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

Dear Governor Haley:

I applaud your efforts to remove the Confederate flag from the public space at the State Capital, and I am asking you to expedite its removal and address other long-term concerns.

The Civil War was fought over 150 years. White Southerners lost that war and blacks were emancipated and freed. It is my understanding that the Confederate flag came back into public use in the South as a response to integration in the 1960s, and I find that fact to be more than disturbing. For many Americans except a unique few, the Confederate flag is a symbol of torture, murder and oppression. In no uncertain terms, that flag has been used by white supremacists and other violent criminals from the time of the murder of Emmett Till, and we as a nation have never recovered from that horror. It is as misguided to believe that the Confederate flag represents Southern heritage and pride as it is to believe that the swastika represents German culture. These graphics and icons are more than drawings and pieces of fabric sewn into cloth. They are embedded with deep, dark and potent meanings of hate. As a result of the pain and terror that flag has caused so many innocent Americans, it is only fair and proper that you remove that flag immediately.

It is also time for us Americans do so some soul searching. Why is the major block in Charleston named Calhoun Street? Where are the monuments to Denmark Vesey? In what manner have the people of your state equally represented the contributions of civil rights activists and the thousands of black Americans lynched in the South? I respectfully ask you to consider the impression that your state makes on people not raised in the South or in the United States.

Now, regrettably, the name Charleston will be added to a sentence with names like Sandy Hook and Columbine in it. You, other elected officials and the citizens of your state have an opportunity to start from a new place and remove the last shreds of apartheid in America. We are all watching and have faith that you will rise to this challenge.

Sincerely,



Nancy S. Klepsch