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March 5, 2015

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

**RE: CREATING A DIALOGUE ON UNEMPLOYMENT IN SOUTH CAROLINA**

Dear Governor Haley:

I am writing about the unemployment crisis facing our state in the hopes of creating a dialogue to examine the problem and to find solutions for it. I write, not in conjunction with any group or organization, but as an individual who is caught in the midst of this crisis. I also write with the purpose of being a voice for the thousands of other unemployed South Carolinians.

I am a university educated woman with twenty-five years of work experience and many great skills. I have been searching for a new job since August 2014 after my previous job in Spartanburg County ended due to budget cuts. I entered the job hunt with a lot of energy and immediately started networking which has always been the best way for me to find new employment. However, this time I found that no matter how much networking, cold calling, internet job searching, and volunteer work I did, nothing was bearing fruit.

Along the way, I have met dozens of other South Carolinians in the same boat. They have done all the right things, but they still cannot find employment. This has made me realize that we are facing a crisis of great proportions. Unemployment affects everyone. Those of us who are unemployed cannot buy anything except the bare necessities. Since consumers represent one of the greatest drivers keeping the economy humming, unemployment has a negative impact on the whole state.

**I believe that in order to solve a problem, it has to be faced head-on, no matter how ugly the truth is.** For example, the unemployment rate is much higher than the six percent that is reported by the press. I realize that the powers-that-be do not want to spook the stock markets by revealing the real unemployment rate, but concealing it will not bring us out of the economic recession/depression that we currently face.

In order to try to bring some dynamic energy to the problem, in the fall I met with Henry Giles, President of Spartanburg Community College. He had previously given a news conference in which he talked about the mismatch between what employers are looking

for and the skill sets with which students are graduating from college. I asked Mr. Giles whether he would consider holding a local conference in which job seekers and employers could come together to discuss this issue. He said he would think about it, but after contacting him several times, I have not heard from him. I recently spoke to Allen Smith, President of the Spartanburg Chamber of Commerce about holding a county-wide dialogue on unemployment, but I did not receive any positive feedback.

Finally, I contacted the office of my congressman, Trey Gowdy, on this topic, and I was told that this is primarily a state issue. **Therefore, I am writing to you, Governor Haley, as the head of our state, to ask if the Governor's office would be willing to hold a dialogue, in the form of a state conference, in which business people, educators, political leaders, and *people who are unemployed* could come together to discuss unemployment and work together to find solutions.**

We who are unemployed are essentially voiceless and invisible in the current economic climate. We know that unemployment is much worse than it is being portrayed. We have been out there pounding the pavement to no avail. It seems like our plight is being minimized and swept under the carpet. The unemployment numbers will not improve until this issue is brought to the light and addressed.

I believe that as the Governor of our great state of South Carolina, you have both the **authority** and the **duty** to speak out and lead on this crucial issue which is affecting our citizens of all ages, educational backgrounds, and socioeconomic groups. **Please listen to the voices of the unemployed.** I look forward to continuing this dialogue with you soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alice Lang". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alice Lang