



State of South Carolina Office of the Governor

NIKKI R. HALEY
GOVERNOR

1205 PENDLETON STREET
COLUMBIA 29201

May 15, 2012

Dear Members of the Senate,

As you begin to debate next year's budget I'd ask that you see it as the opportunity I do – an opportunity to show the people and small businesses of South Carolina that they do in fact come first and that we can be responsible with our actions and not follow the path of Washington, D.C. in spending far too much.

Our Administration invested a significant amount of time and effort in our Executive Budget – it was my goal to give you a real budget, a true blueprint that you could follow that would deliver a strong message about the priorities and direction of the State of South Carolina.

That budget spent \$5.7 billion in general fund dollars, and was able to backfill holes in places like mental health and law enforcement and *still* provide \$140 million in tax relief to the taxpayers and businesses of South Carolina.

Since then, as it always seems to, the 'money tree' has fallen. Last week, the BEA increased revenue estimates by nearly \$300 million - \$137 million of it in recurring dollars that can and should be used to provide permanent tax relief to our citizens.

You are debating a \$6.1 billion budget – an increase of nearly \$400 million over the budget we presented to the General Assembly in January. With this kind of spending – it represents enormous growth over last year's budget and blows the lid off any reasonable spending cap – *there is no excuse for us to not include \$93 million to fully fund H.4996 and H.4997*, which will provide significant tax relief to South Carolina taxpayers and businesses.

We're talking about \$93 million in tax relief out of a \$6.1 billion budget. *That's 1.6 percent of the budget.*

The budget is the ultimate expression of our priorities as a government, as a state. It is time for us to show South Carolina – and everyone else – that in our state, jobs, the people, and our businesses come first.

My very best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nikki R. Haley".
Nikki R. Haley

A large, stylized handwritten slogan in black ink that reads "Let's make South Carolina proud!"