

March 5, 2016

Dear Governor Haley,

I am writing to you to address a serious matter I am hoping you can help me out on, or even direct me in the right direction. I know this letter is going to be lengthy in detail but I feel I have to state how I got to where I am now.

First let me introduce myself. My name is Alicia Schmitz and I am a new resident of Mauldin South Carolina from New Jersey now for almost four months. I moved here with my 17 year old daughter and my boyfriend. When we were living in NJ my husband of 15 years walked out on our daughter and me, being the sole provider. I had disability as did my daughter and she was able to get SSI. We didn't even make enough money for rent without my husband's income. I had to go down to medicade and Social Security numerous times. I was very lucky to have a landlord who understood the circumstances and waited for payment which the state of NJ was able to pick up the back pay. Even though my husband went hiding I found him. He ignored every judge order. He thought he was safe in hiding since he moved hours away to North Carolina. In over a year finally he or should I say the state started taking pay out of his salary because I did the research and found where he was working. The judge said even though I was entitled to so much more he can't make him pay what he doesn't have. The divorce judge actually said, I wish I can print the money for you but I can't. So we agreed in the divorce agreement that he would pay \$200.00 week alimony and our daughter wouldn't get child support because she was getting SSI which was a wash. It also stated that if for any reason it stops due to no fault of our own it would be picked up again. Well over the course of the divorce and when it was over I met a man named Vincent LaGreca who became an important part of our life. He didn't live with me but we were a couple. We decided as a unit meaning myself, daughter and him that we needed a serious change. He too was coming out of a long time marriage as well. My daughter has been through so much in her life she deserved it.(She has been through sexual abuse at the age of 4, then another in 5th grade, we

lost everything in a house fire, we were homeless living in different places for three months. I guess it was too much for my husband to take because three months later he walked out. To this day he may text her once every three months. It was right before her 8th grade graduation three months prior. She was all dressed so pretty to go, family and all there but because he never called her she cried and never made it out of the house to go. She also was teased, bullied, cyber bullied and used by every friend she ever had or made. She became suicidal. Her anxiety would start like clockwork every Sunday night and be very physical. She would start with the bad stomach aches, vomiting, headaches and so forth. Even though she had a disability lawyer in NJ we were in front of the judge constantly, even though she was claimed disabled because the school called it truancy even with doctor notes every time. It was a feeling like I was so powerless to take away her pain. I never knew what was going on and took her to all doctors and therapists I can. She suffers from severe depression, anxiety, social phobia, IEP in school, add, ocd, and numerous other issues that came along with what she experienced. I was very thankful that day I decided to pull her from school and have her home bound was only because I had a camera in the house. When I checked it I realized what was going on. (Including things being made up about her going viral on the internet). I also found out she was being teased so bad she would eat her lunch in the bathroom. During class change she would always have to talk to me on the phone until she got to her next class. She never knew I had a camera. When I told her the next day I'm pulling her from school to be homebound which now she has been since end of 8th grade it was like such a sigh of relief that came over her. I knew we all needed a massive change and we needed it soon. My dream was always to see my only child walk across the stage and graduate. I am on disability myself for numerous health issues. I am set in a comfort zone and being close to my mom who is 67 and lives in a nursing home even though I am 47 years young. Change for me was hard. I was living for my daughter and my mom because I know they both needed me. I knew in my heart what was best. I also knew if I made this move down the line when my mom gets strong enough I would be able to move her to a nursing home down here. We never had been apart more than 10 days in my whole life without seeing each other. I

