



**SOUTH CAROLINA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY &
LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

**Law Enforcement, Criminal and Civil Justice
Subcommittee**

Chairman Chris Wooten

The Honorable William H. Bailey

The Honorable Kambrell H. Garvin

The Honorable Leon Douglas “Doug” Gilliam

The Honorable Jefferey E. “Jeff” Johnson

AMENDED AGENDA

Tuesday, August 11, 2026

9:15 a.m.

Room 110 – Blatt Building

- I. Approval of Minutes
- II. Discussion of the Study of the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division
 - Approval of Findings and Recommendations
- III. Adjournment



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LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

Chair Jeffrey E. “Jeff” Johnson

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MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, July 1, 2026

12:00 p.m.

Room 110 – Blatt Building

Archived Video Available

- I. Pursuant to House Legislative Oversight Committee Rule 6.7, South Carolina ETV was allowed access for streaming the meeting. You may access an archived video of this meeting by visiting the South Carolina General Assembly’s website (<http://www.scstatehouse.gov>) and clicking on Committee Postings and Reports, then under House Standing Committees click on Legislative Oversight. Then, click on Video Archives for a listing of archived videos for the Committee.

Attendance

The Law Enforcement and Criminal and Civil Justice Subcommittee meeting was called to order by Chair Chris Wooten on Wednesday, July 1, 2026, in Room 110 of the Blatt Building. Representative Jeffrey E. “Jeff” Johnson, Representative Leon D. “Doug” Gilliam, and Representative Kambrell H. Garvin were present for all or a portion of the meeting. Representative William H. Bailey was not present.

Minutes

- I. House Rule 4.5 requires standing committees to prepare and make available to the public the minutes of committee meetings, but the minutes do not have to be verbatim accounts of meetings.

Approval of Minutes

- I. Representative Gilliam made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from prior meeting. A roll call vote was held, and the motion passed.

Rep. Garvin's motion to approve meeting minutes.	Yea	Nay	Not Voting
Rep. Wooten	✓		
Rep. Johnson	✓		
Rep. Garvin	✓		
Rep. Gilliam	✓		
Rep. Bailey			✓

Discussion of the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division

- I. Prior to beginning today's testimony, Chair Wooten asks if there are any SLED agency representatives who may address the subcommittee today or at future meetings who have not been placed under oath. Major Richard Hunton, Laura Stephens, CJIS Manager, Jacob Bryant, CJIS, Captain Bryan Ridgeway, CJIS, and Captain Wayne Freeman, Active Chair Unit, were all sworn.

- II. Major Charles Coats, Jr. begins his presentation to the subcommittee and discusses the following topics:

1. SLED Criminal Justice Information Systems.

Throughout his presentation to the subcommittee, Members ask Major Coats questions and he responds.

- III. Major Richard Hunton begins his presentation to the subcommittee and discusses the following topics:

1. SLED Office of Homeland Security.

Throughout his presentation to the subcommittee, Members ask Major Hunton questions and he responds.

Adjournment

- I. There being no further business, the meeting is adjourned.

STATE LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION (SLED)



ABOUT

On May 14, 1935, the General Assembly created the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division to enforce the state liquor law, assist any law enforcement officer in the detection of crime, along with the enforcement of the state's criminal laws. Funding was provided for 21 new officers to the existing three members of the State Constabulary.

MISSION

The primary mission of SLED is to provide quality manpower and technical assistance to all law enforcement agencies in South Carolina to ensure that every citizen in the State of South Carolina is afforded an equal level of law enforcement service. SLED is also tasked with protecting and preserving the safety, integrity, and security of South Carolina's citizens and all statewide public resources, infrastructure, and data. SLED also conducts timely, thorough, and professional criminal investigations on behalf of the State of South Carolina along with many other statutory roles and responsibilities.

VISION

SLED seeks to be the premier law enforcement agency in the State of South Carolina so as to ensure every citizen in South Carolina is provided an equal level of law enforcement services.

SUCSESSES

- ❖ Experienced staff with a wide range of talents capable of handling a variety of tasks and projects.
- ❖ Collaboration and coordination with regional and federal counterparts to provide the highest quality of service.
- ❖ Personnel's dedication, ability and involvement in the law enforcement profession as subject matter experts in their own individual areas of expertise.
- ❖ Commitment to maintaining accreditation to ensure law enforcement partners have access to the best forensic analysis possible.

