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TO: Governor Haley  
FROM: Cathy Simmons

SUBJECT: CLOSING OF RURAL SCHOOLS IN PICKENS COUNTY

Dear Governor Haley,

This is my first time in doing this, but I felt I had to write you concerning the closing of the rural schools in Pickens County. Anything I can possibly do to help prevent the closing of these schools is worth it. Our community is devastated over this decision.

I am 64 years old, a mother, and grandmother, who attended A.R. Lewis Elementary school. My children and two of my grandchildren also have attended there. My youngest granddaughter is now in second grade there.

I am so upset at the school board's decision to close both A.R. Lewis and Holly Springs. These are both wonderful schools, and I believe that children this age need that small class room exposure.

So many people here in our community were willing to do whatever it took to keep the schools open, including a tax increase. The board refused to listen to any kind of recommendations, and there were many good ideas presented. They just refused to listen.

My question is this. This is supposed to be a democratic nation, but 4 out of the 6 board members voted to close the schools, and it's done? How can 4 people have that kind of authority to make such a drastic decision that effects so many people is beyond me. Just doesn't seem right.

Also, these same people went against the majority and voted to borrow millions of dollars to build new schools, and do renovations, and now due to those bad decisions, we are in this mess.

A.R. Lewis was remodeled only a few years ago, and my understanding is, we will be making payments on that until 2032, BUT it will be a vacant building that we are making payments on. It is such a beautiful school.

I would really appreciate you checking in to what is happening here if you are not aware already, and if there is anything you can do to help prevent the closing of these schools, it would be such a blessing to our children and community.

Thank you for your time,

Cathy Simmons  
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