

**PROVISO SUBCOMMITTEE
CRIMINAL JUSTICE
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FY 2026-27
TO THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE**

SECTION 47 - P240 - DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

- 47.19** **AMEND** (DNR: Deer Processing Pilot Program) Allows funds appropriated to the department to be utilized to create a pilot program awarding grants to deer processors who agree to process antlerless deer without a fee to the hunter, with the purpose of harvesting antlerless deer in areas where they impact the agriculture sector. States the processors must agree to donate the processed meat to non-profit organizations. Requires a report to be provided to the Chairmen of SFC and HWM on the implementation of the program and the grants awarded by June 30.

PROVISO SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: AMEND proviso to update calendar year reference.

47.19. (DNR: Deer Processing Pilot Program) Funds appropriated to the Department of Natural Resources for the Pilot Deer Donation Program shall be used for the creation and implementation of a deer processing pilot program. This program shall be designated to incentivize the harvesting of antlerless deer in areas that are having impacts on the agriculture sector of the State's economy. The grants to processors will allow hunters to deliver antlerless deer to the processors without a processing fee if the deer is to be donated as established by the department in the grant. The department is authorized to create a program and provide grants year-round to deer processors in this state. Grants shall only be provided to deer processors who agree to donate the processed meats to non-profit organizations. The department shall establish a fee structure to be paid to cooperating deer processors before awarding grants. The department may contract with vendors without competition. A report shall be provided by the department to the Chairmen of the Senate Finance and House Ways and Means Committees by June 30, ~~2026~~2027, on the implementation of the pilot program and the grants awarded.

SECTION 59 - E200- OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL

- 59.cci** **CONFORM TO FUNDING / ADD** (AG: Complex Criminal Investigation Witness Assistance Program) **PROVISO SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:** CONFORM TO FUNDING / ADD proviso to direct that funds shall be used by the Attorney General's Office to provide temporary, limited assistance to eligible cooperating witnesses and their families whose safety is at risk due to participation in the investigation or prosecution of serious or violent crimes. Details eligible costs included as approved under the Complex Criminal Investigation Cooperating Witness Assistance Program. Unexpended funds may be carried forward for the same purpose.

59.cci. (AG: Complex Criminal Investigation Cooperating Witness Assistance Program) Funds appropriated in the current fiscal year shall be used to cover costs for eligible witnesses and their families who may be in danger because of their cooperation with the investigation and prosecution of serious, most serious, or violent offenses, or a crime under the jurisdiction of the South Carolina State Grand Jury. This funding shall be used to provide temporary and limited assistance to material cooperating witnesses to defray the costs associated with their ability to safely serve as a witness including, but not limited to, lodging, transportation, food, mental health treatment, and relocation expenses. The funds may only be used by the Attorney General's Office for established costs approved through the Complex Criminal Investigation Cooperating Witness Assistance Program. Any remaining funds may be carried forward into the next fiscal year and used for the same purpose.

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SECTION 60 - E210 - PROSECUTION COORDINATION COMMISSION

60.3 **CONFORM TO FUNDING/ AMEND** (PCC: Judicial Circuits State Support) Directs that funds appropriated for Judicial Circuits State Support be apportioned quarterly to the circuits on a per capita basis.

PROVISO SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: CONFORM TO FUNDING / AMEND proviso to update funding amounts.

60.3. (PCC: Judicial Circuits State Support) The amount appropriated and authorized in this section for Judicial Circuits (16) State Support shall be apportioned among the circuits. The first ~~\$7,632,961~~\$9,232,961 shall be distributed on a per capita basis based upon the current official census. The next ~~\$2,919,041~~\$6,399,041 shall be distributed on a pro-rata basis. Payment shall be made as soon after the beginning of each quarter as practical.

SECTION 61 - E230 - COMMISSION ON INDIGENT DEFENSE

61.pdt **CONFORM TO FUNDING / ADD** (INDEF: Public Defender Technology and Digital Storage) **PROVISO SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:** CONFORM TO FUNDING / ADD proviso to direct that the \$1,382,000 appropriated shall be distributed to the judicial circuits in quarterly installments, with \$720,000 allocated evenly at \$45,000 per circuit and the remaining \$662,000 distributed based on population.

61.pdt. (INDEF: Public Defender Technology and Digital Storage) The \$1,382,000 appropriated shall be apportioned among the circuits in quarterly disbursements. The first \$720,000 shall be distributed on a pro-rata basis at \$45,000 per circuit, and the remaining \$662,000 shall be distributed on a per capita basis.