DEPARTMENTS

- ❖ Alcohol, Narcotics & Vice Services
- ❖ Criminal Justice Information Services
- ❖ South Carolina Information and Intelligence Center
- ❖ Counterterrorism
- ❖ Forensic Services
- ❖ Homeland Security
- ❖ Investigative Services
- ❖ Regulatory Services

EMPLOYEES

758

Authorized FTEs

FUNDING

\$148,137,395

Total Funds

CHALLENGES

- ❖ Personnel turnover
- ❖ Succession planning issues
- ❖ Reliance on others and outside factors causing a delay in case progress.
- ❖ High volume of plant material testing cases has caused a time delay in receiving results.
- ❖ Continued use of an outdated case management system.



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South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) Findings & Recommendations

FINDINGS

SLED Chief

1. The Chief of the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) is appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate to serve a six-year term, remaining in office until a successor is appointed and qualified.

SLED Evolution

2. At its core, SLED is an assisting investigative agency that has grown into a diversified statewide public safety agency with more than 70 operational units.

SLED Specialized Agencies

3. SLED maintains an array of specialized investigative, tactical, and technical capabilities that provide statewide assistance support to local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies at no cost to the requesting agency.

Crime Suppression and Saturation

4. SLED coordinates multi-agency crime suppression and saturation operations that have reduced violent crime in jurisdictions experiencing heightened crime and limited local law enforcement capacity.

Local Law Enforcement Shortages

5. Local law enforcement staffing shortages are increasing reliance on SLED for assistance and creating additional personnel and financial demands on the agency.

Specific Jurisdiction

6. SLED has statutory statewide exclusive and specific jurisdiction over certain matters but lacks supervisory authority over local law enforcement agencies.

Regional Investigations Unit

7. SLED's Regional Investigations Unit operates under caseload demands that raise concerns regarding whether current staffing levels are sufficient to meet statewide investigative needs.

Improper Buccal Swab Collection

8. Inconsistent and improper collection of DNA buccal swabs from qualifying arrestees limits the effectiveness of CODIS as a statewide investigative tool.

SLED DNA Database Unit

9. SLED's DNA Database Unit maintains expeditious statewide DNA processing capabilities while administering statutory expungement requirements and indefinitely retaining biological samples.

Rapid DNA Technology

10. Rapid DNA technology may provide expedited investigative leads in limited circumstances, but it is not a substitute for traditional forensic DNA analysis and is significantly more expensive than conventional laboratory processing.

Sexual Assault Kit Tracking System

11. The Sexual Assault Kit Tracking System was enacted without dedicated funding, personnel, or enforcement authority.

SLED's New Forensic Services Laboratory

12. SLED's new Forensic Services Laboratory functions as the State's centralized full-service forensic laboratory supporting all 46 counties and 16 judicial circuits.

Forensic Laboratory Operational Efficiencies

13. SLED's forensic laboratory utilizes national benchmarking metrics and centralized operational efficiencies to provide forensic services at or below median cost levels in most forensic disciplines.

Forensic Laboratory Backlog Reduction

14. SLED's new forensic laboratory has significantly increased productivity and reduced major backlogs, although firearms, DNA casework, and drug chemistry remain high-pressure areas.

Hemp Legalization Backlog Impact

15. Hemp legalization significantly increased the backlog and workload of the SLED Forensic Laboratory.

Forensic Laboratory Turnover and Retirements

16. Forensic Laboratory operations are vulnerable to turnover, retirements, and delayed hiring, creating instability in multiple forensic disciplines.

Impact of Private Sector Compensation Disparities

17. Private-sector compensation disparities continue to hinder SLED's ability to recruit and retain critical Information Technology personnel.

CJIS Division Non-Permanent Positions

18. SLED's Criminal Justice Information Services Division operates critical statewide public safety functions with a fragile workforce in which nearly forty percent of positions are non-permanent.

Impact of Employment Onboarding Costs

19. SLED incurs substantial personnel acquisition, equipment, and onboarding costs when hiring and certifying new agents, which increases the impact of turnover, retirements, and attrition.

SLED Funding Structure Limitation

20. SLED's funding structure and FTE authorization framework limit its ability to convert available resources into staffing capacity.

Fingerprints

21. Only 7% of approximately 4,300 direct indictments in 2025 had fingerprints in the state repository, and some detention facilities have more than a thousand prints sitting unsubmitted on their own machines.

