

Good evening. My name is Ben Saul, and I am here to discuss former Secretary of Education and South Carolina Governor Richard Riley, who recently endorsed Mayor Floyd Nicholson as the District 10 South Carolina Senate candidate.

Richard Riley served as our governor from 1978 to 1986, in which his chief accomplishments became increased funding and support for public education. He was so loved that the state constitution was amended so that he could run for a second term in 1982.

In 1993, President Clinton, impressed by Governor Riley's numerous educational achievements in South Carolina, named him Secretary of Education. As Secretary, Riley worked to raise academic standards through significant initiatives; to allow greater educational opportunities for the poor and disadvantaged; to allow more Americans the opportunity to receive a college education through expanded loans and grants; and finally, to improve teaching in all grades. Riley remained Secretary of Education for all eight years and became regarded as one of the great statesman of education.

In 1999, the Richard W. Riley Institute of Government, Politics, and Public Leadership was established at Furman University. Through the help of Governor Riley, the institute has brought numerous national and international leaders to South Carolina and Furman that has created a synergy of discussion, analysis, and understanding about public policy, leadership, and government for not only Furman, but the whole regional community as well.

Among its programs that promote civic participation, responsibility, and leadership, is the Emerging Public Leaders Program (known as EPL) held at Furman University. The program is for rising high school seniors, eager to become leaders in

their communities. I participated in the program this past summer and was fortunate to meet Governor Riley myself.

EPL had a profound effect on me as I gained lifelong friendships and learned important life lessons. Entering EPL, I had no idea what I wanted to do with the rest of my life. I had contemplated business, but ultimately, I knew that was not what I wanted to do. Through the numerous events of EPL, such as listening to Furman political science professors, Greenville's City Manager, a Greenville County Council member, a State Representative from Lexington, and Governor Riley, himself, I knew I wanted to become involved in politics and make a difference in all of my communities (city, state, and country). EPL inspired me to become a future leader and prominent voice to my generation. And for that, I owe the Riley Institute the amazing experience I was able to partake in this summer.

It is also through programs, such as the Riley Institute's Emerging Public Leaders, that Governor Riley has truly made a difference in so many people's lives as his EPL program made a difference in mine. Governor Riley is a genuine public servant in which he is the employee and the people are his employers. He has always worked for the better good of the community, like Mayor Floyd Nicholson has worked for the city of Greenwood and will work for our Senate District as our next State Senator.

It is Mayor Nicholson's passion for community improvement, especially public education, that has led Governor Riley to endorse him to become the next State Senator for District 10.

And now, it is my pleasure to read Governor Riley's full endorsement of Mayor Nicholson:

“My friends:

“It is my honor to strongly endorse Mayor Floyd Nicholson for the State Senate position now held by my great friend, Senator John Drummond.

“I have followed Mayor Nicholson’s career with interest and have found him to be worthy of this important State position. He is a fair-minded leader who is respected by everyone who has ever worked with him. He has the strong family values that we in South Carolina support. He will, in my opinion, carry on the wonderful work of Senator John Drummond who has also endorsed him.

“My best wishes to all.

“Dick Riley.”

Thank you.