

March 21, 2016

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

Re: Assault and Intimidation at the voting poll

Governor Haley:

This letter is in reference to what happened to me while serving as clerk for Johns Island 1A, 1B, and 2 on November 17, 2015 when Charleston elected a new mayor. So far, individuals and attorneys have attempted to intimidate me, and others have simply ignored me. From the beginning, I have traversed the proper channels with my complaint with no success. Over the years, I have dealt with misbehaviors on the part of voters, poll watchers, representatives, and even candidates, but never have I been treated in such a combative and threatening manner as I was by Councilman Rodney Williams, his two women friends, and the husband of one of the women. This was the first time I have had to request police backup, and only the second time I had to ask someone to leave the property. I take my job as clerk very seriously, and that concern encompasses the legitimacy of the voting process and the safety and comfort of the voters. Although the average voter may or may not be aware of the laws and regulations of the voting process, you would think that a city councilman would know the law, or at least be respectful of it and the person(s) carrying it out. The following are the SC law violations committed by the councilman (please see codes/definitions at the end of this letter):

- Impeding the Voting Process
- Creating a Safety Hazard
- Assault and Battery
- Disobeying a Direct Request of an Election Clerk

The following recap is exactly what happened on the seventeenth. Times are approximate based on emails and phone calls between the election commission and myself.

9:18AM

A voter complained that someone was passing out fliers close to the election entrance. I went outside, and a woman was handing out flyers within 200 feet of the entrance to the poll. I asked her to step across the driveway to get out of the 200 foot zone and she did. I returned to the inside of the polling place.

Within a half hour, another voter came inside angry and requested that she be allowed to file a formal complaint. There is no real system for that, so I asked her to tell me the complaint, and I would address it personally. She told me that a woman was in the

middle of the driveway that comes off of Main Road making cars stop so that she could give them a flier. The woman was in the road, and she was the same woman I had moved earlier. I told her that I appreciated her moving out of the 200 feet zone, but she could not stop cars on their way into the polling place. She turned around, got close to my face and said, "I don't need this shit." I told her that I was sorry that she felt that way, but she could still hand out fliers to people once they park if they are outside of 200 feet. She replied "Fuck you" more than once. She kept saying she could do what she wanted to outside of 200 feet. I said no, she could not because she was impeding the voting process, causing complaints, and creating a safety hazard. She replied "Fuck you" over and over while shaking her fingers and hands at my face. I told her she had to leave the property because she was disrespectful and was causing a scene in front of voters. She told me if I wanted her to leave I had to come over to her and fight her. I said no, but she could walk with me to the resource officer and he could remove her. She walked closer to me and began yelling "Fuck you" some more. She screamed obscenities at me all the way to her car for everyone to hear. While we were close, I saw that the fliers were from the Tecklenberg campaign. I called Pam McArthur at the election commission so that she could alert him about the conduct of one of his people.

Davis Walker, a poll manager, came to me to report a man walking around outside of the polling place. He was talking to people as they left. He was black and both candidates were white, so I knew he was not on the ballot, which would require a name badge. He was not breaking any laws, so I went back inside.

Another voter complained about a woman who was stopping cars as they entered the driveway. I looked out, and there was a backup of four cars—one of which was partly on Main Road. The woman was on the edge of the road stopping cars and giving them a flier. Again, I walked out there and told the woman (a different one this time) that she could not stop traffic. The man that I had watched earlier came over and told me they could do what they wanted outside of 200 feet. I told him no, that they were impeding the voting process and causing a safety hazard. I told them that voters were complaining, and I had to address those complaints. The woman hesitated, but the man ordered her to return to the road and hand out fliers. Again, I told them to stop. Both of them argued with me, and were transfixed on the 200 feet rule. After they repeatedly refused to stop, I asked them to leave the property. They again argued about the 200 feet rule. I explained that it wasn't the issue—the complaints and the traffic flow were the issues. The woman moved closer to the highway and would wave at traffic. The man told me he was calling an attorney. I moved back towards the building, took a few pictures, and called Pam McArthur and requested that a policeman be sent out to escort them from the property. As soon as I stepped away, she was back in the road handing out fliers. I went back out, told them to leave again, and they refused. I asked the man who they were representing. He said it was "none of my damn business." I looked at the woman who was holding the fliers, and asked to see one. She started to hand one to me when I put my hand out. The man said no, and slapped my hand out of the way. When I turned to the man, the woman moved back

to the road, and began giving out fliers again. While she was doing that RIGHT BESIDE ME, the man repeatedly said they weren't stopping cars. I walked over to the car and asked the voter if I could see the flier. She showed it to me—it was from Tecklenberg's campaign.

