



# House of Representatives

State of South Carolina

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**Committee:**

Education and Public Works

**To All House of Representatives Members:**

I will be brief and direct in explaining my decision to offer you a choice in the upcoming election of the Speaker of the House for the 2011-2012 session;

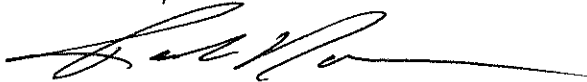
- A) **BUDGET PROCESS:** As Speaker, I will pledge to have open and frank dialogues on all line items now being funded with our tax dollars as we face severe cuts in our state budget. I will have no 'sacred cows' or pre-committed support for various agencies or programs. I will oppose the easy way out of 'across the board cuts' which are unjust and inequitable. I will, however, actively support and encourage my fellow House members to INCREASE the following core functions of government which I consider vital to all citizens of South Carolina:
1. EDUCATION
  2. LAW ENFORCEMENT
  3. INFRASTRUCTURE IMPORVEMENTS TO ROADS, HIGHWAYS AND UTILITIES
  4. MORE PROGRAMS TO HELP LESS FORTUNATE INDIVIDUALS SUFFERING WITH PYHSICAL AND MENTAL HANDICAPS
  - 5.
- B) **COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:** As Speaker, I will pledge **not** to work behind the scenes to garner support for or against any person or member seeking a position. I feel strongly that if an individual House member is willing to dedicate the time, effort and work and aspires to a higher position (whether it is for themselves or another person), I, as Speaker, should not use the **power** of the office to interfere with the final outcome. I will place House members on committees based on competency, leadership abilities, work ethics and trustworthiness.
- C) **SENATE COMPROMISE:** I will pledge to uphold the actions of our body and our body alone. I totally disagree with constantly placating and making excuses for supporting or not supporting various legislation based on the actions of the Senate. The Senate should be held accountable for their actions; **Remember, in less than twenty-four (24) months Senators and House members will answer to the voters.**

D) **TRANSPARENCY AND TRUTHFULNESS:** As Speaker, I will be straightforward and direct in each issue that comes before our legislative body. I will encourage varying opinions and ideas. Disagreement with my point of view **will not** result in committee demotion or punishment of any kind. Leadership and true statesmanship are demonstrated by taking ownership for every decision regardless of the end result. A recent confession by the current Speaker (admitted to in our Republican Caucus) of being responsible for a random “**robo call**” to voters across the district (meant to discredit me on the issue of transparency) does a disservice to our entire legislative body. The ensuing claim that he was “**unaware of the content of the message**” is untruthful and disingenuous. I have been asked the question, “Why are you not choosing the normal process of getting support discreetly and silently before announcing your candidacy?” My answer is that I simply have too much respect and admiration for the office itself. I believe the past procedure runs opposite to truth and transparency.

In closing, The Speaker of the House derives his power from each of us as elected Representatives which means **he works for us; we do not work for him**. When we cast our votes for the next Speaker our votes are **not** to give the individual **POWER** but to give him or her **RESPONSIBILITY**. I must warn you, however, that (from past experience) anyone who votes for me and should my venture prove to be unsuccessful, may risk losing a committee assignment and current position or may be subject to other forms of retribution.

I ask each of you to stand up for what is right and to answer to a higher calling of public service which is far greater than any individual title, position, or accolade. I look forward to personally calling each of you in the coming weeks to ask for your support.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ralph Norman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ralph Norman