lived in NJ from 16 years old till I was 46. My boyfriend was working while living in NJ but his blood disorder took over his life that he was born with and had to file disability. In NJ when you don't have a job you get medicade unlike here you have to be on disability to get on medicade. He was denied and put a claim in with a lawyer. You see his blood disorder is so rare that only Penn Medicine in Penn heard of it. Not one DR. he saw in NJ can help him or direct him what to do. I did my normal research before the move and I had the opportunity and I knew it was now or never. You see I met up with a friend on face book that I haven't seen since high school and she so happens to be a realtor here in SC. She told me for my family to come spend a week by her and check out the area. She also has a daughter my daughters age and they were face timing each other weeks before we went to visit.(just to find out like later she too wasn't a true friend to her.) She knew my income and my alimony would end soon but insisted in the area of Maudlin since it's one of the top rated schools. She agreed to pay for 80 percent of the move, which was thousands of dollars, help us out with bills for a month until we get caught up, pay first month rent and \$100 towards rent monthly for a year. I put all my trust in her when signing the lease once we found the home. I guess it was only my fault for not reading line by line and putting 100 percent trust in her because she was my friend and my realtor. We used every cent we had to make this move and it took everything I had inside to follow through with it. I did this for my daughter. She needed a new start where no one knew her even though her junior year she would still be homebound and hope to work toward her goals to attend high school her senior year and full fill her goals to go to trade school to be a hair dresser. I figured my girlfriend/realtor invested so much in all of this, she knew how far we are coming and a new direction we were taking why would she do us wrong? Well being she's a realtor she only was dealing with my landlord's property manager who he fired once we signed the lease. We also thought her knowing me that she would have at least known a little history of the landlord prior from us signing the lease and also letting us sign a lease with things that were on there that were so unreasonable. We had bad vibes from day one since we paid to move in on the 15th of October and our realtor-friend said it wasn't in move in condition to the 24th. When we moved in here none of the things we requested

were done. There are at least 5 broken or missing screens none of which were repaired or replaced. The rear deck was not power washed and treated. The front step is very steep and not up to code. It took about 3 months until the landlord got around to replacing the ceiling fan in the master bedroom only after repeated requests to do so. We rent a washing machine and dryer for \$50 a month which he added onto to the lease. The first day the landlord installed the washer and dryer from banging it up the steps to the second floor where the laundry room is, something was knocked loose causing the machine to flood through to the kitchen ceiling causing a large space to get soaked with water and collapse. The landlord immediately called for a repairman to fix the washing machine, but it was a few weeks before someone repaired the ceiling damage in the kitchen. The doorbell doesn't work and he says that he is not responsible to provide a working doorbell. We asked for the carpets to be cleaned, the landlord stated he had them professionally cleaned but they were not. The landlord sent a cleaning service to the house prior to our moving in. We found this out from a neighbor who saw a woman enter the house and leave 5 minutes later saying she couldn't clean the house because there was no electricity and no running water. The dining room was painted by my realtor friend and her husband and son. When the landlord saw it he complained saying the job was incomplete and that they missed spots. This was another pre move-in request that he refused to do and the realtor took it upon herself to do it. I guess she didn't want to disappoint us. She even had pumpkins, and plants outside and flowers inside awaiting our arrival. The landlord keeps saying he will do the repairs and maintenance we're requesting "in the spring". We love this home and treat it like it is ours. We got lots of bad mouthing text messages childish name callings as well. Every time we brought up an issue, the response is if you can't afford it move out. We had to go to the police station, per Mauldin Police told us to tell them all communication via texting or social media from this point on will be considered harassment and charges will be filed. Then we get a reverse text stating its our actions from today on if we continue to live here. It all happened because once December hit everything changed. They stopped my daughters SSI stating because I got alimony it was too much money. They took away paying my medicare part B, There taking \$25.00 a month out of

