



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

Chair Jeffrey E. “Jeff” Johnson

Vice-Chair Chris Wooten

Lucas Atkinson	Wendell K. Jones	Scott Montgomery
William H. Bailey	Kathy Landing	Michael Rivers
Phillip Bowers	John R. McCravy III	Richard B. “Blake” Sanders
Gary S. Brewer Jr.	Annie E. McDaniel	Marvin “Mark” Smith
Kambrell H. Garvin	Timothy A. “Tim” McGinnis	Robert Williams
Leon Douglas “Doug” Gilliam	Travis A. Moore	Paul B. Wickensimer
Lewis Carter Research Director	Cathy Greer Administrative Coordinator	Roland Franklin Legal Counsel
Charlie LaRosa Research Analyst	Riley McCullough Research Analyst	

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MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, March 19, 2025
1:30 p.m.
Room 110 – Blatt Building

I. Archived Video Available

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 Government Efficiency and Legislative Oversight. Then, click on Video Archives for a listing of archived videos for the Committee.

II. Attendance

The Government Efficiency and Legislative Oversight Committee meeting was called to order by Chair Jeffrey E. “Jeff” Johnson on Wednesday, March 19, 2025, in Room 110 of the Blatt Building. Representatives William Bailey and Scott Montgomery were absent from the meeting. All other members were present for all or a portion of the meeting.

III. Minutes

House Rule 4.5 requires standing committees to prepare and make available to the public the minutes of committee meetings. The minutes are not required to be verbatim accounts.

IV. Approval of Minutes

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

Vote on Motion by Rep. McCravy to Approve Minutes from December 4, 2024

Member	Yea	Nay	Not Voting
Lucas Atkinson	x		
William H. Bailey			x
Phillip Bowers			x
Gary S. Brewer, Jr.	x		
Kambrell H. Garvin			x
L. Douglas “Doug” Gilliam			x
Jeffrey E. “Jeff” Johnson	x		
Wendell Jones	x		
Kathy Landing	x		
John R. McCravy, III	x		
Annie McDaniel	x		
Timothy A. “Tim” McGinnis			x
Travis A. Moore	x		
Scott Montgomery			x
Michael Rivers	x		
Richard B. “Blake” Sanders	x		
Marvin “Mark” Smith	x		
Robert Williams	x		
Paul B. Wickensimer	x		
Chris Wooten	x		

V. Agency Presentations and Committee Discussion

1. Committee Opening and Overview of Meeting Procedures

Chair Johnson welcomed members and attendees and reviewed the following procedural items:

- Microphone and audio limitations
- Livestream and archived video availability
- Rules for public testimony
- Oath requirement for speakers
- Time limits and decorum
- Clarification that the Committee does not intervene in individual disputes with state agencies

Roll was taken, and prior meeting minutes were approved.

2. Administrative Law Court (ALC)

Presenter: Chief Administrative Law Judge Ralph K. Anderson II

Items presented:

- Structure and jurisdiction of the court (six judges; ~50% trial / ~50% appellate)
- Contested case hearings (de novo; no jury trials)
- Appeals standards (substantial evidence; no reweighing of facts)
- Responsibilities including regulations hearings, declaratory rulings, and injunctive authority
- Office of Motor Vehicle Hearings caseload (>6,000 cases/year)
- Current challenges: staff retention, competitive salaries, and technology modernization

Committee discussion included questions on backlog management, e-filing implementation, survey feedback, and public perceptions about agency favoritism.

