

Chair Wm. Weston J. Newton

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Bill Taylor
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Legislative Oversight Committee



South Carolina House of Representatives

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Edward R. Tallon, Sr.
John Taliaferro (Jay) West, IV
Christopher Sloan (Chris) Wooten*

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Legislative Oversight Committee Meeting

Wednesday, December 5, 2018

Blatt Building Room 110

Archived Video Available

- I. Pursuant to House Legislative Oversight Committee Rule 6.8, 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

- I. Pursuant to Committee Rule 3.1, the organizational meeting of the House Legislative Oversight Committee was called to order by Chairman Wm. Weston Newton. All members of the Committee were present for all or a portion of the meeting, except Representative Jeffrey Johnson, Representative Mandy Powers Norrell, Representative Tommy Stringer and Representative Robert Williams.

Minutes

- I. Representative Joseph H. Jefferson, Jr. moved to approve the minutes from the meeting on December 5, 2018. A roll call vote was held, and the motion passed.

Representative Jefferson’s motion to approve the minutes from the meeting on December 5, 2018:	Yea	Nay	Not Voting: Present	Not Voting: Absent
Micajah P. “Micah” Caskey, IV	✓			
Gary E. Clary	✓			
Neal A. Collins	✓			
Chandra E. Dillard	✓			
Patricia Moore “Pat” Henegan	✓			
Lee Hewitt	✓			
William M. “Bill” Hixon	✓			
Laurie Slade Funderburk	✓			
Joseph H. Jefferson, Jr.	✓			
Jeffrey E. Johnson				✓
Marvin R. Pendarivs	✓			
Mandy Powers Norrell				✓
Robert L. Ridgeway, III	✓			
Tommy M. Stringer				✓
Edward R. “Eddie” Tallon, Sr.	✓			
Bill Taylor	✓			
John T. West	✓			
Robert Q. Williams	✓			✓
Christopher Sloan “Chris” Wooten	✓			
Wm. Weston J. Newton	✓			

Public Input

- I. Chairman Newton stated that the purpose of this meeting was to hear public testimony regarding the Department of Mental Health, Department of Motor Vehicles, and Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School.
- II. Members of the public provided testimony about the Department of Mental Health, Department of Motor Vehicles, and Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School. Constituent testimony and Committee minutes summarizing testimony are not the comments or expression of the House Legislative Oversight Committee, any of its Subcommittees, the House of Representatives, or any of these entities staff.

Before each person testifies, Chairman Newton administered an oath to the person. Below are the names of each person who testified and the time in the archived video at which the testimony begins. The testimony is grouped by agency.

Department of Mental Health

Mr. Bill Lindsey (10:30)

Mr. Lindsey testified that he resides in Richland County and is the Executive Director of the South Carolina Chapter of the National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI). Mr. Lindsey testified about his involvement with NAMI and the Department of Mental Health as the parent of a child with mental illness.

Mr. Lindsey testified that, since 2006, the Department of Mental Health has made significant improvement. He specifically references increased resources for tele-psychiatry services, mental health services in schools, suicide prevention, and law enforcement officer training.

Ms. Helen Pridgen (34:01)

Ms. Pridgen testified that she resides in Lexington County and serves as the South Carolina Area Director of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. Ms. Pridgen testified about the mission of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP). She referred to statistics indicating the suicide is the tenth leading cause of death in the United States.

Ms. Pridgen testified that the Department of Mental Health serves as a strong partner in the AFSP's mission to prevent suicide. She further testified that the Department of Mental Health should be commended for its work with limited resources.

Department of Motor Vehicles

Mr. Oren L. Brady III (49:50)

Mr. Brady testified that he resides in Spartanburg County and is the County Treasurer. He testified that he has served in the position since 1978. He further testified that Spartanburg County participates in the Department of Motor Vehicles' County Issuance of Decals and Registration (CIDRS) program.

Mr. Darrell Hudson (1:04:17)

Mr. Hudson testified that he resides in Lexington County and is a member of the Lexington County Council. He testified regarding the South Carolina DMV's progress over the years. Mr. Hudson testified that he believes every county should have the treasurer's office and DMV office in the same location. In Lexington County, for example, traffic issues result from citizens going back forth between the DMV and the treasurer's office.

Mr. Ralph H. Bell, Jr. (1:18:42)

Mr. Bell testified that he resides in Richland County and is the Director of ABATE of South Carolina. ABATE is a motorcycle rights organization. The organization works with the Department of Motor Vehicles, as well as several other state agencies. He testified regarding the work ABATE has done, in coordination with the DMV, to pass legislation promoting safety for motorcyclists.

