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Dear Governor Haley,

My name is Tenecka Young and I am a lifelong South Carolinian. I currently live in Edgefield, South Carolina, home of the ten governors. I attended the public schools of Edgefield County and graduated from Strom Thurmond High School in nineteen ninety seven. I am thirty seven years old single, with no children. I come from a hard working family that has always worked for the things that we had.

The reason for this letter is to hopefully have you help me with finding a better job. As I stated earlier, I did graduate from Strom Thurmond High School. Shortly after graduation I went to work at Milliken & Company. It was not what I expected to be doing but I could not attend college because I had an ailing mother that I had to help. I went to that job faithfully every day, sometimes six or seven days a week on rotating shifts with no days off. We worked eight hour shifts for a while and twelve hour shifts as well. I did not make a lot of money but it was decent pay, decent insurance, and close to home. That job really showed me the importance of having a good education because that was truly the key to a better life.

My mother worked until her illness proved to be too much on her body. She was on dialysis for a while and then she had a massive heart attack which led to her not being able to walk and not being able to do a lot of normal everyday things. The decision was then made to put her into a rehabilitation home. That was the hardest decision that my siblings and I had to make. I was only around nineteen when that happened. My mom died a few years later and I was left to take care of myself. My dad had died a couple of years earlier.

I went back to work three days after burying her. I began to not like my job but I had no college education and I did not really know how to use a computer. I was stuck in a dead end job. The rotating shifts really began to get to me. There were plenty nights that I sat on my bed and cried because I did not want to go to work at night. I was tired all the time, my body hurt and ached. It started to be torture for me.

A friend of mine had started taking online classes at The University of Phoenix. I was intrigued so I inquired about it and soon after I started the classes as well. I majored in criminal justice and I must say that people think taking online classes is easy but it was one of the hardest things that I have ever done in my life. There were plenty of days that I would come home from working a twelve hour shift and go straight to my computer. I would sit there for hours getting assignments done and in before the deadline. On Sunday my day was spent in front of the computer trying to get ahead for the upcoming week.

I finally got through it and graduated in 2010 with an Associate's Degree in Criminal Justice. I was so proud of myself because I am the first in my family to receive a degree. Two years later I received my bachelor's in the same field. I knew that I was on my way to a better life.

I worked at Milliken & Company for sixteen years. Sixteen long hard years because I had no other choice and working is all that I am made of. I finally got a job with the South Carolina Department of Probation Parole and Pardons. That was the happiest day of my life. I was finally able to have a dream job with a normal working schedule. I was also happy because I was able to accomplish something that I never thought I would. It was true, hard work and dedication does pay off.

A year earlier my boyfriend got into some trouble with the law in another state and he was placed on probation. When his case made it to South Carolina and they found out and they fired me. Which I was going to tell them but I was waiting until the Thanksgiving holiday to sit down face to face and have the conversation. That did not happen instead they fired me a day before my birthday, which was the last day at the academy before the Thanksgiving holiday. I was in my sixth week of training at the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy. They later let me resign so I would have a resignation on my record instead of a termination because I thought that would help me find another job. Over a year later and over one hundred and fifty applications later, I am still trying to find a job. I was denied unemployment benefits so I have been living on my retirement from Milliken which is about to run out.

I have student loans that I have had to defer for the second time because without a job I simply cannot pay the monthly payments. This weighs heavy on me because I know that the longer that I have to defer the payments, the longer it will take me to pay them off. I just feel like I have gotten into this debt and I am drowning and no life preservers are in sight.

I am also about to lose the health insurance that I had because I do not have any income to show. I was hoping that I would have a job by now so that would not have been an issue but that did not work out in my favor. I have never been without health or dental insurance since I started working seventeen years ago. I now will have to cancel my upcoming gynecologist appointment because I will not have any insurance.

I have no criminal record, I have never even gotten a speeding ticket in all my years of driving. I just want to get up and go to work every day like everybody else. It should not be this hard for someone like myself to get a job. I just want to have the American dream just like anybody else. I want to one day purchase a home and have the white picket fence too. I have been on interviews but nothing ever pans out. I do not want my old job back, I just want another job that I can retire from. I have only had two jobs in my life. Sitting home every day is so foreign to me and it just depresses me to no end. I get up every day and spend hours on the computer looking for jobs. I just honestly do not know what else to do at this point.

South Carolina House of Representatives member Mr. Todd Rutherford, who is a friend of the family, has been trying to help me find a job but since he is so busy I doubt that he really has the time to put his all into it which is totally understandable. I do however appreciate the time that he has put into helping me because he did not have to do it.

I also met with 11th Circuit Solicitor Mr. Donnie Myers about a year ago for him to help me. He too is a friend of the family. He took time out of his busy schedule to meet with me. We talked and I gave him my resume.

I would greatly appreciate any help that you can provide me with. Being that I do not have a job, I am free and available to talk or email at any time. My number is (803) 270-2572 and my email is . Please give me some feedback or suggestions. Again thank you for time.

Sincerely,

Tenecka Young