



# State of South Carolina

## Office of the Governor

MARK SANFORD  
GOVERNOR

PO BOX 12267  
COLUMBIA, SC 29211

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Ben Fox  
803-734-2100  
[bfox@gov.sc.gov](mailto:bfox@gov.sc.gov)

## **Gov. Sanford Comments on Ethics Commission Consent Order**

**Columbia, S.C. - March 18, 2010** - Gov. Sanford provided the following statement with regard to the Consent Order issued by the Ethics Commission.

“I have both tried to apologize and take full responsibility for my personal failing, as I know I let so many down in all that unfolded since this past summer. That said, I think it’s important at this point to distinguish between a personal failure and the use of tax dollars.

“On this I have three thoughts:

“In signing this Consent Order, it is my belief that it confirms my long maintained position that the costs of my actions never extended to the taxpayer. When it comes to watching out for the taxpayer I, and by extension my administration, did nothing wrong and have always tried to go the extra mile in being good stewards of taxpayer funds. For this reason, I continue to maintain my belief in the innocence of my actions being judged by the Ethics Commission. It is worth noting that the “probable cause” determination used by the Ethics Commission considers whether or not there is a case to be looked at, not guilt or innocence. On the one time thus far that my full arguments and defenses were considered (by the House Impeachment Committee), 32 of the 37 Ethics Commission findings were dismissed.

“Two, it is disturbing that the Ethics Commission has chosen to judge me by a different standard than any governor over the last 30 years. For example, under the case of business class tickets, which represent half of all questions raised by the Ethics Commission, I’m also being judged by a different standard than that applied to members of the House, Senate, Cabinet and Commerce staff. I think it would be more than fair to disallow the use of business class tickets by any of the above mentioned groups going forward if leaders in Columbia were so inclined. But to do what the Ethics Commission is doing in this instance and to charge that what was accepted for 30 years is now an ethics breach means not only looking the other way on 30 years of practice, but allowing an unelected board to make retroactive change - and hold others accountable for it. I believe this sets exceedingly bad precedent going forward.

“Three, it’s time to move on. While I believe I would be vindicated on all these matters if there were ever a full airing, the people of South Carolina have moved on from all that unfolded last summer and



# State of South Carolina

## Office of the Governor

MARK SANFORD  
GOVERNOR

PO BOX 12267  
COLUMBIA, SC 29211

this administration has moved on as well. We have been a good steward of taxpayer resources - using the state plane a full one-third to one-half less than any of my predecessors, spending 63% less on this administration's travel budget versus that of my predecessor, selling off the state's fractional interest in the Hawker jet and thereby saving taxpayers more than \$1.5 million, and more - but the legal steps necessary to prove all this would subject the people of South Carolina to more of what at times has seemed an endless media circus. I don't believe continuing this is in the best interest of the state, my boys, the ideas I believe in - or those who support those ideas, and for these reasons, I have signed the Consent Order.

"Finally, and despite my obvious reservations on their findings, I recognize the Ethics Commission's work and efforts in dealing with what my actions brought to them. As well, I would once again thank so many from across the state for the ways in which they have offered grace, forgiveness and wisdom."

-###-