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STATE OF ALABAMA

September 30, 2020

Mr. Ishan Bhabha
Jenner & Block LLP
1099 New York Avenue
Suite 900
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Bhabha:

Thank you for your recent letter on behalf of Ms. Sarah Collins Rudolph.

As you know, September 15, 1963 was one of the darkest days in Alabama's history. If any good could come from something so bad and evil, it was the momentum that was created to spur many profound and long-overdue changes—changes that were not only beneficial for our state but also for our entire nation.

While few can truly imagine what it was like to live through that tragic day, what Ms. Collins Rudolph has endured as a survivor is a testament to the Biblical belief that good does conquer evil. Thankfully, the violence that unfolded on that fateful Sunday morning—and other incidents during this difficult chapter of American history—resulted in many positive changes that have been beneficial to our national story during the years and decades that followed.

As you noted in your letter, “the State of Alabama did not place the bomb next to the church.” For this and other reasons, many would question whether the State can be held legally responsible for what happened at the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church so long ago.

Having said that, there should be no question that the racist, segregationist rhetoric used by some of our leaders during that time was wrong and would be utterly unacceptable in today's Alabama. Moreover, there should be no question that Ms. Collins Rudolph and the families of those who perished—including Ms. Collins Rudolph's sister, Addie Mae, as well as Cynthia Wesley, Carole Robertson, and Carole Denise McNair—suffered an egregious injustice that has yielded untold pain and suffering over the ensuing decades. For that, they most certainly deserve a sincere, heartfelt apology—an apology that I extend today without hesitation or reservation.

Naturally, your letter raises other questions that will need to be considered, reviewed, and discussed as your proposal also includes a response from the Alabama Legislature, a separate branch of government. For that reason, I would propose that our attorneys—as well as attorneys for the Legislature—begin such discussions with you as soon as possible.

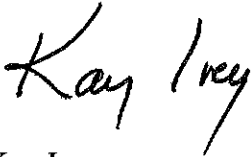
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It would seem to me that beginning these conversations—without prejudice for what any final outcome might produce but with a goal of finding mutual accord—would be a natural extension of my Administration’s ongoing efforts to foster fruitful conversations about the all-too-difficult—and sometimes painful—topic of race, a conversation occurring not only in Alabama but throughout America.

I will instruct my General Counsel, Will Parker, to reach out to you to continue this very important dialogue. He will be in touch soon.

Please extend to Ms. Collins Rudolph my highest personal regards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kay Ivey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kay Ivey
Governor