

DEBORAH S. THOMAS

Post Office Box 175
Springfield, South Carolina 29146

December 13, 2016

Richele K. Taylor, Esq.
Chief Legal Counsel, Office of the Governor
State of South Carolina
1205 Pendleton Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

I received your response to the correspondence that I sent to the office of the Governor regarding the Commissioner of the South Carolina Human Affairs Commission, Raymond Buxton II.

First of all, let me thank you for your time, for responding to me, and forwarding the information to the Board Chair, Commissioner John Oakland.


Second, I need to tell you that I did include Mr. Oakland in the distribution of the subject correspondence in accordance with following "the chain of command." However, his response to me was a statement made in the regular Board Meeting that I attended held on November 17, 2016 here at the Agency, wherein he instructed all Board members not to respond and supervisors to advise their agency employees not to contact the Board on personal matters. As I stated previously, I followed protocol because this was a not a personal matter but a personnel matter involving my allegations against the Board's employee, Mr. Buxton.

Third, in Mr. Buxton's written response to me (enclosed), he closed by reminding me of my option to file a charge of discrimination with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and that he felt his response to me was an end to the matter as far as he was concerned. This Commission has two open discrimination cases that have been filed with the EEOC against it by both a former employee and an existing employee.

Failure on the part of both Commissioner Buxton and Commissioner Oakland to try to mediate this situation is a mockery to the Mission of this Agency and an insult to the State of South Carolina. To suggest that I file a complaint would be an unnecessary expense for the State as opposed to settling the matter in a direct and decent fashion.

Again, thank you so very kindly for your time and response to this matter.

Sincerely,



Deborah S. Thomas

Enclosure (1)



Raymond Buxton, II
Commissioner

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA HUMAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION

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October 27, 2016

VIA Hand Delivery

Ms. Deborah Thomas
1026 Sumter Street
Suite 101
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Deborah:

This is in response to the memorandum dated October 7, 2016, that you sent to me and copied to the board members, members of our state legislature, and others. In that memorandum, you accuse me of discrimination against you and other employees of the Human Affairs Commission.

I have not discriminated against you or any other Commission employee. I would respond succinctly to you with the following:

While I cannot respond to each allegation you have raised, it is unfortunate that you believe that many of the decisions that I have made were not in the best interest of the Commission and were essentially based on an individual's membership in a protected category. Nothing can be so far from the truth. I want to stress to you that all of my decisions have always been steadfastly undergirded with solid principles related to transparency, fairness, and equal opportunity.

In the above context, I understand that not all people will be pleased with some of the difficult decisions that have to be made regarding assignments, promotions, and funding allocations, among other things. Notwithstanding, however, I am confident that an objective assessment of each of my decisions would result in a conclusive finding that they have always been based on my reasonable beliefs of what was then (and now) in the best interest of the Commission.

As far as I am concerned, this is the end of this matter; however, please feel free to come to me with other issues. If you choose, you have the option of filing a charge of discrimination with the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Sincerely Yours,

Raymond Buxton, II
Commissioner

cc: Personnel File

Our mission is to eliminate and prevent unlawful discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodation.