

June 30, 2015

Governor Nikki Haley  
Columbia, SC

Dear Governor Haley:

I watched your speech of Monday, June 22, regarding the Confederate flag on the State House grounds. I am greatly disappointed at your attitude concerning the flag. I am a fervently patriotic American who was born and raised in Alabama, and has lived in South Carolina for almost 25 years. Both of my parents' families came from the South, and we know of no one on either my father's or my mother's side who owned slaves. (In fact, only about ten per cent of all Southerners owned slaves at the time of the Confederacy.) My ancestors treated black people respectfully, as my siblings and I were taught to do.

Men on both sides of my family fought under the flag which you are now proclaiming must be removed from the State House grounds. In your speech, you talked of these South Carolinians to whom the flag "causes pain," and who view the flag as "a deeply offensive symbol of a brutally oppressive past." These people, however, undoubtedly have an incorrect view of the true meaning and history of the flag.

The Confederate battle flag has been used since almost the end of the War Between the States to express hatred (usually toward black people); and, in the past

50 or 60 years, to express rebellion against authority. However, the truth behind the flag is that the Southern states were being ill-treated by the U.S. government in ways which challenged the states' Constitutional sovereignty. The situation became more and more intolerable, until, over several months' time, eleven of the Southern states voted in favor of secession, which was their Constitutional right. However, the U.S. government was not willing for the states to secede; thus, the government trespassed on South Carolina soil and refused to leave.

In my opinion, it is a great honor to live in the state which was the first to have the gumption to secede. And add to that, the state in which the first shots of the War were fired.

And for what did we and the other Confederate states fight? For our independence, our right to be a free people, our homes, our families, our property — does this list sound familiar? These are some of the same things for which America's founders fought in the Revolutionary War! As the thirteen American colonies warred against the tyrannical rule of a supposedly all-powerful government in the 1700s, so did the eleven Confederate states in the 1860s.

Perhaps many of the South Carolinians that you speak of as being offended by the Confederate battle flag are not from the South. Our state

is known to be a right-to-work state, open to new and expanding businesses and industries. Many people have moved here from other regions of the country in just the last few years, and many have come to our state from other countries. These people almost certainly would have no concept of the true background of the flag.

Though the South lost the War Between the States, she never has completely been absorbed into the identity and personality of the North, nor has she been completely subdued under the North's attempts at domination. (The removal of the Confederate flag from the State House grounds would be a big step toward that subjugation and absorption, however.) The South has a very important place of influence in America. We have been known for decades to be, overall, the most truly Christian region in our nation. We are also, in general, the most politically conservative area in the U.S., which means that we uphold traditional, Biblical beliefs and behavior. And I have heard that 50% or more of the members of the U.S. Armed Forces come from the South. This statistic is a strong indication of our patriotism. All three of these qualities are precious ones, and we Southern states are blessed of the Lord Jesus Christ to have them.

The Confederate States of America revered the

United States of America as she was at her founding, but not what she had become in the 1850s and 1860s. The Confederate States didn't want to cut ties with their heritage, but to hold to the founding principles of the USA in their newly formed country. Thus, the national flags of the Confederacy are all red, white, and blue (as is the battle flag); the Great Seal of the Confederacy depicts President George Washington; and the Constitution of the Confederate States of America is extensively similar to the Constitution of the United States of America. Within the Confederacy was preserved the spirit and the essence of America as she was originally founded.

Governor Haley, you made some statements in your speech that I would like to address specifically. You said that "for many people of our state" the Confederate battle flag "stands for... traditions of history [and] of heritage." Yes, the flag - not just in the minds of many South Carolinians, but in indisputable fact - the flag is a part of South Carolina's history and heritage. And why would you want to remove evidence of that history and heritage from open view on the State House grounds?

The flag and the Confederacy are still a part of our state and of the South because of the qualities given to us by the Lord Jesus Christ which saw us through the War Between the States and the

horrible and long Reconstruction period. We still have these qualities, and you, as governor, will agree that we South Carolinians need to keep them as part of our daily lives: dedication to the defense of right and truth no matter what adversities come against us; honorable behavior in the face of danger and fear; and love for our country. Why is the Confederate battle flag, which stands for such sterling virtues, to be taken down, according to your announcement?

You also said that the flags of South Carolina and America would continue to fly over our State House. Why, in your view, are these appropriate flags for our capital? The South Carolina flag that we use now is the same flag that we used during the War Between the States. As for the American flag, a long list of misdeeds have been wrought under its watch.

