



State of South Carolina Office of the Governor

NIKKI R. HALEY
GOVERNOR

1205 PENDLETON STREET
COLUMBIA 29201

January 5, 2016

Mr. James R. York Jr.
2531 Kingston Drive
Florence, South Carolina 29505-6424

Dear Mr. York,

Thank you for taking the time to contact us. These have been very difficult times for South Carolina, but our hearts and minds remain fixed on the nine families and the communities shaken by this tragedy. Their grace and strength set a powerful example for us all.

Even in the midst of our grief, South Carolina set about the process of healing – not by talking about issues that divide us – but by hugging our neighbors, holding vigils, honoring those we lost, and falling to our knees in prayer. We came together as a state, as a unified people, to remember those we lost and to begin this healing process.

We've also come together in acknowledging that certain symbols and events of our past resonate differently among us. For some, the Confederate flag represents a history of their ancestry and heritage. For others, the flag is a deeply painful reminder of a brutally oppressive past.

Inspired by the victims' families and the re-opening of Emanuel A.M.E. Church, I felt compelled to make a statement about moving the flag from the Statehouse grounds, and on July 10, 2015, after the General Assembly overwhelmingly passed and I signed into law Senate Bill 897, the South Carolina Infantry Battle Flag of the Confederate States of America was respectfully removed from the Statehouse grounds to a permanent place in the Confederate Relic Room.

This was a moment in which we can say that the flag, while an integral part of our past, does not represent the future of our great state, and that by removing a symbol that divides us, we can move forward in harmony and set our eyes on the great promise of a united South Carolina. God bless.

My very best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nikki".

Nikki R. Haley

NRH/ahp

A handwritten note in black ink that says "Thank you." with a period at the end.