

Executive Order No. 2018-12

WHEREAS, government at any level should not and shall not penalize religious activity by denying any person or organization an equal share of the rights, benefits, and privileges enjoyed by other individuals or organizations solely on account of one's religious identity and sincerely held beliefs; and

WHEREAS, faith-based organizations may retain their religious character and participate in government programs, provided that public funds are not used to directly subsidize or support religious worship activities; and

WHEREAS, the foregoing rights are guaranteed by, *inter alia*, the First Amendment to the United States Constitution and article I, section 2 of the South Carolina Constitution, both of which provide that there shall be no laws prohibiting the free exercise of religion, abridging the freedom of speech, or inhibiting the corresponding right to associate with others; and

WHEREAS, the rights of faith-based organizations to exercise religious beliefs while participating in government are also protected by the South Carolina Religious Freedom Act of 1999 ("RFA"), codified in sections 1-32-10 through -60 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, which provides, in relevant part, that "[t]he State may not substantially burden a person's exercise of religion, even if the burden results from a rule of general applicability," unless the burden furthers a compelling state interest and is applied in the least restrictive means of furthering that interest; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to article IV, section 15 of the South Carolina Constitution, the Governor "shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed," which includes ensuring the free exercise of religion as guaranteed by the South Carolina Constitution and upholding religious liberty under the RFA; and

WHEREAS, the licensing and participation of faith-based organizations in South Carolina's foster-care system is a long-standing and constitutionally permissible practice; and

WHEREAS, the South Carolina Department of Social Services ("DSS"), which is part of the Governor's Cabinet, oversees the State's foster-care program and, as such, licenses Child Placing Agencies ("CPAs"); and

WHEREAS, pursuant to section 114-550 of the South Carolina Code of Regulations, CPAs are defined, in pertinent part, as "any person or entity who holds legal or physical custody of a child for the purpose of placement for foster care or adoption or a private placement and . . . retain[s] their own system of foster homes"; and

WHEREAS, sections 114-4910 through -4980 of the South Carolina Code of Regulations govern the licensing and administration of CPAs; and

WHEREAS, CPAs may be secular or non-secular and are separate private, non-governmental entities that recruit, retain, and support current and prospective foster-care families in South Carolina, thereby fulfilling a crucial need for the State and providing a critical service to the children of South Carolina; and

WHEREAS, DSS licenses many CPAs and provides a variety of CPA options from which foster parents may choose; and

WHEREAS, the State has no compelling interest in limiting faith-based organizations' participation as CPAs; and

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WHEREAS, faith-based CPAs associate foster parents and homes who share the same faith and should not be asked to compromise sincerely held religious beliefs in recruiting, training, and retaining foster parents; and

WHEREAS, separate and apart from the association of foster parents by CPAs, under federal and state law, CPAs must assist *any children in foster care* without regard to their religious beliefs; and

WHEREAS, to the extent DSS receives funding from the United States Department of Health and Human Services (“DHHS”) or otherwise participates in the Federal Foster Care Program, the undersigned has requested that DHHS not exclude faith-based CPAs and grant DSS a formal deviation from DHHS policy in recognition of the foregoing rights and considerations and in accordance with the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 (“RFRA”), codified as amended at 42 U.S.C. § 2000bb through 42 U.S.C. § 2000bb-4; and

WHEREAS, religious observers and organizations should not be required to sacrifice the tenets of their faith to serve the children of South Carolina, particularly where, as here, doing so would not serve or further any identifiable or compelling state interest.

NOW, THEREFORE, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of South Carolina and pursuant to the Constitution and Laws of this State and the powers conferred upon me therein, to the fullest extent permitted by state and federal law, I direct that DSS shall not deny licensure to faith-based CPAs solely on account of their religious identity or sincerely held religious beliefs. Further, I hereby direct DSS to review and revise its policies and manuals in accordance with this Order and ensure that DSS does not directly or indirectly penalize religious identity or activity in applying sections 114-550 or 114-4910 through -4980 of the South Carolina Code of Regulations with regard to Licensure for Foster Care.

In furtherance of the foregoing rights, principles, and considerations, all Cabinet agencies, including all boards and commissions that are part of, comprised within, or under the jurisdiction of a Cabinet agency, are hereby directed to review their policies, procedures, and regulations to ensure that the same do not directly or indirectly penalize religious activity by denying any person or organization an equal share of the rights, benefits, and privileges enjoyed by other individuals or organizations solely on account of religious identity or beliefs. It is further advised that executive agencies not in the undersigned’s Cabinet or otherwise subject to the undersigned’s direct authority shall likewise act in accordance with this Order and the foregoing directives.

This Order is effective immediately.

**GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND THE GREAT
SEAL OF THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA,
THIS 13th DAY OF MARCH, 2018.**

**HENRY MCMASTER
Governor**

Executive Order No. 2018-13

WHEREAS, on March 9, 2018, a gravel truck struck the Secondary Route 50 (Four Holes Road) bridge overpass over I-26 near Exit 153; and

WHEREAS, the impact of the collision resulted in catastrophic damage to the bridge overpass, striking a support structure of the bridge overpass and requiring immediate closure of I-26 Westbound lanes between Exit 154 and 149; and

WHEREAS, the bridge overpass must be removed and replaced; and

WHEREAS, repairs to complete the bridge replacement required for the Secondary Route 50 overpass are beyond the scope of extraordinary maintenance; and

WHEREAS, these conditions constitute an emergency as is contemplated by the terms of Section 125 of Title 23, the United States Code.

NOW, THEREFORE, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of South Carolina and pursuant to the Constitution and Laws of this State and the powers conferred upon me therein, I hereby declare that an emergency exists as a result of the crash at I-26 and Secondary Route 50 and direct the South Carolina Department of Transportation to undertake actions to replace the collapsed bridge to ensure the safety and well-being of the traveling public. I further direct the Department of Transportation to take all necessary action to obtain the federal approval of the Federal Highway Division Administrator to make Federal Highway Division Emergency Relief assistance available to the State.

This Order is effective immediately.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND THE GREAT SEAL OF THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA, THIS 21st DAY OF MARCH, 2018.

HENRY MCMASTER
Governor

Executive Order No. 2018-14

WHEREAS, I have been notified of the passing of Corporal Dale Hallman of the Saluda County Sheriff's Office, who dutifully served as a law enforcement officer in this State and died in the line of duty; and

WHEREAS, Corporal Hallman dedicated his life to protecting and serving the people of the State of South Carolina and the residents of Saluda County, both as a decorated law enforcement officer with the Saluda County Sheriff's Office and as a volunteer firefighter; and

WHEREAS, section 1-3-470 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, as amended, authorizes the Governor, on the day of burial or other service for any firefighter or law enforcement officer in this State who died in the line of duty, to order that all flags on state buildings be lowered to half-staff in tribute to the deceased firefighter or law enforcement officer and to request that flags over the buildings of the political subdivisions of this State similarly be flown at half-staff for this purpose.

NOW, THEREFORE, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of South Carolina and pursuant to the Constitution and Laws of this State and the powers conferred upon me therein, I hereby Order that all flags on state buildings be lowered to half-staff from sunrise until sunset on Monday, April 9, 2018, in tribute to Corporal Hallman, who died in the line of duty. I request that all flags over the buildings of the political subdivisions of this State similarly be flown at half-staff for this purpose. This Order is effective immediately.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND THE GREAT SEAL OF THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA, THIS 8th DAY OF APRIL, 2018.

HENRY MCMASTER
Governor