The South Carolina Information Exchange

22. Eighty percent of South Carolina law enforcement agencies cannot replicate data into the state's criminal justice information exchange system, a gap directly connected to the 2015 Emanuel AME Church shooting, and a single special agent currently maintains the entire statewide system.

Crime Data Reporting Regulation Limitation

23. South Carolina's crime data reporting regulation makes incident and arrest reporting mandatory for law enforcement agencies statewide, but contains no enforcement mechanism, producing inconsistent data that ripples across four separate CJIS units simultaneously and limits the state's ability to accurately map and analyze crime.

Procurement

24. State procurement processes and the absence of a formal statewide software-vetting process create challenges for SLED's cybersecurity and technology modernization efforts.

SLED Insurance Fraud Unit Staffing

25. SLED's Insurance Fraud Unit investigates increasingly sophisticated organized fraud schemes through a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Insurance and Attorney General's Office, but current investigative staffing levels limit the number of complaints and referrals that can be fully pursued.

IBIS/NIBIN Ballistic Intelligence Program

26. SLED's IBIS/NIBIN ballistic intelligence program has become a significant source of investigative leads linking firearm-related crimes across jurisdictions.

SLED Narcotics Unit

27. SLED's Narcotics Unit serves as a statewide investigative resource that assists local agencies with complex drug trafficking and related investigations.

Illegal Narcotics Challenge

28. Illegal narcotics trafficking continues to present significant public safety, criminal enforcement, and drug overdose challenges throughout South Carolina.

SLED Interdiction Unit

29. SLED's Interdiction Unit serves as a frontline defense against illegal narcotics and other contraband entering South Carolina through commercial parcel carriers and airports.

Commercial Shipping Parcel Volume

30. The volume of parcels moving through the state's commercial shipping network substantially exceeds SLED's ability to identify and intercept illegal narcotics entering the state.

Vape Shop Enforcement Challenges

31. Vape-shop THC products present significant enforcement challenges due to legal ambiguity, inconsistent labeling practices, marketing strategies, and statutory testing

limitations that prevent reliable determination of product legality and potency.

Cross-Trained Personnel

32. Many of SLED's specialized statewide response capabilities depend upon cross-trained personnel serving in collateral roles.

Personnel Expertise

33. Many of SLED's specialized operational capabilities depend upon personnel whose expertise requires years to develop and cannot be rapidly replaced.

SLED Alcohol Enforcement

34. SLED's alcohol enforcement responsibilities operate within a regulatory framework in which licensing, compliance, and enforcement functions are divided across agencies.

Contraband Cell Phones

35. Contraband cell phone usage within correctional facilities allows incarcerated traffickers to continue coordinating drug distribution activity outside prison walls, reducing the disruptive effect of arrest and indictment on organized trafficking networks.

Center for School Safety and Targeted Violence

36. SLED's Center for School Safety and Targeted Violence, located at the former Gilbert Middle School in Lexington County, has become a nationally recognized training facility providing active attack and public safety training to thousands of students annually at little to no cost.

Centralized Fiscal Oversight

37. SLED utilizes centralized fiscal oversight, regulatory review, and in-house fleet operations to control costs and improve operational efficiency.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Human Resources

1. The Committee recommends that SLED evaluate the efficacy of developing an internal Infrastructure Engineering Career Development Pathway to prepare cybersecurity professionals and other qualified information technology personnel for network engineering and other critical infrastructure roles.
2. The Committee recommends that SLED evaluate the staffing and resource needs of its Interdiction Unit and develop a plan to expand the unit's capacity, including additional special agents and narcotics detection canine teams, to address the growing volume of commercial parcel shipments and air cargo entering South Carolina.
3. The Committee recommends that SLED develop and implement a comprehensive agency-wide workforce sustainability and succession plan to address impending retirements, workforce turnover, recruitment challenges, training demands, and the preservation of institutional knowledge across all divisions and operational areas.
4. The Committee recommends that SLED request the Office of the State Inspector General (SIG) conduct an employee satisfaction survey.

Funding

5. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly consider authorizing or funding an independent Lean Six Sigma operational assessment of SLED's Forensic Services Laboratory to identify workflow efficiencies, process improvements, backlog reduction opportunities, and resource optimization strategies within the State's centralized forensic system.
6. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly evaluate and consider targeted compensation adjustments for SLED aviation personnel to improve retention and protect the state's investment in pilot training and statewide aerial response capability.
7. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly evaluate and consider providing dedicated recurring funding for the replacement and maintenance of TruNarc field testing devices used by SLED personnel in narcotics investigations.