3. South Carolina Conservation Bank

Presenters: Director Raleigh West and Board Chair Mike McShane

Items presented:

- Mission to conserve farms, forests, historic sites, and public-access lands through voluntary agreements
- Achievements to date:
 - 400,000 acres protected
 - 500+ grants statewide
 - \$287 million in state funding leveraged into \$1.1 billion in conservation value (~1:4 ratio)
- Emphasis on voluntary landowner participation and private property rights
- Partnerships with state and federal agencies, local governments, and land trusts
- Board priorities: statewide conservation mapping, threat assessment, maximizing leverage, expanding public access

Public testimony emphasized:

- Working forest initiatives
- Increased public recreation opportunities
- Successful partnerships with land trusts, Farm Bureau, and Palmetto Trail

Speakers: Kate Schaefer; David Jones (State Forestry Commission); Mary Rowe (Palmetto Trail); Lyles Cooper (Pee Dee Land Trust); Brian Harrison (Farmer); Gary Spires (SC Farm Bureau Federation)

4. South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE)

Presenter: State Superintendent Ellen Weaver

Items presented:

- SCDE mission to serve students, support teachers, empower parents, and engage communities
- Goal of 75% of students at or above grade-level by 2030
- Governance structure from federal guidelines to local school districts
- Funding profile: ~10% federal, ~90% state/local, ~\$8B overseen by the department
- Teacher pay increases of 47% since FY18-19
- Key initiatives:
 - Shift from compliance to support model
 - Teacher recruitment and retention strategies
 - Implementation of statewide cell phone policy
 - Modernization of facilities guidance for charters
 - Monitoring potential federal DOE restructuring

Public testimony addressed:

- Data-driven leadership practices
- Equity in education
- Education Savings Account (ESA) program impacts
- Family perspectives on cell phone restrictions

I. Speakers: Barrett Jackson (Principal); Brian Newsome; Xavier Burrell, and Sandra Gray

5. South Carolina Department of Insurance (DOI)

Presenter: Director Michael Wise

Items presented:

- Agency responsibilities: solvency regulation, product/rate review, market conduct, PBM licensing, and insurance fraud investigations
- Focus on transparency and consumer education

- Committee members commended Director Wise for departmental responsiveness and national leadership

6. State Law Enforcement Division (SLED)

Presenter: Chief Mark Keel

Items presented:

- SLED's statewide support role for local law enforcement
- Law enforcement misconduct investigations and arrest statistics
- Citizen complaint intake and review process
- Improvements to Concealed Weapons Permit (CWP) processing
- Hiring practices and recruitment strategies
- De-escalation and community outreach initiatives
- Challenges related to forensic laboratory backlogs

7. South Carolina Tuition Grants Commission

Presenters: Director Katie Harrison and Board Chair Dr. Boone Hopkins

Items presented:

- Need-based grants for students attending eligible private colleges
- Program impact:
 - Over 500,000 grants issued
 - Estimated \$994 million in cost avoidance for the state
- Average award of ~\$4,391 compared to ~\$27,000 in average private-college tuition
- Strong student outcomes and increased access to higher education

8. South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW)

Presenter: Executive Director William Floyd

Items presented:

- Mission to connect job seekers with employers
- Division responsibilities: Unemployment Insurance, Workforce Development, Employment Services, Labor Market Information
- Rural outreach through SC Works road trips
- Leadership role in the Coordinating Council for Workforce Development under Act 67
- Continued vigilance against UI fraud
- Committee discussion on service improvements and workforce diversity

9. South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department (VR)

Presenter: Commissioner Felicia Johnson

Items presented:

- Mission to support competitive employment for individuals with disabilities
- Annual program impact:
 - 22,000 individuals served
 - 4,000 successful job placements
- Infrastructure: 31 offices, 27 job readiness centers, 207 employer partners
- Strong interagency collaboration with DOE, DMH, PPPPS
- Disability Determination Services challenges related to federal hiring limits and security requirements

Public testimony highlighted:

- Intake barriers and inconsistent eligibility communication
- Coordination issues with DDSN
- Delays in post-secondary VR services
- Concerns about case closure timing and continuity
- Positive employer partnerships and immediate interest in hiring VR clients

VI. Adjournment

- Chair Johnson thanked agency officials, partners, and public speakers for their contributions.
- There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.