11:08AM

The lawyer arrived, and the "F you" woman returned. The lawyer attempted to coach me on the 200 foot rule. As I did with the others, I explained that that was not the issue. The lawyer made the two women get in a car with her. Tag #GRA 516. They were in there for a while. The man stood under a tree near the road. I saw a large man with what appeared from a distance to be a badge. I assumed he was the cop I requested. When I got out to the road, I realized that what I thought was a badge was actually just a thing on his shirt. One of the women had called this guy who was her husband because I was telling them to stop or leave. He was very large (about 6'4") and rude. All of them absolutely refused to stop handing out the fliers to cars, and leave the property. The big guy told me to leave them alone that I had no authority. I told him that I did, that I was the clerk. He said that he had graduated from St. Johns, and that the property was his "turf." Things became heated, so I walked away and called Pam again. I asked her where the cops were. She said that she did not call them. I asked why. She said her boss told her not to. He had wanted to settle it peacefully by contacting Tecklenberg, but that had not worked. The police were called.

11:23AM

I walked out to the car where the cops were standing with the entire group. The cops asked what was going on. The big guy said they were mad because I was stealing Tecklenberg signs off the road. I called him a liar. Right there by the cops, he said "You don't know who you are messing with. I am calling Black Lives Matter, and they will take care of you personally. Come to your home tonight." I am not sure if the cops heard him or not, but it should be on their body cams. Officer Leahy asked me to go up to the building. Officer Coard came up there and I told her what had happened. Officer Leahy came up and we discussed it with him. They assured me that the group was gone and would not return.

1:15PM

The large man returned later to talk to Channel 2 News. After the interview, he left. He contacted the news stations and the Post & Courier. Channel 2 came in to speak with me. She asked for an on camera interview. I said no. They said they'd received a complaint that I was not allowing people to give out fliers outside of 200feet. I told her I would not allow people to flag down drivers. She asked if that was it. I said yes. She left.

7:30PM

The Election Commission provided an escort to my car. Dan Martin and I had a quick conversation. He said the first man was Charleston City Councilman Rodney Williams.

He believes the other guy may have been George Knight. I don't know either man personally.

SC Code of Laws Title 7 Elections:

Section: 7-13-140 Maintenance of order; police powers of managers.

Managers of election are clothed with such police powers as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this article. The managers shall possess full authority to maintain good order at the polls and to enforce obedience to their lawful commands during an election and during the canvass and counting of the votes. All peace officers shall answer all such calls for help in preserving the peace as may be made by the managers of election.

Section: 7-13-150 Penalty for failure to assist in maintaining order.

Any person who, when summoned or called upon by peace officers shall fail or refuse to assist him in maintaining the peace and good order at the polls shall be fined in a sum not to exceed one hundred dollars or imprisonment not to exceed thirty days.

Definitions:

Assault—an act, criminal or tortious, that threatens physical harm to a person, whether or not actual harm is done.

Battery—the crime or tort of unconsented physical contact with another person, even where the contact is not violent but merely menacing or offensive.

As you can see, Mr. Williams and his friends all behaved poorly and in a way that was unlawful. No public servant should have to tolerate that type of behavior from anyone, much less an elected official. On November 25, 2015, a letter describing this event was sent to Brian Sheehan, Ombudsman at the Clerk of Council's Office. There was a signature card, which is also in this letter. The following is an update of events since the letter was mailed to Mr. Sheehan:

During the Two Weeks Following the Incident

I called the police department many times, and they argued with me and amongst themselves about jurisdiction. Finally, the City of Charleston claimed jurisdiction (something I already knew), but did not want to file a report because it would be a "waste of my time and theirs." That is a direct quote. No officer ever helped me file a report.