my daughters s disability. (the letter states \$20.00 a month until the year 2036.) They claim I owe them over \$5,000 of overpayment on daughters SSI because of my alimony. Even though I showed them and it clearly states it in my divorce why she wasn't granted child support was because she was already getting SSI. They also stated her SSI would pick up and my Medicaide part B once I showed proof alimony ended which it did in Feb. Since then I almost live at the Social Security office and Medicaide to square this up and asking for appeals on payback because with all the difference in money I can't even make rent and with my boyfriend awaiting a hearing for disability everything we worked so hard for and moved here for a new start where going to lose it all. They all have proper paperwork and all suppose to pick up but nothing yet. Vinnie has a SC lawyer for the hearing but the lawyer states it can take a year. We will lose it all. I did so much research before the move and never once did it ever cross my mind that the income I get would stop or change. I didn't even look into it hard enough not knowing that SC doesn't give medicaid to anyone unless you are already on disability. That would have been a decision maker then just knowing that because of Vinnie's health how fast it went downhill. He has letters from doctors he can never work again. He has a rare blood disorder called HHT. He needs blood transfusions frequently and iron infusions bi-weekly and constant testing's of Brain and lungs and liver. He needs blood work done monthly. All because his hemoglobin's caused by his blood disorder never stay higher than 8 and causes so many problems for his health daily. He has no insurance here. Doctor and hospital bills are thousands already. We were only living here 4 months and he needed two pints of blood and two iron infusions and a lot more to come. Because of this we had to go to charities for help. Now my income is based on his as well even though he doesn't work and we only lived together for 4 months it's called holding out. Which we never heard of before. We had charities help with rent and electric. The electric company stated in over 2 years before we moved in the highest bill in winter was \$250.00 and we don't even keep the heat on and we can't afford for anyone to come out, and to ask the landlord to look at it he will say it's fine. Our monthly electric bill is almost \$500.00 a month. Even Duke Electric said something is wrong must be a leak or something. I even told them we don't even keep heat on because I am always

hot. Catholic charities paid \$300.00 toward rent and landlord signed papers and returned. He didn't get there payment on time but cashed our check. He was charging us \$75.00 a day stating we owe him over \$600.00 late fees. We said we were not paying it because we took care of this and you signed agreement and cashed our check on Jan 26th. Rent is due Feb 3rd. That's when all harassing started and we had to go to the police. That's how we found out there past. They have a record from the floor to the ceiling of all sorts of charges. Including our neighbors having a restraining order on them since he threatened to kill their family and burn there house down when they are sleeping. This is not what we moved 13 hours from my comfort zone away to deal with which causes why I am on disability in the first place to get so bad like it never was before. We told him he can't inspect property now without letting us know a time because we felt threatened of their past and want the police with us when he does so. Then the nasty text messages started with them saying now the ball is in our court. When my boyfriend called to talk to him, all you can hear is his wife screaming profanities badly and Vinnie stated he doesn't need her screaming at him in the background. Then when he was away from his wife he called to apologize to my boyfriend. We believe it was her (his wife) using his phone claiming it was him. There is No man that I know of that says the word toddles. Moving here the state took away close to \$1400 of my income and asking for \$5,000 back. We know when we go in front of this judge Vincent will win the hearing. We found doctors in this state that specialize in his disorder and know it changes someone's life forever. We just need it to go in front of the judge. We need this for numerous reasons. The bills are piling up so high there bound to stop seeing him soon for his treatments without medicade. For over two months I'm back and forth with the state for my disability and my daughters. Also to get her SSI to be picked back up. Our monthly payments are never the same. The last time we went to Social Security I started crying because by now after months of constantly being on the phone, going down there, getting different answers I was an emotional wreck. We are about to lose everything. The lady who took care of us treated me like I was a child because I didn't understand what she was saying and stating she will have to change my daughters payee because I'm unstable. What did she expect? My

whole life changed. I was her payee from day one but there was so much I can handle and ever one is allowed to get emotional especially when everything they own and came so far for will be lost if the process isn't speed up. Vinnie needs constant treatment. We also need his income to make it here and not loose what we came so far to have. He put a claim in June but since he was denied we got a lawyer and been awaiting a hearing since. With this type of landlord one day late he will try to have us out. I am no longer friends with the only person I knew in this state the realtor because I feel if she dug a little deeper she would of new what type of landlord this man was. He is an Extortionist. Every day all I do is worry. Not knowing what is going to come in. They keep saying they will back pay me for the SSI that should have been picked up and it's a waiting game. With the income I have now I fall short of the rent. Not to mention any other single bill. I do get food stamps but not a dollar left over for what food stamps can't buy. I never wanted to live like this but I am doing my best of what god gave me. I also remember stating to Vinnie sitting in Catholic Charities that my only wish in life is for my daughter never has to go to any of these places I had to go so we can get by. My own health conditions cause me to be hospitalized or bed ridden from illness a lot as well. We are asking you, if you have any connections to push up his hearing. I know so many people are waiting on it as well but he can actually die if he needs treatment and doesn't get it. He needs his blood checked monthly to make sure it doesn't go to a 4 which two weeks it can be an 8 then it goes to a 5. (Hemoglobin's). We came so far. For us to have moved here where I am so out of my comfort zone to better our lives to lose it all scares me to death to think we can be living in my car. Can you direct us where to go? How can we get him in front of a judge to push up a hearing or even get a hearing date? Everything is in order waiting to go. Everybody has bills to get paid I understand but our circumstances go so far and beyond. Don't you hate when people can never be happy for you and say, well you didn't do enough research before you moved or you wouldn't be in this predicament, but instead say it will be ok, give it a few months and things will work into place. Well that's my dad. When we moved he was so proud of what I was doing. Now when he calls it's like I told you so. For once in my adult life I did something that needed to be done to keep my

