

Simran J. Khosla
31024 Pebble Beach Oval
Westlake, OH 44145
October 12th, 2015

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

Dear Governor Haley,

I am Simran J. Khosla, a senior at Westlake High School, and was assigned a project in which we must contact a government official or special interest group of sorts and speak about something we admire or disdain. Over the summer, I interned at the Cuyahoga County Prosecutors' office, which sparked a political interest in me. Later on, when controversy surrounding the Confederate Flag in the State House hit, I was extremely impressed by the swift, diplomatic action that you and your staff took.

I have a lot of family in South Carolina and frequently visit. Even with my short time being there, I could easily tell that South Carolinians are proud of their heritage and the lives of their ancestors lost. This is not an easy thing to politically navigate around, especially when the matter is tied so close to people's hearts. Also, I am the daughter of Indian immigrants as well. Coming from a similar background, I can only imagine how daunting it would be to tell a bunch of people whose ancestors lost their lives to a war I feel foreign to that their flag is banned. Nevertheless, you faced the issue head on with poise and understanding. You acknowledged the lives lost and culture but kept with progress and evaluated what the flag has come to mean. However, I did not appreciate the multiple references to God in your speech/press release. In order to keep with progress, we should keep with separation of Church and State. I believe it is inappropriate for a secular leader to give a secular speech and reference religion. Consequently, I felt a little uncomfortable. Due to the growing number of religions and diversity in our country, this is becoming a growing issue. I have heard that you are thinking of running for President of the United States in the future and the direction our country is moving towards calls for less and less religion in the government. Subsequently, you may alienate some of your younger voting population. This is because almost a third of millennials consider themselves agnostic, atheist, or of no particular religion. In summation, these are just some thoughts on how you handled that perplexing, delicate situation.

When it comes down to it, judging by how you handled that fragile situation over the summer, I believe I would vote for you for President of the United States in the future. However, I would feel immensely more comfortable with trusting our country with someone who can separate Church and State. This is the most professional, impartial thing to do and would be received well throughout the American public. I would like to thank you for your time and bid you a good day.

Sincerely,
Simran J. Khosla