I received two phone calls from Mayor Tecklenberg's attorney. He refused to discuss the incident with me, and the attorneys simply told me his offices were not involved and that Mayor Tecklenberg would not address the issue of Black Lives Matter or the threat I received. He did not deny involvement with BLM either.

December 16, 2015

No response. Mr. Sheehan agreed to check on the letter via email.

January 7, 2016

Still Nothing. Sheehan assures me he will find some answers. The legal department denies receiving a letter.

January 8, 2016

I sent a copy of the signature card to Mr. Sheehan via email.

February 2, 2016

According to Mr. Sheehan, the letter is "lost" despite the signature card. The legal department for Mayor Tecklenberg called me twice so they are most certainly aware of the situation. They lied to Mr. Sheehan saying they had never contacted me. He was surprised by this.

February 3, 2016

I emailed the signature card again. Mr. Sheehan told me via email that the person who signed it is no longer employed in that office. Mr. Sheehan said, "I remember seeing what I think is a copy of the letter and I thought I forwarded it to legal."

February 18, 2016

I called Mr. Sheehan and told him I would have all individuals involved removed from my polling place if they came to the presidential during primaries because they had threatened me back in the fall.

February 20, 2016

Sgt. Leahy (one of the responding officers from November) arrived at the poll first thing in the morning. He wanted to know if I was having any problems. I said no. He implied that my poll does have problems. I said we did last time. He said he was told that a councilman was defending himself when someone reached for something HE had. I told him that someone was me, and that that was a lie, and he knew it. This is the officer who overheard the Black Lives Matter threat and did nothing.

February 25, 2016

Contacted governor's office through website and requested a meeting.

March 21, 2016

I have contacted the Governor's office twice. Both have been ignored.

Absolutely no one in a position of authority has been interested in addressing this unfortunate situation. By their disinterest and/or attempts of intimidation, the unlawful behavior of elected

officials is not only being approved but encouraged. It took years to eliminate the voter fraud at my poll location, and my efforts, as well as the voting process, should be taken seriously. If there are laws on the books, they should be enforced, and our elected officials should be the ones who set the standards for what is proper and right for the rest of us.

I am interested to see where you stand and how you choose to address this situation. Please feel free to contact me for additional information and to set up a meeting if necessary. Your time is appreciated, and I eagerly await your response.

Sincerely yours,

Melinda S. Norris
 4550 Soft Shell Road, Johns Island, SC 29455
 mnorris2266@gmail.com
 843-696-5261

SENDER: COMPLETE THIS SECTION	COMPLETE THIS SECTION ON DELIVERY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Complete Items 1, 2, and 3. ■ Print your name and address on the reverse so that we can return the card to you. ■ Attach this card to the back of the mailpiece, or on the front if space permits. 	<p>A. Signature <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agent <input type="checkbox"/> Addressee</p>
<p>1. Article Addressed to:</p> <p>Brian Sheehan Clerk of Council Office 80 Broad St Charleston, SC 29401</p>	<p>B. Received by (Printed Name) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> [Signature]</p> <p>C. Date of Delivery 12/11/15</p>
<p>2. Article Number (Transfer from service label)</p> <p>9590 9401 0029 5168 8513 83</p> <p>7015 0640 0007 6467 4564</p>	<p>D. Is delivery address different from item 1? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes If YES, enter delivery address below: <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p>PS Form 3811, April 2015 PSN 7530-02-000-9053</p>	<p>3. Service Type</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Adult Signature <input type="checkbox"/> Adult Signature Restricted Delivery <input type="checkbox"/> Certified Mail® <input type="checkbox"/> Certified Mail Restricted Delivery <input type="checkbox"/> Collect on Delivery <input type="checkbox"/> Collect on Delivery Restricted Delivery <input type="checkbox"/> Insured Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Insured Mail Restricted Delivery (over \$500) 