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Subject: Robo Calls & School Closings

Sheila notified me that we have been getting a lot of calls on these two topics – below are my proposed written responses that can be modified for talking points for callers as well. Please let me know how to proceed.

Robo Calls on Ethics Reform Bill:

Thank you for contacting the Governor's Office with your concerns about H.3184, the ethics reform bill. Unfortunately, out-of-state groups have been sharing false information about the contents and effects of H.3184 with South Carolina residents, which we would like to correct.

Let us be clear: Nothing in H.3184 infringes on anyone's constitutional rights. The bill simply reforms the State Ethics Act in two ways: (1) Expands income disclosure requirements for elected officials; and (2) Requires ethics complaints of all elected officials to be investigated by the same independent body.

- South Carolina is one of three states that do not require elected officials to disclose of private sources of income – if we don't know how our legislators are being paid, then how can we effectively decide on how they spend our taxpayer dollars?
- South Carolina is one of only six states where the state's ethics commission has no jurisdiction over legislators – if we don't hold all public officials to the same standards of accountability, then how can we expect the legislature's fox-guarding-the-henhouse mentality to change?

For the past four years, multiple cases of public corruption have come and gone while these two key areas of reform have been debated by the General Assembly – over and over again – with no results to show for the people of South Carolina. Our state's ethics laws have gone seemingly unchanged since their inception following Operation Lost Trust in 1991. Now is the time to clean up Columbia and pass a strong ethics reform bill.

Governor Haley will always stand up for citizens' rights, just as she has continued to fight the good ol' boy establishment for good government reforms. We hope you will join the Governor and support the passage of ethics reform, so the officials in South Carolina will remember who they work for – you.

If you have any other questions about the information you were told, please let us know. We are always happy to clarify any area of confusion about this or another matter.

School Closures in Pickens County:

Thank you for contacting the Governor's Office with your concerns about the decision of your school board of trustees to close certain schools in your school district. While our office cannot provide you with legal advice, we can provide you with additional information, which we hope you find helpful.

Pursuant to Section 59-19-580 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, the decision of any board of trustees of any school district to operate or not to operate a school or schools may be appealed directly to the court of common pleas of the county and limited to questions of law. Accordingly, you may wish to retain the legal advice of private counsel on this matter.

As always, do not forget that - as elected officials - the people's power over their elected school board members ultimately lies at the ballot box, allowing citizens to vote in or vote out their representatives as they see fit.

