
From: Ben Whitener <benwhitener@cummingsandmccrady.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 21, 2016 6:42 AM
To: Haley, Nikki
Subject: State of the Union - waste of money on architects

Governor Haley,

I am not sure this is an actual email that goes to Governor Haley, but I wanted to voice my opinion. I read the text of your State of the Union speech this morning and could not help but get frustrated when I read the following paragraph:

"It includes the development of a strict set of building standards so that school districts will be able to build age and size-appropriate schools but not break the bank or waste millions of dollars on architects and blueprints, dollars that would be far better spent if that money actually touched a child and a teacher."

I agree with you that our state needs to be more responsible and help those counties that are less fortunate than most with K-12 education and buildings, but why do you make it sound like architects would somehow be a waste of money? An architect's fee is typically less than 5% of the budget for that project (not adding the 2-4% cost of licensed engineers so the building will function properly and not fall down). We are licensed to design facilities that protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public. And I would argue that having an architect involved in any building only adds to the success of the project. If your goal is prototypes, that is a true way to have zero connectivity to an existing community, the immediate site, and a local culture and vernacular.

I voted for you twice and feel like I have a right to voice my opinion. I certainly hope you will rethink this initiative. I would be more than happy to discuss with you further if you would like.

I am a product of public education in this state. I grew up and attended junior high and high school in Darlington, SC, where my father received the Order of the Palmetto for his involvement in the community. I attended Clemson University, graduated first in my major, and became a licensed architect. I am a partner in a firm that is over 100 years old and practice architecture throughout SC and the region.

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