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#### HEADQUARTERS

1729 King Street, Suite 100  
Alexandria, VA 22314-2720  
(703) 684-9479; Fax: (703) 684-9489

#### FIELD SERVICES

548 Silicon Drive, Suite 101  
Southlake, TX 76092  
(972) 691-4486; Fax: (972) 874-0063

WEBSITE: <http://www.jag.org>

July 21, 2016

The Honorable Nikki Haley  
Office of the Governor  
1205 Pendleton Street  
Columbia, SC 29201  
[nikkihaley@gov.sc.gov](mailto:nikkihaley@gov.sc.gov)

Dear Governor Haley:

On behalf of our entire Board of Directors, it is my special pleasure to report to you that your JAG organization has earned the highest honor awarded to our State Affiliates – the Jobs for America's Graduates **"5-of-5 National Performance Award."**

This award is presented to recognize the achievement of the Class of 2015, for whom JAG completed services on May 31, 2016. After graduating in May 2015, graduates were provided with 12 months of intensive follow-up support to ensure that they transition successfully into employment, higher education, or both. The JAG Affiliate in your state met the most demanding goals for graduation (90%+), employment (60%+), and 80% or higher rates of full-time employment, commitment to higher education, or a combination of both for the challenging population the program serves. These results are even more remarkable given the national unemployment rate of this demographic, which is greater than four times the unemployment rate of young people in general. (And young people, in general, have the highest unemployment rate in the nation.) Further, these 90%+ graduation rates were achieved in the face of the most demanding high school graduation and career requirements in history.

Finally, your state's JAG organization also saw high levels of enrollment in higher education, at a time when college enrollments across the nation were down by approximately 500,000. This performance makes a convincing case for the value of the JAG program that you have led and supported – and of the extraordinary commitment of its leaders, front line staff, young people, schools, and employers in your state, all of whose expectations must be met or exceeded in order for the JAG Model to work so successfully across 33 states in 1,000 communities.

Please know that you have our enthusiastic commendation and deep appreciation for your personal support and commitment to the work of your state's JAG organization. We would welcome an opportunity to have members of our Board and staff join in a press event to recognize the success of your JAG organization with your leadership, whenever it might be timely to do so. These kinds of results deserve recognition, as does the leadership of you and others who help to find the resources to invest in the program.

We will be in touch with your staff to look ahead for the right opportunity to recognize your state for achieving JAG's **"5-of-5 National Performance Award"** for the Class of 2015.

Thank you again for your support and confidence.

With best regards,



Kenneth M. Smith  
President, Jobs for America's Graduates, Inc.

KMS/tdk

cc: Governor Phil Bryant, Chair, Jobs for America's Graduates Board of Directors  
Governor Steve Bullock, Vice Chair, Jobs for America's Graduates Board of Directors  
Governor Jay Nixon, Vice Chair, Jobs for America's Graduates Board of Directors  
Governor Mike Pence, Vice Chair, Jobs for America's Graduates Board of Directors  
Cheryl Stanton, Executive Director, South Carolina Department of Education and  
Workforce  
Elaine Midkiff, State Director, JAG-South Carolina