

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

FEBRUARY 2, 2015
9 NORTH WICKWY
BIRDMOUNT SC 29615

Dear Governor Haley,

My name is Katherine Featherstone, and I am a student in the South Carolina school system. My concern is that there is not enough funding for education in South Carolina to improve our schools and our overall state education.

Many schools in South Carolina have deplorable conditions, unavailing teachers, and low funding for classroom materials. In 2009 it was published that "South Carolina is home to 11 of the Nation's 25 worst public schools". South Carolina even has a Scholastic video, "Corridor of Shame" exposing the weaknesses of our Education system. In the span of three years from 2005-2008 only \$3.6 billion was spent on improving South Carolina school infrastructure; however South Carolina schools currently have an estimated \$7.1 billion in infrastructure needs. South Carolina also had a low four-year high school graduation rate in 2012, at 72%. The state was also one of only a few where student scores on reading standardized tests decreased. South Carolina also has nearly the lowest teacher wages compared with other states.

Schools with deplorable conditions are unsafe for both the students and teachers who dedicate their time toward education. Students should be able to obtain their education in a controlled, secure, and caring environment. Students should enjoy their classrooms and feel safe and supported throughout their experience in South Carolina Schools. With our teacher salaries on the low side of the spectrum, teachers are not likely to look to South Carolina as a destination for their teaching efforts. In the more rural districts of South Carolina, teachers have very low salaries, poor school conditions, and low classroom funding, which correlate to the low amount of advanced degree teachers in such schools. With an increase in school funding, schools and teachers in South Carolina will become better, which will lead to a rise in our test averages, graduation rate, and overall state education level.

Please explain to me what the government is doing to encourage education in South Carolina. What actions are taking place in order to improve our graduation rate? How is South Carolina going to climb the list and become known for quality education throughout the nation? How are South Carolina schools being improved inside and out?

As a new voter and a future education major, these concerns involve more than just me. The future of South Carolina is held within the hands of the youth. In order to make a difference in this state and throughout the world these young people need to obtain a quality education from the beginning. Your actions towards education will help determine the future for students in South Carolina. My vote for you may well hang in the balance.

I will look forward to and await your response.

Respectfully yours,
Katherine Featherstone

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