63.8 **AMEND** (DPS: School Safety Program) Directs that funds appropriated for the School Safety Program must be used to hire certified law enforcement officers as school resource officers (SROs) in districts lacking adequate resources, with priority given to districts with the lowest taxpaying ability. Districts must apply in partnership with a local law enforcement agency, and funds will be directed to the agency or, in Tier IV counties only, to private companies for hiring certified Class I officers. Unused funds may be carried forward for salaries, equipment, and training. Districts must report quarterly SRO staffing. Any remaining funds must be transferred to the Department of Public Safety by August 15.

PROVISO SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: AMEND proviso to allow eligibility for public or charter schools serving kindergarten through eight grade with enrollment exceeding 1,500 students to be eligible for a state-funded School Resource Officer.

63.8. (DPS: School Safety Program) (A) Funds appropriated for the School Safety Program and School Resource Officers in this act shall be utilized by the department for the purpose of hiring certified law enforcement officers to serve as a school resource officer for school districts, including the South Carolina Public Charter School District and schools authorized by an institution of higher learning, that otherwise would lack the adequate resources to hire their own school resource officers. In making determinations of eligibility, the department shall use the most recent index of taxpaying ability as the district's indicator of ability to pay with districts of the lowest index of taxpaying ability receiving priority consideration. Districts, in collaboration with a local law enforcement agency of its choosing, must apply for

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funding through the department. In making awards the department shall provide funding directly to the local law enforcement agency, or private companies, as authorized, to pay for the cost of the law enforcement officer that shall serve as a full time school resource officer. Unexpended funds may be carried forward and expended for salaries, equipment, and training. School district superintendents shall provide to the department at the end of each quarter the number of full and part-time school resource officers that currently serve schools in their respective districts, regardless of the fund sources supporting those officers. Of the funds appropriated for the School Safety Program and School Resource Officers, the Department of Public Safety shall consider a public or charter school serving kindergarten through eighth grade with an enrollment exceeding one thousand five hundred students to be eligible for a state-funded School Resource Officer, without regard to whether the school is located within a single facility. Funds allocated pursuant to this provision shall be used solely to supplement locally- funded School Resource Officers by authorizing a state-funded position and shall not be used to supplant or replace local funds appropriated for the same purpose.

(B) The Department of Education shall transfer any fund balance to the Department of Public Safety by August 15.

SECTION 66 - N080 - DEPARTMENT OF PROBATION, PAROLE AND PARDON SERVICES

66.6 **AMEND** (DPPP: Reentry Transition Services) Directs the department to allocate up to \$500,000, if available, for reentry transition services.

PROVISO SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: AMEND proviso to update fiscal year reference.

66.6. (DPPP: Reentry Transition Services) For Fiscal Year ~~2025-26~~2026-27, the Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services shall allocate up to \$500,000 of any fund balances, if available, for reentry transition services.

SECTION 67 - N120 - DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

67.6 **CONFORM TO FUNDING / AMEND** (DJJ: Juvenile Arbitration/Community Advocacy Program) Directs that Juvenile Arbitration Program funds be retained and expended to provide juvenile arbitration services through the 16 Judicial Circuit Solicitors' offices to fund administrative and personnel costs of the programs. Directs DJJ to contract with the Solicitors to administer the program and to disburse up to \$60,000 per Judicial Circuit based on services rendered. Directs that the \$350,000 for the Community Advocacy Program in the first Judicial Circuit be used for necessary administrative and personnel costs for this status offender diversion program. Authorizes unexpended funds to be retained and carried forward for the same purpose.

PROVISO SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: CONFORM TO FUNDING / AMEND proviso to update the judicial disbursement amount for the Juvenile Arbitration Program. Requested by the Department of Juvenile Justice.

67.6. (DJJ: Juvenile Arbitration/Community Advocacy Program) (A) The amount appropriated and authorized in this section for the Juvenile Arbitration Program shall be retained and expended by the Department of Juvenile Justice for the purpose of providing juvenile arbitration services through the sixteen Judicial Circuit Solicitors' offices in the state and used to fund necessary administrative and personnel costs for the programs.

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(B) The Department of Juvenile Justice shall contract with Solicitors to administer the Juvenile Arbitration Program and disburse up to \$60,000 ~~\$120,000~~ per Judicial Circuit based on services rendered. The amount payable to Solicitors may vary based on consistent adherence to established statewide program guidelines to assess program performance.