daughter in a focus of what life is about and to trust again. I had to leave my mom, my best friend behind in doing so, so I can finally put me, my daughter my boyfriend first. We moved here and everything changed because things and laws are so different from NJ and a lot of things were dropped and funds taken away. We didn't know this was going to happen when we rented this beautiful home or we wouldn't have rented it this price range. We couldn't even afford movers now even if we had to get out. I feel like my job is every day sitting on this computer as long as I can before feeling sick trying to find a way to live. We are good hearted loving people who had so many rough patches that deserve a new start that was steered in the wrong direction. When my husband left 15 years 27 all together I was so scarred but I knew I had a daughter to take care of. She saved me in so many ways when I felt like just giving up. Now I feel like such a failure because I have no one to turn to and nowhere to go. We can make this. We need Vinnie to get medicade to keep up his treatment and his social security disability. This is a given he will get it. He has doctor's letters stating so from every Dr. he saw. Even the back payment from hat we can finally pay back people who got us this far who have no more to give and catch up with everything and not have to worry what is going to be shut off today or if we have a roof over our head next month. It's not a woe as me story. I mean the other day a man was holding a sign saying I just want to get home with a backpack. I had two dollars to my name and gave it to him. People fall on hard times. 15 minutes later my gas light was on and didn't even have money to put in the tank because I gave my last two dollars to him. I don't want to take advantage of anything. I wish things could be different but no one can predict what tomorrow can hold. My realtor friend she did do more for me than anyone has my whole life. I will never forget that. I just feel the situation we're in now could have been avoided before we moved here if she did a little more research for us on how we got our income being she is from South Carolina. In fact I drove since I was 16 and I need to get behind the wheel soon because if I don't I feel I will be afraid to drive. I just don't like driving if I don't know where I am going even with the GPS. This might be the craziest letter to ever come across your desk but it is coming from my (our) hearts. We do love living here. I really do believe in my heart that it was a right choice. I will believe that better when

I can go three days without crying. Whether it is bad news via phone, mail or something being shut off. There is nowhere else for us to turn to. We ran out of sources since December. I constantly call the lawyer but they say it's a very long waiting period for hearing. They said even with an eviction notice there is no guarantee that you will get to go in front of the judge before 6 months. I don't want it to ever have to come to that. My daughter and myself have been through so much more than any child should have. She has been traumatized in so many ways and I have lost so much and things along the way.

First off I want to thank you for taking the time to even read this letter. I am enclosing some copies of paper work to see if it can help in any way. I guess what I am trying to say is please direct us on what to do. It takes the state so long to push papers through and I stay on top of everything. Please help my family get in front of the judge so my boyfriend can get the kind of care he so desperately needs and we can get the funds to survive and enjoy the change we worked so hard to make.

We want to stay in our home we made as ours. This landlord is not the kind of man any tenant would want to deal with and the past record to this place and his police record along with his wife states that. We don't care. We can make it and there wouldn't be any trouble as long as he gets his money. We signed a two year lease so I knew in case we did have to move my daughter wouldn't have to change schools before the lease ended.

If you knew the kind of person I am you would realize how hard this all was just to even move let alone move 13 hours away from everything I ever knew even as an adult. I don't want my daughter thinking her mom is a failure. She finally knows she has a man she can count on that will be there for her and never leave, and that is so important. We are going to make this family work.

Please help us get in front of a judge for the hearing. People who we borrowed from will never believe in us again. I was even so desperate I went to one of the