An open letter on behalf of more than 77,000 South Carolina students to the honorable Governor Nikki Haley and members of the South Carolina General Assembly:

It’s time that we focus on the future of our state and reinvest in higher education. While more and more South Carolinians are pursuing degrees from colleges and universities across this state, sadly, college tuition prices are becoming increasingly unaffordable.

In 2010, colleges and universities in South Carolina saw the second largest state-funding cut in the country. In order to keep their doors open to thousands of our state’s citizens, each of the largest universities, the University of South Carolina, Clemson University and College of Charleston, increased tuition around seven percent. Because of the dearth of state funding, institutions of higher learning have been forced to continue raising tuition. Since that time, tuition at South Carolina colleges and universities has increased between 18 and 36 percent; truly, an alarming rate and one that is openly hostile to the educational aspirations of our citizens.

We South Carolinians have a tradition to be proud of in higher education. Indeed, we were one of the earliest states to publicly support institutions of higher learning. This is to emphasize the commitment we have always had in taking an active role to provide for the education of our citizens.

As South Carolina continues to grow and as its markets continue to expand, high impact companies are realizing that South Carolina is a great place to do business. The need for cutting edge research universities and a highly educated populace is pressing. Affordable education for all our citizens is the key to ensuring the success of our state, both now and in the future. As a collective group of student body presidents, representing a variety of institutions across this state, we hope that you, the Governor and the members of the General Assembly, will join us in seeking a sensible and sustainable solution to help make colleges and universities in our state more accessible and affordable to all South Carolinians.

We must reinvest in higher education. We must reinvest in the future of South Carolina.

Chase Mizzell
Student Body President
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Jordan Hensley
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