

21 March 2016

The Honorable Nikki R. Haley, Governor
Office of the Governor
1205 Pendleton Street
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Governor Haley,

Thank you so much for your efforts on combating the issue of domestic violence in South Carolina, and continuing to support the \$2.9 million budget allocation for domestic violence prosecutors.

Please see the attached letter that I have sent to the South Carolina House of Representatives and Senate.

Thank you for all you do for our great state.

Sincerely,



Alicia Mullen Gregory
35 Broughton Road
Charleston, SC 29407

21 March 2016

The Honorable Hugh K. Leatherman, Sr.
South Carolina Senate
Post Office Box 142
Columbia, SC 29202

Dear Senator Leatherman,

A tragic, profound and violent reality persists in our great state. South Carolina's status as the nation's record holder for rate of death of women at the hands of violent domestic partners is a crisis that demands your immediate attention.

Domestic violence impacts women, children and families across all socioeconomic groups. Women and children bear the brunt of this heinous violence. 80% of male batterers do not batter other adults, solely their domestic partners. Evidence based research strongly indicates that high consequences in the criminal justice system strongly influence a batterer's choice to continue the violent behavior.

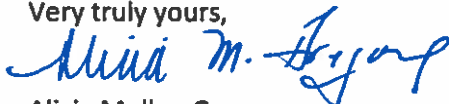
Criminal law by definition describes behavior prohibited by the government. If an individual commits a prohibited behavior, the individual risks prosecution and legal punishment. South Carolina law prohibits the violent behaviors associated with domestic violence. We must ask ourselves a tough question. Has the state's policy of using police officers rather than trained legal professionals established a de facto scenario in which SC law is not adequately enforced?

Governor Haley reached the conclusion that prosecutorial staff must be utilized if our court system is to reverse South Carolina's deadly domestic violence record. Her policy affirms the essential role of front line, trained prosecutors to enforce South Carolina law to the fullest and strongest extent. She recognizes South Carolina's duty to shield women, children and families from the brutal effects of domestic violence. Her budgetary allocation of \$2.9 million for the hiring of 39 domestic violence prosecutors statewide is to be commended. Surely \$2.9 million could be identified in a budget that easily exceeds \$6 billion.

The next question we must ask ourselves is why our legislature reached the opposite conclusion. It is a troubling and unsettling question. This legislature's failure to fund prosecutorial staff sends a clear message that domestic violence victims are undeserving of the full legal protections of the criminal justice system. It demonstrates paternalistic, neglectful and antiquated attitudes that have no place in 21st century South Carolina. Additionally, it has not escaped our notice that the treasury's coffers are replete with an additional \$1.6 billion windfall of new revenue and unspent cash.

Let me remind you of your responsibility to govern and represent all South Carolinians. This by definition includes the women and children of our great state. There are woefully few women to represent our interests in the state government. While the ladies of our state attend to the rearing of SC's children and the economic realities of our households, you gentlemen in the legislature must attend to this issue. Your moral and ethical duty demands that you rectify this dangerous reality. Allocate funds for the hiring of prosecutorial staff to handle all domestic violence cases. Send a loud and clear message that the violent behaviors associated with domestic violence have no place in our great state and will be prosecuted swiftly and forcefully.

Very truly yours,



Alicia Mullen Gregory
35 Broughton Road
Charleston, SC 29407

CC: South Carolina Senators and House of Representatives
Governor Nikki Haley