished high school. Only about one in five adults has a bachelor's degree or higher. Per pupil spending for public elementary and secondary education in the 2004–05 academic year was \$7,555, compared with a national average of \$8,701—and \$14,119 in New York. The state lacks skilled workers and has no top-tier research university. It also lags in two other

areas thought critical to economic growth: patents and venture capital funding. South Carolina companies, universities, and individuals were granted only 3.6 patents per 10,000 workers in 2001, half the national rate. Available venture capital stood at \$3 per worker in 2002, compared with \$155 per worker nationally.

South Carolina, the authors conclude, must abandon the "easy political posturing of seeing the answer to all problems in irresponsible tax cuts and the savaging of a public sector that creates the bulk of the state's human capital." It must invest "heavily and patiently" in education so that, instead of slipping into a new era of stagnation and decline, its residents can attain "an American standard of living."

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

Presidential Paralysis

THE SOURCE: "Personal Tragedy and Presidential Performance: Calvin Coolidge as Legislative Leader" by Robert E. Gilbert, in *Congress and the Presidency*, Autumn 2006.

SCHOLARS NOW KNOW THAT King George III, the monarch who lost America, was profoundly impaired toward the end of his reign by a disease that caused progressive insanity. Robert E. Gilbert, a political scientist at Northeastern University, argues that more than a century later America was led by a president

who was also afflicted by a misunderstood and untreated mental condition that destroyed his authority and undermined his judgment. Calvin Coolidge, rated by historians as among the worst presidents in history, strode boldly into the White House in 1923 only to lose his young son 11 months later and plunge into clinical depression.

Following President Warren G. Harding's sudden death of a heart attack, vice president Coolidge proceeded confidently to dominate the capital. He met almost daily with members of Congress, entertained them at breakfast and on the presidential yacht, corresponded extensively with influential government leaders, and upon the death of the wife of an important farm bloc leader, invited the senator to live at the White House for a while.

In his first State of the Union message, which was delivered in person at the Capitol and was the first such address to be broadcast on radio, Coolidge made 44 requests, including the establishment of a world court, creation of a cabinet-level department of health and welfare, tax cuts,

the reopening of intercoastal waterways, and a constitutional amendment to limit child labor. Many of these proposals were enacted. The redoubtable Senator Henry Cabot Lodge (R.-Mass.) praised Coolidge for the ratification of 32 treaties—"no such record . . . has ever been made by any administration." The former governor of Lodge's home state was elected to the presidency in his own right with 54 percent of the vote in 1924, and brought in 25 more Republican members of Congress on his coattails.

In the midst of that campaign, however, Coolidge endured a personal tragedy that would change his life. On June 30, Coolidge's two sons played a game of tennis on the White House court. Sixteen-year-old Calvin Jr. developed a blister on his foot that became infected, and, in that era before antibiotics, he was dead within a week. Coolidge became hysterical at his son's deathbed. He broke down sobbing when the body was removed from the White House, began sleeping 15 hours a day, and seemed to be on the verge of collapse. His secretary described him as "mentally ill," and

his surviving son said, "My father was never the same again." Coolidge had already lost his 39-year-old mother to tuberculosis when he was 12, and his only sibling, Abbie, to appendicitis when she was 14.

After Calvin Coolidge Jr.'s death, the president lost interest in working with Congress for the remainder of his presidency. He was indifferent to enemies and friends, Gilbert writes. When allies brought up his cherished world court proposal from his first State of the Union address, he was mute. When a congressman visited him at the summer White House, Coolidge went off fishing and left him waiting. The president now sent up vague and tentative State of the Union addresses to be read by a clerk. His few proposals were often holdovers, or trivialities—such as providing a location for a statue commemorating the victims of the explosion on the battleship *Maine*. Congress considered Coolidge easy to ignore and safe to challenge. There was little disappointment when "Silent Cal" declared, with characteristic brevity, "I do not choose to run for president in 1928."

SOCIETY

Let Them Sue

THE SOURCE: "Doctors and Juries" by Philip G. Peters Jr., in *Michigan Law Review*, May 2007.

DESPITE DOCTORS' LOUD COMPLAINTS about medical malpractice suits, there is little evidence that

juries are awarding unjustified bonanzas to lawsuit-happy patients. If anything, jurors have a slight bias in favor of doctors, even when they are negligent, writes University of Missouri, Columbia, law professor Philip G. Peters Jr.

Nevertheless, Congress is again considering legislation to experiment with "health courts" staffed by judges with health expertise and intended to eliminate irrational and unjust verdicts. Such verdicts are thought to contribute to the high cost of medical care by forcing doctors to pay expensive malpractice insurance premiums and to practice defensive medicine by ordering extra tests and procedures to protect themselves in the