8. The Committee recommends that SLED evaluate the potential benefits and feasibility of establishing a dedicated crime suppression unit to provide experienced personnel for coordinating and conducting crime suppression operations across South Carolina counties.
9. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly convert the most critical recurring grant-funded positions within SLED's Criminal Justice Information Services division to state-funded full-time equivalent positions.
10. The Committee recommends that SLED develop a comprehensive Artificial Intelligence (AI) Strategy to guide the agency's internal use of AI. As part of that strategy, SLED should also establish a framework to assist requesting local and county law enforcement agencies with the adoption, implementation, and integration of AI technologies, consistent with SLED's role as an assisting agency. The Committee further recommends that SLED collaborate with the South Carolina Department of Administration to develop and implement an agency-specific artificial intelligence strategy aligned with the South Carolina State Agencies' Artificial Intelligence Strategy.

Modernization of Laws

11. SLED has conducted a comprehensive review of all regulations governing the agency and has identified regulations that should be repealed and regulations that should be amended. The Committee recommends that within six months of publication of this Report, SLED initiate the process of updating its regulations by publishing a notice of intent and first draft of revised regulations in the State Register. The Committee further recommends that following submission of revised regulations to the General Assembly, the General Assembly prioritize review and approval of SLED's revised regulations.
12. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly review and clarify the regulatory treatment of frozen products containing alcohol to determine whether such products should be subject to the licensing, distribution, sale, and enforcement provisions applicable to alcoholic beverages under Title 61.
13. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly consider expanding SLED's dedicated tobacco enforcement capacity to ensure comprehensive statewide

enforcement of the Omnibus Tobacco Enforcement Act of 2023 and related tobacco, vape, and nicotine-product laws.

14. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly amend S.C. Code Ann. § 56-5-2950(E) of the South Carolina Code to increase the statutory DUI conviction fee supporting breath test instrumentation and maintenance as recommended by SLED.
15. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly amend Section 9-11-90(4)(a)(i) of the South Carolina Code as recommended by SLED to increase the current return-to-work earnings limitation applicable to retired Police Officers Retirement System (PORS) members who return to covered public employment.
16. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly enact comprehensive criminal gang and anti-racketeering legislation substantially similar to H. 3520 or S. 76 to strengthen South Carolina's ability to investigate, disrupt, and prosecute organized criminal enterprises operating across multiple jurisdictions.
17. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly amend the Omnibus Insurance Fraud and Reporting Immunity Act as recommended by SLED to codify the existing Memorandum of Understanding governing SLED's Insurance Fraud Division.
18. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly amend Section 23-9-197 of the Code, similar to H. 4777, to revise the definition of the term "firefighter" to include SLED agents assigned to the Arson Unit.
19. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly amend Section 16-3-1040(A) of the South Carolina Code, as recommended by SLED, which governs threats against public officials and schools, to clarify that a threat may be communicated through a third party.
20. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly amend Section 23-3-1300 of the South Carolina Code, as recommended by SLED, to clarify participation requirements and provide SLED with authority to effectively administer the Sexual Assault Kit Tracking System.
21. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly amend section 16-13-480 and section 16-13-510 of the South Carolina Code, as recommended by SLED, to increase the penalties associated with the creation, sale, possession, and use of fraudulent identification

documents, financial identity fraud, and related forgery offenses.

22. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly amend Section 23-3-620 of the South Carolina Code to establish a penalty mechanism for detention facilities that fail to consistently collect and submit DNA buccal swabs from qualifying arrestees.
23. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly amend Section 23-3-120 of the South Carolina Code, as recommended by SLED, to establish a penalty mechanism for non-compliance with fingerprint submission requirements and to require that fingerprints be captured at the time of a direct indictment.
24. The Committee recommends that SLED amend S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 73-30 to mandate a standardized incident and booking report format for law enforcement agencies statewide and to establish penalties for noncompliance with incident and arrest reporting requirements.
25. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly enact legislation requiring dispatchers statewide to receive active shooter training, building on South Carolina's nationally recognized Active Shooter for Dispatchers program, which has already reached more than 12,000 students across 11 states at no charge.