

BERT & PHYLLIS *Wills*

June 29, 2015

To: Gov. Nikki R. Haley
Office of the Governor
1205 Pendleton Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

From: Bert Williams
Re: The removal of the old confederate flag

I want to first thank you for taking the time to accept and read my letter. There is no reason that you will be familiar with my name. I have no fame attached to it, but I hope this letter will have some meaning to you.

You did a press conference last week responding to the issue concerning the sustained flying of the confederate flag at the State House. My response was one of amazement and wonder. And I must say it made me view you in a completely different light. When you took office I was concerned about what changes you might bring that could have devastating impact on people of color, and to be honest those who are underemployed who have skills and are educated. Would these groups survive some of the things you might implement that the Republican Party is wanting? I was a little nervous.

However, it was your appeal to take down the confederate flag and asking for action that has turned my undivided attention and support. I want to thank you for speaking on that front. It is a visual reminder of threats of possible hanging and death. I grew up during the civil rights movement as a teen and experienced the harshness of the racist attitudes that prevailed in those times. We have come quite a ways from those days, but obvious not far enough. What I experienced wasn't nearly as vicious as that of the south. I grew up in the north on Long Island in New York. In New York there were those who believed in separation; it could be conveniently well hidden. We all new it was there.

My question to you is why is a war flag flying over the state as a representative of the state? This flag was used on the battlefield and in any war, from what I'm told, the losing side has no right to fly that flag. If we are a united front this flag is inappropriate. It represented states that were for slavery, and it still banners the spirit of racism. The Civil War of the south was a war rebelling against the will of the government to free men who were slaves. A people viewed as less than men and with no rights as a citizen. The original State flag is designed with 2 red-stripped bars divided by a white bar, a blue field to its left with 7 white stars forming a circle. What would the world think if the

Germans still flew their war flag? I think there would be repercussions from that decision.

You stated at one of the funeral services "you would make this right". I'm not sure what you had in mind, but I believe their lives are marked and yoked to an end of an era. It is now time to change the south and their connection to this flag. The south is now new.

I can see and I believe Governor Nikki that the gavel of justice is in your hand. I also see and believe that when you stand you are going to turn around and see a sea of people from every level of life: legislators, famous people and everyday laymen standing with you. I encourage you Gov. Nikki to stand on the side of God who has ordained us all to live as free men and women. This is our birthright. Please, let the flag come down.

Father, I pray that you give Governor Nikki the power and the wisdom to overcome every device she may face; the powers that be who would wish this flag to remain as an object of threat, intimidation and deceit of citizen's freedom. Father we thank you.

In God We Trust,

Bert Williams