



**August 16, 2021**

**The Honorable Harvey S. Peeler, Jr.  
President of the South Carolina Senate  
213 Gressette Building  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201**

**Dear President Peeler:**

**The number of COVID-19 cases is once again on the rise across our State. The Delta variant of the virus is spreading at an alarming rate, and threatens much of the progress we made over the past year working to put an end to the pandemic. Hospitals report they are overwhelmed, children are getting sick, and our State's vaccination rate continues to lag.**

**Every community has different rates of infection and challenges and need the tools to address their unique circumstances. We are respectfully asking you to call a special session of the South Carolina Senate to reconsider restrictions on school districts and mask mandates.**

**The situation we are now faced with is far different than when the State Legislature last convened. Recall the House inserted budget proviso demanded schools not mandate masks or risk being defunded. When originally passed, many may have thought COVID-19 was well under control. Now, many in the Senate would like to revisit this proviso given the current conditions.**

**The start of the school year is rapidly approaching, and experts believe the spread of COVID -19 will explode. South Carolina's Epidemiologist, Dr. Linda Bell, says we can save lives if we get widespread adoption of prevention measures like masks and vaccines. More than 1,000 doctors and pediatricians in South Carolina have rallied together and asked us to return to session to reconsider the ban on masks in schools.**

In this request, we will allow our local school boards and officials to make decisions which they believe will best keep their people safe, young and old alike.

Thank you for your consideration.

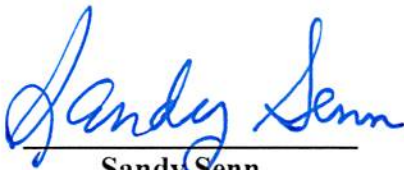
Sincerely,



Brad Hutto



Luke A. Rankin



Sandy Senn



Ronnie A. Sabb