August 2, 2106

Mr. Russell:

It is very disappointing to have to send this letter; however, I think it is important to do so.

I understand that you have made a public record request concerning my criminal background check. While I am thankful Mr. Landry has attempted to protect my privacy, I have nothing to hide. This information is readily available to anyone willing to run a simple google search.

While I was in college, nearly 20 years ago – like most young people, I was very irresponsible at times. I was particularly irresponsible with the decision that resulted in an arrest for credit card fraud. This episode was devastating and has haunted me ever since; however, through incredibly hard work and dedication, I have persevered to overcome my mistakes. The powerful lesson learned in my teen years, however, has made me a stronger, harder working, ethical adult with much more to share with my family, my employer and our community as a whole.

I have since received a Bachelor's Degree, a Law Degree, and a Public Trust National Security Clearance for my past employment as a federal contractor with the United States Department of Justice through the United States Office of Personnel Management after a thorough investigation into my character and fitness to serve in a capacity deserving of public trust. I have worked hard to provide for my young children. Unfortunately, many opportunities I have made for myself have been short circuited by this one mistake.

I am shocked you would use my situation to try and publically humiliate me, my family and Mr. Landry. Even before ban the box was signed into law, Mr. Landry was willing to look beyond this single mistake and hire someone who he knows is imminently qualified to educate young minorities and all constituents about the responsibilities we must take for our choices.

I met Mr. Landry during the campaign for Attorney General last year, when I was working hard to elect my mother. While I certainly did not agree with all of Mr. Landry's political beliefs, I formed a profound respect for his passion and integrity.

Following the primary, my whole family met with him; and after a long discussion about issues that were important to us, we decided to support his candidacy. We chose to support him because of his desire to actually transform and change the way the Attorney General's office does business.

After his election and inauguration, I decided that I wanted to join his team and boost his efforts to make Louisiana a better place. Community education and outreach are an important role in Mr. Landry's Department of Justice. I am proud to be on the team, and I think my work and Mr. Landry's are making a real difference for everyone in our State.

Mr. Landry has given me a platform to help educate my neighbors on the importance of being responsible and law-abiding. I had to learn this lesson the hard way, as you know all too well.

Scanned by CamScanner

Mr. Landry and I predicted this scrutiny would come; yet he thought my abilities, my experiences, and my work ethic would prove much more beneficial than the potential bad publicity. He should be commended for standing up and taking a chance on me.

Now that I have said my piece, I want to ask you a question: Why is it that you wish to suggest that I was hired because of politics and not my education, my background, and my qualifications?

It is hypocritical the media did not give Mr. Dardenne's appointment this type of handling. After all, he endorsed Mr. Edwards then landed a job and got a pay raise. Mr. Dardenne said he was being hired and paid for his qualifications, and that was enough to satisfy the media. Why is that same reasoning not good enough for a minority female?

Despite your best efforts, I will continue to work every day for the man who was willing to give me a fair chance. I hope that young African-Americans all over this State can see me as an example of perseverance and a model for how negative life experiences can be transformative and become a catalyst for achievement.

Thank you,
Quendi Baloney

Scanned by CamScanner