Under that flag, slave ships sailed. (No slave ships ever sailed under the Confederate flags.) Under the American flag, atrocities were committed against the Southern people during the War Between the States; and, to those who choose to feel this way, the American flag could certainly be—to use your words again—“a deeply offensive symbol of a brutally oppressive past” regarding the years of Reconstruction. (By the way, the removal of the Confederate battle flag from our State House grounds is another step in the Reconstruction process even now, in 2015.)

Under the American flag was the deeply unjust treatment of black people for many decades after slavery ended; was persecution and cruel relocation of American Indians; and was the second-class treatment of white women.

Under the American flag have been made judicial decisions that are unpopular with many Americans - including citizens of South Carolina - such as *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, *Roe v. Wade*, and the two decrees upholding the Affordable Care Act (even though Chief Justice Roberts unconstitutionally legislated from the bench in his 2012 decision).

Some people who are not American citizens, but who are in our country legally, hate our country and hate our flag. Nidal Hassan and the Ismaaen brothers (who were here legally to begin with) caused the deaths of more American citizens than did the gunman in Charleston week before last. (I don't mean, by saying that, to diminish in any way what happened at Emanuel AME Church. It was a shocking, heinous crime.)

Some American citizens hate our flag and what it stands for; they publicly burn the American flag, or stamp on it.

If the American flag makes such hate arise in some people, and it is under this flag that numerous actions which are offensive to many Americans have

been taken by the government and by individuals, why do you deem it an acceptable flag to fly on top of our State House?

Please don't misunderstand me. I love America, and I love our flag. I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ founded and established the United States of America. I do not want the American flag - or the flag of South Carolina - removed from the South Carolina State House. I'm just attempting to show the inconsistency of your reasoning in removing, as you hope to do, the Confederate battle flag while keeping the American and South Carolina flags. (And the battle flag isn't even on the State House itself; it's merely on the grounds.)

In your speech, you announced, "We do not need to declare a winner and a loser here." Please explain in what way the thousands of South Carolinians - including a number of our state legislators - who want the flag to remain where it is will not be losers' if you reach your objective of taking the battle flag down. In what way will we have been treated equally with the people who do want the flag taken down? Wouldn't it be a more neutral and equalizing act to keep the flag where it is; or, at the very most, move it to a prominent location in open view quite near to the State House grounds?

You also stated that, since July fourth is coming

up, which is "the birthday of our nation and of our freedoms, [it] will be fitting" to "soon" not have the Confederate battle flag on the State House grounds. On the contrary, I think that it is unfitting and unbecoming for the state of South Carolina to be eradicating from official recognition a symbol of the ideals for which America's founders lived and died.

And where will this end? Though from what you said in your speech, you apparently don't mind now if individuals fly the Confederate battle flag on their own property, how long will it be before you declare or another South Carolina governor — emboldened by this precedent — declares that the flag is "hate speech" and must not be in public view, even if it's on private property? How long will it be before the entire Confederate memorial is removed from the State House grounds?

Governor Haley, you said in your speech that the Confederate battle flag divides us. Apparently, your solution to the matter is to disassociate both yourself and the South Carolina government from the flag (therefore, from the Confederacy itself). Instead of abandoning and denying your own state's history in this way, why don't you begin a South Carolina Heritage Education Program in which people — both children and adults — would be taught the true

meaning and background of the battle flag and the War Between the States? Since the Union won the War, and the federal government ultimately controls the public education system in our country, the true and full history of the War has not been taught in our schools for probably 100 years or more. I am not suggesting that you make this new Education Program a part of the South Carolina school system, but am pointing out that almost no one for about a century has been taught the truth about the War in schools; obviously, then, people our age and those younger than we are were not taught it. Don't you believe that education is a powerful tool with which to make a fuller, brighter future? That is true for an individual as well as for an entire state. It's much better than state-sponsored betrayal of its citizens' — and its own — heritage.

In my opinion, Governor Haley, the Confederate battle flag should not be removed from the State House grounds, but should remain there as a symbol of virtue and honor for all South Carolinians. Please do not urge the legislature to vote in favor of taking the flag down!

Thank you so much for giving this lengthy letter your time and attention.

Sincerely, Rachel Roberta Henry  
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The following signatories are family members of mine who agree with the substance of this letter. They also live at the above address.

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Sen. Lee Bright  
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Rep. Bill Chumley  
Sen. Lindsey Graham  
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