

Dear Former Mayor Pete,

We all watched Friday night's debate in New Hampshire as the moderator asked you why [a black person was four times more likely to be arrested for marijuana possession than a white person in South Bend, Indiana under your leadership](#). And, then we watched as you looked like you had no idea how to answer that question. And when you finally did, your answer was woefully insufficient.

Your record on systemic racism in South Bend continues to trouble South Carolina voters. Unfortunately, it seems as if voters in Iowa did not care- but we do. And as you campaign in New Hampshire, we hope you remember that this race turns to us in less than three weeks and we will demand answers.

Systemic racism pervades everything from education to our criminal justice system. From [your firing of your city's African-American police chief](#) to your past comments that "[black students don't have someone they know personally who testifies to the value of education](#)," we have some serious questions.

Down here, our lives depend on you being able to answer. The lives of our black children depend on it. We need a president who understands what our communities need. Who talks to us - not at us. Who listens, and takes the time to forge relationships in our communities. Who can explain their decisions from the last few years and how they will inform their future leadership.

It's not just about putting forth plans. It's about demonstrating that when your back is against a wall, you'll implement those plans. You'll take a risk for our communities. You'll put your political capital on the line for our kids and our future.

We get the sense you may be giving up on us, but we are looking to see you here in South Carolina answering these questions in all regions of the state, urban and rural. You cannot abandon us and our issues and just expect us to fall in line in November. We believe this is a liability not just in this primary, but against Donald Trump.

We ask that you campaign in South Carolina and give our communities honest answers, not side-steps. Come down here and show us you know how to deal with the anguish in our communities. Show us you have a genuine understanding of how to fight for equal rights and equal access to opportunity for all Americans. And if you can't, you simply are not ready to be our president. We are hurting and we need leaders who can give us results.

Signed,

Former Richland County Council Chair Bernice Scott- Founder of the Reckoning Crew