The Honorable Nikki R. Haley
Office of the Governor
1205 Pendleton Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

January 2, 2017

Dear Governor Haley,

Congratulations on your nomination as UN Ambassador. I believe that you will be a wise and sound voice of reason, guided by your Christian values and beliefs, in the Trump administration if you are confirmed by the Senate to serve the country as Ambassador. I will be praying for you.

I am writing to you to voice my concern for the bill drafted by Representative Joshua Putnam to allow school personnel to carry concealed weapons(guns). I am not familiar with all of the details of this bill. The thought of teachers carrying guns scares me. I am a retired educator of thirty-two years having taught third and fourth grades and working at the district level in the federal programs office. I never would have imagined the day that a classroom teacher would carry a gun in a class filled with **children**.

Of course I understand that there are details that must be worked out before this bill is considered for passage, but I'd like to see it die before it reaches that point. Governor, my husband is an Associate Warden at a prison. He has worked on Death Row. The officers at the prisons in South Carolina do not carry weapons, and they work around convicts-hardened criminals! Needless to say, our children are not criminals and convicts. Please help me understand the reasoning behind this bill. I know that it is in response to the shooting at Townville Elementary School. Sadly, three people were shot and one of them, a sweet child named Jacob, died. No child should be shot at school. In my opinion this bill is an extreme response to a situation that could have been prevented had the State invested in the safety and wellbeing of our children, its youngest citizens.

I was a classroom teacher when the shooting occurred at Columbine High School. After that tragedy, schools were required to provide emergency training to staff and develop emergency response plans in the event an active shooter came on campus. I'd like to suggest that the State of South Carolina (1)ramp up the schools' emergency response efforts, (2)increase security to gain access to school grounds and buildings and (3)provide School Resource Officers for every school. **This would be an investment in the safety of our children and school staff**. Aren't they worth it?

One other reason this bill concerns me is because I know that many of our teachers are young, right out of college, and they do not have much experience with classroom management. I read that the bill would "require training" for staff who carry these concealed weapons. However, no amount of training will protect a student who misbehaves from a weary teacher carrying a gun if the teacher "perceives" a threat from the student. We know what the stats are for the number of school aged African-American males who get in trouble while at school. No child should be shot at school. Additionally, we certainly would not want older children to bring weapons to school because they fear they may be shot by their teacher. Violence begets violence.

Governor, would you want your child in a classroom in a public school in South Carolina with an armed teacher? I foresee more tragedy.

Sincerely,

Karen B. Williams

Karen B. Williams
215 Beverly Drive
Ladson, SC 29456
843-819-1712