

July 6, 2016

Doris Emasie
(803)606-6920
417 Barn Plank Ct.
Lexington, SC 29072

Governor Haley,

I pray that my letter found its way to your desk. I am writing to you as a result of the Emanuel AME Church shootings on June 17, 2015.

I recently saw an interview where you spoke of how you think of the Charleston Shootings daily. I felt a connection to you then, as a mother and citizen of South Carolina. I think of it daily, also. Our daughter, Cristina Emasie was directly involved and affected by the horrific tragedy that took place in Charleston that night. Herself and her partner, Greg were the first medic unit on the scene and the only one's allowed in the church for the duration. I know as our Governor, you are aware of the horrible details of what our daughter and all the First Responders (Police, Fire, and EMS) encountered during their time in Mother Emanuel.

Our daughter was 23 years old and had just been assigned Medic 1 for one week when she drove the ambulance in the direction of police vehicles going lights and sirens. They assumed they would be dispatched for the same incident. She arrived at the Emanuel AME Church before their dispatch even took place. Her and her partner were told by police, that the scene was secure and summoned them inside the side door of Mother Emanuel Church. Cristina and her partner, were faced with a scene that was horrific and in Cristina's words "they saw Satan in God's House!" My husband and I know that our daughter grew up in an instance that night and will be forever changed due to the career path she chose.

It is not my intention to take anything away from the victims or their families of this horrific tragedy. They have and will always have my respect. The victim's families saved South Carolina and the Country from more tragedies, in giving Dylan Roof their forgiveness. In doing so, they allowed God to reign over our State, instead of Satan.

My reason for writing to you, Governor Haley is on behalf of who I call the "Silent Victims." They are all of our Uniformed First Responders. I call them "Silent Victims" because Police, Fire and EMS personnel answer many different calls of duty while working that may affect them short-term or long-term but they return to do it all again on their next shift. Sure, they sign on to the uniform careers, but some of what they may encounter on just a day of work now, no human can be prepared for. In the past, the public showed more respect for people in these careers so that helped to keep quality people even though the salaries were low.

Being married to a Firefighter for 26 years and being around people in Public Safety, I have seen changes in the demands of the jobs, with increased training and expectations, and less public support. Now that our son, Nicolas chose the career path of a Firefighter and our daughter chose to be an EMT, I see their stress and hear their concerns when people tell them that their careers will not pay enough for them to afford having a family in these expensive times. I know very well how they feel when they hear that from people because many times over the years I have been told "Oh I know that you can not afford it because your husband is a firefighter!"

I know that this is not just a problem for my children, but all First Responders. As a nation, we have not valued or respected these very necessary careers enough even though everyday, somewhere a person is still alive due to one or more just doing their job! I am afraid that one day very soon we may not be able to have and keep quality people wanting and doing these jobs.

Our government has to recognize that they all have been "Silent Victims" and these careers need to be fully funded and incentives given to keep good quality people doing them. Young people need to see them as lucrative careers to pursue. Our daughter, Cristina received EMT of the Year for Charleston County her first year doing the job but struggles to pay a college loan that provided her nothing toward her career as an EMT. Our son loves his job as a Firefighter and had perfect attendance but is scared that not getting a college degree will hurt him in affording a family in the future.

Governor Haley, I pray that you see the urgency in making changes for the outlook of these careers. These are very necessary careers in our State of South Carolina and our Country. Please help them to become careers people will be able to afford doing physically, emotionally, and financially.

Thank you so much for reading my words and I pray for you everyday as you lead our State!

Doris Emasia
mome@sc.rr.com