Mr. Bell testified that the DMV is a strong partner in ABATE's mission and is receptive to their ideas about potential legislation or policy changes to promote motorcycle safety.

Ms. Tracy Moore (1:28:15)

Ms. Moore testified that she resides in Greenville County and is the CEO and Executive Director of Donate Life SC. She testified that Donate Life SC has a strong partnership with the DMV. South Carolina launched its first-person consent organ donation registry. South Carolina now has more than 2.1 million donors registered. Ms. Moore testified that the donation registration has saved thousands of lives in South Carolina. In 2018, South Carolina finished in the top five in the country for organ donation.

Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School

Ms. Laura Spears (1:45:04)

Ms. Spears testified that she resides in Florence County and is the transition services coordinator for the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation. She testified that she has more than 26 years of experience in vocational rehabilitation services. She testified that Wil Lou Gray provides excellent opportunities to students that do not do well in an ordinary school setting.

Ms. Spears testified that Wil Lou Gray does an excellent job in connecting students with vocational rehabilitation services in their home counties after graduating from the school. She said that the staff at Wil Lou Gray are excellent in their jobs and serve as strong partners for the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Mr. Shawn Robey (1:54:20)

Mr. Robey testified that he resides in Lexington County and is a former student at Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School. He testified that he attended the school at the age of 16. Mr. Robey stated that the school provided education and helped him learn to be a responsible adult. After graduating, Mr. Robey entered the U.S. Army and learned several trade skills. He was medically retired from the Army after being injured.

Mr. Robey testified that he was able to obtain his Bachelor's degree after being medically retired from the Army. He further testified that he believes that Wil Lou Gray saved his life and saves the lives of many troubled youths in South Carolina.

Ms. Christie Mendez (1:57:45)

Ms. Mendez testified that she resides in Richland County and is the mother of multiple former students at Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School. She testified that she grew up in a high-risk environment and had several children at a young age. She testified that Wil Lou Gray provided an opportunity to her children that she could not provide. She further testified that her children have benefited immensely from their attendance at Wil Lou Gray.

Ms. Mendez testified that one of her children graduated from traditional high school and does not believe that traditional high school does a better job preparing young people for adulthood than Wil Lou Gray.

Ms. Kristina Duncan (2:04:50)

Ms. Duncan testified that she resides in Greenville County and is a critical care paramedic. She has a daughter who attended Wil Lou Gray. She testified that she firmly believes that the school saves lives and that her daughter benefited immensely from the structure and education that Wil Lou Gray provides. She testified that she believes that Wil Lou Gray helps prevent troubled youth from ending up in jail or a potentially worse situation.

Mr. James Miller (2:11:11)

Mr. Miller testified that he resides in Richland County and is the former JROTC instructor at Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School. Mr. Miller testified that Wil Lou Gray helps instill discipline in at-risk youth and helps the youth channel their energy in a more productive way. He further testified that, while Wil Lou Gray does not succeed with every student, it has a very high success rate.

Mr. Miller testified that parents of former students tell him how important Wil Lou Gray was to their child. He also testified that the majority of students at Wil Lou Gray rise to the challenge presented to them.

Mr. Russell Hart (2:17:25)

Mr. Hart testified that he resides in Marlboro County and is the Chairman of the Board for Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School. He testified that Wil Lou Gray provides an opportunity to troubled youth who have lost their way through bad decisions. Mr. Hart testified that the staff at Wil Lou Gray is loving and caring towards all of the students with an interest in helping their students change their life. Lastly, Mr. Hart further testified that students graduate from Wil Lou Gray with the ability to positively contribute to society.

- III. Members asked each constituent questions after their public testimony, which the different constituents answer.

Discussion of Department of Motor Vehicles

- I. After placed under oath, Mr. Kevin Schwedo, Director of Department of Motor Vehicles, addressed the committee regarding the public input.
- II. Members asked the director questions regarding the public testimony, which the director answers.

Discussion of Department of Mental Health

- I. After placed under oath, Mr. Mark Binkley, Interim Director of the Department of Mental Health, addressee the committee regarding the public input.
- II. Members asked the director questions regarding the public testimony, which the director answers.

Discussion of Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School

- I. After placed under oath, Mr. Pat Smith, Director of Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School, addressed the committee regarding the public input.
- II. Members asked the director questions regarding the public testimony, which the director answers.

Discussion of Committee Administrative Matters

- I. Chairman Newton provided an overview of administrative matters regarding the legislative process.
- II. There being no further business; the meeting was adjourned.