



State of South Carolina Office of the Governor

NIKKI R. HALEY
GOVERNOR

1205 PENDLETON STREET
COLUMBIA 29201

July 14, 2016

Ms. Teresa Reno
1498 Brazell Road
Elgin, South Carolina 29045

Dear Ms. Reno,

Thank you for your heartfelt message regarding your story as well as your passionate concern for ending domestic violence in South Carolina. No one can doubt that South Carolina has a culture of domestic violence, evidenced by our state's ranking of first highest in the nation for the rate of women killed by men, which follows previous top ten rankings each year for the past ten years. As governor, and more importantly as a wife and mother, this ranking is troubling and sad on so many levels.

In January of 2015, I established the South Carolina Domestic Violence Task Force for the purpose of identifying and addressing systemic problems within our criminal justice system, the services we provide to victims and offenders, and the education, awareness, and outreach that we bring to our communities. County by county, the Task Force is analyzing the quality and quantity of training, services, and resources to ensure that every part of South Carolina is lifted up through this effort.

Last year, in addition to the Task Force and with the help from the General Assembly, I also signed into law the Domestic Violence Reform Bill, which rewrote the statutory offense of domestic violence to account for the severity of the crime, not just the number of prior offenses. By creating aggravating factors and increasing penalties, our law is now smarter and stronger, reflecting the true nature of domestic violence, which is rooted in power and control and inevitability escalates over time.

To date, the Task Force issued 50 Recommendations that address specific problems and propose specific solutions to cultural issues surrounding domestic violence in South Carolina. This year, I have already announced that 30 of those recommendations have been implemented, and more are to come. For more information and resources for dealing with domestic violence, I encourage you to visit our state's new website, www.safeplaceSC.sc.gov.

Whether through changes in policy, law, or funding, the leaders of South Carolina will continue making domestic violence a priority. I believe that if we tackle domestic violence together, as Team South Carolina, then we can make every home in our state a safer home for our men, women, and children. Once again, thank you for contacting me. God bless.

My very best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nikki".

Nikki R. Haley

NRH/rs

A handwritten note in black ink that reads "Thank you Teresa".