(C) The \$350,000 appropriated for the Community Advocacy Program in the first Judicial Circuit, will be used to fund necessary administrative and personnel costs for this status offender diversion program. The Department of Juvenile Justice shall monitor and provide support to this program.

(D) All unexpended funds may be retained and carried forward from the prior fiscal year to be used for the same purposes.

SECTION 117 - X900 - GENERAL PROVISIONS

- 117.157 DELETE** (GP: Employee Retention and Recruitment) Appropriates funds to the Commission on Prosecution Coordination Commission and the Commission on Indigent Defense for recruitment and retention. Directs that before funds are disbursed, all Prosecution and Indigent Defense Circuits shall provide a report of current warrants pending. Directs the commissions to provide progress reports to the Chief Administrative Judge of each respective circuit handling the General Sessions docket, the Chairmen of the Senate Finance Committee and House Ways and Means Committee, and the Governor's Office semiannually.

PROVISO SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: DELETE proviso. Requested by the Commission on Prosecution Coordination and Indigent Defense.

~~117.157.(GP: Employee Retention and Recruitment) (A) For Fiscal Year 2025-26, the Circuit Solicitor and Circuit Public Defender for each judicial circuit shall provide to the Commission on Prosecution Coordination Director and the Commission on Indigent Defense Director, respectively, a report of current warrants pending. The report shall provide the total number of warrants pending in Circuit Court on July 1st of the preceding and current fiscal year, and the total number of warrants disposed of in the previous fiscal year. In addition, the report shall provide the aging categories for pending warrants as follows: (1) those pending 365 days or less; (2) those pending 366 days to 544 days; and (3) the number of warrants pending more than 545 days. Each circuit shall also submit on a semiannual basis an updated report on the current number of warrants pending.~~

~~(B) The Commission on Prosecution Coordination and the Commission on Indigent Defense shall semiannually report progress updates to the Chief Administrative Judge of each respective circuit handling the General Sessions docket, the Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, the Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, and the Governor's Office. The report shall include the utilization of the funds distributed among the circuits, steps taken to retain current employees, the number of new FTEs that have been hired, and information obtained from circuits on how these measures will go towards reducing both the number and aging warrants pending.~~

- 117.173 AMEND** (GP: Rice Fields and Wetlands Pilot Program) Directs the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, DNR, and the Office of Resilience to collaborate to create the Rice Fields and Wetlands Pilot Program. Provides the requirements of the program and directs that a progress report be submitted to the General Assembly by 6/30/26.

PROVISO SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: AMEND proviso to update fiscal year reference.

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117.173.(GP: Rice Fields and Wetlands Pilot Program) (A) For Fiscal Year ~~2025-26~~2026-27, the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, Department of Natural Resources, and the Office of Resilience shall collaborate to create the Rice Fields and Wetlands Pilot Program. The purpose of this program is to evaluate the creation of permits for reconstructing defunct rice fields and managed wetlands for the purposes of conservation, wildlife management, and flood mitigation.

(B) The pilot program shall:

(1) create certain eligibility criteria that properties are required to fit to participate in the program;

(2) establish the fee of the permit;

(3) allow up to one hundred properties that fit the specified criteria to participate; and

(4) utilize the revenue derived from the fee of the experimental permit for the cost of the pilot program.

(C) A progress report on the viability of the permit program shall be submitted to the General Assembly no later than June 30, ~~2026~~2027.

117.juu ADD (GP: JUUL Settlement) PROVISO SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: ADD new proviso to direct the annual JUUL Settlement payment received by the Office of the Attorney General to be transferred to the Department of Public Health Tobacco Prevention and Control Unit for statewide tobacco prevention and control efforts. Requires DPH to follow the CDC's Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs guidelines in carrying out these efforts and to requires a report to be submitted on the use of the funds to the by June 30 of the current fiscal year.

117.juu.(GP: JUUL Settlement) In the current fiscal year, the annual payment received by the State of South Carolina, Office of Attorney General, from the JUUL Settlement Fund shall be transferred to the Department of Public Health (DPH) Tobacco Prevention and Control Unit to support and increase the work of tobacco prevention and control efforts statewide. The DPH Tobacco Prevention and Control Unit shall follow the Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs guidelines set forth by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in its mission to prevent and reduce tobacco use through partnerships around the state. DPH shall provide a report on the use of funds to the Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee and the Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee by June 30 of the current fiscal year.