

From: Office of the Governor Site Support
Sent: 2/11/2015 7:40:29 PM
To: Haley, Nikki
Cc:
Subject: My story of domestic issues

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Message:

Hello Governor Haley,

I was just on Dorothea Benton Frank's Facebook page where she has an article about some guy who bit a lady's nose. She was saying this article needs to be on your desk. Well maybe. But seeing this touched me in a really bad way.

Around 20 years ago I decided that I had enough of my husband's "mouth" and decided to leave him. He had also hit me a few times during our marriage. But somehow I managed to not have a clue that this was domestic abuse / mental abuse. It was not until I finally called my Mom and asked if I could come back home that I realized what I was dealing with might be serious. My parents came over on a Sunday afternoon and my father stood close and watching while I packed my daughter's and my things in my car. My husband was a perfect gentleman and even helped me. Over the next few months, I had death threats and was followed by my husband and some strange men my father in law had to follow me. At the first sign of trouble, my brother in law put a 357 mg in my dash so that I could travel back and forth to work safely. I was driving from Pumpkintown to Travelers Rest for my job. As the threats grew, family members drove from Pickens to TR to follow me home. My father was a wonderful Christian man. He was a country man who fought in WWII. Thank the Lord for my father, brother, and brother in law as well as other family members who protected me.

I'm so sorry this was long. But I did leave out a lot to keep it as short as it is. Even though I haven't spoken about this to anyone other than family members, I felt like I should tell you about it. Reason #1 is that there are so many women who do NOT have family in their lives as I did who are able or willing to protect them. My father had a great influence on me as a child. He taught me to defend myself. So I had a little more leverage than some other women do. The #2 reason I'm writing is that I do understand why women don't realize what is being done to them is wrong. I feel like I have a good head about myself. But I was so naive about admitting to myself that I was in an abusive relationship. Of course it didn't help for my Mom to keep saying, "Oh no! What will the church people think?"

That leads me to reason #3 for finally speaking up. We do need laws that will help protect the women of SC. But we also need education about domestic abuse. On one occasion of having my life threatened, I called the Greenville county desk clerk. I explained that a lady contacted me because she was talking to her best friend on the phone while my "then" husband was at her home talking to her friend's husband. She overheard my husband and her friend's husband discussing where I would be after leaving my job. They were planning to follow me and shoot me. I didn't believe this lady until she became frantic. I told her she should contact my attorney (Redmond Coyle of Pickens SC, he was later shot from behind by a husband of another female

who he was helping divorce an abusive spouse). The lady did contact him as well as the sheriff's office. At this point the desk clerk at the Greenville county law enforcement center told me to get a gun & learn how to use it. I told him I did have one & knew how to use it. But did I really need to? He explained that the police would do all they could to protect me, but they couldn't be with me 24 hours a day. He also discussed gun safety and where it could be stowed in my vehicle and remain legal.

Since then, I was a single Mom for years. Then I married a wonderful man. I have a job in Customer service at Michelin. Life is great for me now. But how many women out there have the guts and or family to back her up. What can we do to make it better for other SC ladies going through the horrors of domestic abuse? It's not just the lower class women who deal with this.

Well I do feel better after opening up about this!

Thanks!!!

Ann Morris Richards

PS: I'm a Southern Conservative