



State of South Carolina

Office of the Governor

NIKKI R. HALEY
GOVERNOR

1205 PENDLETON STREET
COLUMBIA 29201

November 16, 2011

Mr. Leroy Smith
Interim Director
South Carolina Department of Public Safety
10311 Wilson Boulevard
Blythewood, South Carolina 29016

Mr. Zackary Wise
Chief of Police
South Carolina Bureau of Protective Services
10311 Wilson Boulevard
Blythewood, South Carolina 29016

Dear Director Smith and Chief Wise:

I write to seek your assistance in enforcing the State's laws and policies for use of Statehouse grounds as it relates to the "Occupy Columbia" group, which has been lodging on Statehouse grounds after 6:00 p.m. for the last several weeks. I fully support free speech, robust political debate, and the right to peaceably assemble, but these rights must be exercised within bounds of the law and without an expectation that South Carolina's taxpayers will fund the speech of only a few individuals.

To date, the "Occupy Columbia" group has been ignoring South Carolina law and long-standing policies associated with after-hours gatherings on Statehouse grounds. As you are aware, the Budget and Control Board has long required any individual or organization that wishes to remain at the Statehouse after 6:00 p.m. to receive written permission from the agency. Groups have uniformly followed this content-neutral policy for years. However, no one associated with the "Occupy Columbia" group appears to have even sought such permission, much less received it, yet they have essentially taken to living on Statehouse property.

The "Occupy Columbia" group's decision to ignore the rules governing use of Statehouse property is unfair to South Carolina's taxpayers, who finance the security of the grounds, and all other groups assembling and expressing free speech that do follow these rules. Because the "Occupy Columbia" group has stayed on Statehouse property at all hours, I understand that the Bureau of Protective Services (BPS) has been forced to staff an extra officer to patrol the exterior of the building in the evenings. This additional security comes at a monthly cost of approximately \$17,600, and it is unfair for taxpayers to bear this expense. I understand that your officers have already arrested several individuals associated with this group for various violations. In light of this, as well as of media reports of violence that have been occurring recently at similar "Occupy" gatherings around the country, it is not an option to reduce on-site security at this point.

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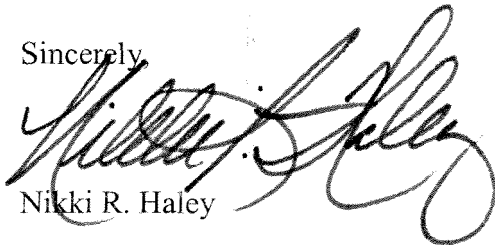
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My office has also been notified by BPS that individuals within the "Occupy Columbia" group have been damaging the grounds, including trampling flower beds and shrubbery, bringing in large amounts of living amenities that have damaged the grass, and using the Statehouse grounds as a toilet. I have been told of a myriad of additional complaints about how individuals within this group have blocked sidewalks and made it difficult for the visiting public to navigate around Statehouse property. Just as with security, South Carolina's taxpayers pay for maintenance of Statehouse grounds. It is wholly unfair for taxpayers to bear expenses associated with repairing damage done by the "Occupy Columbia" group.

In short, the individuals associated with the "Occupy Columbia" group have co-opted Statehouse grounds for camping and lodging, at taxpayer expense, without regard for the rules governing the property's after-hours use and without regard for the dignity and maintenance of the property.

Therefore, I seek your assistance in removing any individual associated with the "Occupy Columbia" group, as well as his or her belongings, who remains on Statehouse grounds after 6:00 p.m. without written authorization from the Budget and Control Board. While I welcome the expression of all points of view, here, at the Statehouse, South Carolina's laws and policies require such expression to be reasonably limited to normal business hours and without destruction of or damage to Statehouse grounds.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nikki R. Haley", written over a horizontal line.

Nikki R. Haley

NRH/tc/sp