

February 8, 2015
5 Blackburg Ct.
Simpsonville, SC 29681

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

Dear Governor Haley,

My name is Meagan L. Holland, I am currently a senior at James L. Mann High School, and my family and I have fostered six children since 2010. My concern is that too many children's needs are being neglected due to the dysfunction of the South Carolina Department of Social Services.

The very first child we fostered, a two year old boy, was with us for over a year, taken away, and given to his aunt due to the rights of direct family. However, right when he was sent to Texas to live with his aunt, he was turned away because his aunt no longer wanted him. Every day, other children are put in the same situation, waiting to be wanted. As of June 2015, there were nearly 1,300 children waiting to be adopted and over the past year, there has been a 32 percent increase in children entering the foster care system.

As a citizen of South Carolina and a child of two actively-voting parents, I am concerned that the continuous overlooking of the problems of our Department of Social Services is depriving foster children of all ages the right to belong to a family and sleep at night feeling safe, which I am sure is a feeling you and your children Rena and Nalin enjoy having.

Please explain to me what the State government is doing to protect the hundreds of children awaiting adoption and to fix South Carolina's Department of Social Services. Your very own press secretary stated in January 2015 that you were "actively pursuing a new direction" for DSS. If that is the case, why haven't the hard-working people of South Carolina seen an increase in the number of children placed permanently with loving families?

As a young adult who will be eligible to vote in the next South Carolina Governor election, these concerns involve more than my family and I. The future of South Carolina's DSS and the children in foster care are at risk if circumstances do not improve. Your actions will help determine the future of children's lives all over our country. My future votes, as well as many other passionate foster care advocates' votes, may well hang in the balance.

I will look forward to and await your response.

Respectfully yours,

Meagan L. Holland