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**Law Enforcement & Criminal Justice Subcommittee Meeting
Thursday, March 10, 2016
8:00 a.m.
Room 108 - Blatt Building**

Archived Video Available

- I. You may access an archived video of this meeting by visiting the South Carolina General Assembly's website (<http://www.scstatehouse.gov>) and click on "Citizens' Interests," then click on "House Legislative Oversight Committee Postings and Reports." Lastly, click on "Video Archives" for a listing of archived videos for the Legislative Oversight Committee.

Attendance

- I. The Law Enforcement & Criminal Justice Subcommittee (Subcommittee) meeting was called to order by Chairman Kirkman Finlay on Thursday, March 10, 2016, in Room 108 of the Blatt Building, Columbia, South Carolina. The following Subcommittee Members were present: Representative Edward R. Tallon, Representative Raye Felder, and Chairman Kirkman Finlay. Representative William K. Bowers stepped in shortly after the meeting was called to order. Representative Norman D. "Doug" Brannon was also in attendance.

Minutes

- I. House Rule 4.5 requires the standing committees of the House to prepare and make available for public inspection, in compliance with Section 30-4-90, the minutes of full committee meetings. House Rule 4.5 further provides that such minutes need not be verbatim accounts of such meetings. It is the practice of the House Legislative Oversight Committee to provide minutes, which are not verbatim accounts of such meetings, for its Subcommittee meetings.
- II. Representative Felder moved to approve the minutes from the Subcommittee meeting on February 25, 2016. A roll call vote was held, and all present voted in favor of approval.

Rep. Felder’s motion to approve the Subcommittee minutes from February 25, 2016:	Yea	Nay	Not Voting
Rep. Bowers	✓		
Rep. Felder	✓		
Rep. Tallon	✓		
Rep. Finlay	✓		

III. Chairman Finlay began the meeting by briefly explaining that this meeting would allow the Subcommittee to continue their study of the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) as well as allow members of DJJ to address the Subcommittee directly.

Committee staff read a summary of the study up to the time of the meeting.

Discussion of PbS Personnel Request

- I. Chairman Finlay highlighted the fact that the Subcommittee, at the previous meeting on February 25, had invited PbS personnel to attend a meeting. He explained the request that a representative from PbS appear before the Subcommittee still stands, but that testimony given via teleconference or letter was also welcome.
- II. Chairman Finlay requested that all further reports to DJJ from the PbS be delivered in writing.

Discussion of Incidents and Issues at DJJ

I. Chairman Finlay opened the floor to testimony from constituents and reminded attendees that the purpose of the meeting was to address the concerns of the constituents.

Catherine McKnight testified under oath to the Subcommittee. She outlined the following issues:

- **Gangs.** Ms. McKnight testified that officers were not equipped to deal with the growing gang activity at DJJ.
- **Chain of Command.** Ms. McKnight stated that when the unit managers (who are in charge of each dorm) were not on duty, they were often forced to make decisions from an offsite location via telephone. She testified that DJJ was often understaffed on weekends. She testified that there was a lack of communication among staff at DJJ.
- **DJJ’s Education System.** Ms. McKnight testified that DJJ education was substandard and had incited gang altercations.
- **Slow responses to misbehaving juveniles.**
- **Overworked officers.**

Ms. McKnight outlined some possible solutions to these issues:

- Minimum age for officers be raised from 21 to 25, stating that the age gap between officer and juvenile is not wide enough.
- Request National Guard support for 6 months.
- Improve communication between ranks among the staff of DJJ.

- Front-line officers should know the primary charge of each juvenile.
- Front-line officers should be allowed to participate in decided where each juvenile is placed.
- Front-line officers should know what resourced are available to them after a traumatizing experience such as a riot or gang violence.

Ms. McKnight testified that she knew of many co-workers who had responded to the Subcommittee by writing and anonymously, but felt it was her duty to “put a face” to the issues.

Chairman Finlay told Ms. McKnight that her testimony was not the first he had heard, and her issues were not uncommon to others that had responded anonymously.

Chairman Finlay thanked Ms. McKnight for appearing and asked if she had plans to retire from DJJ. Ms. McKnight testified that she had plans to retire in April 2016. Chairman Finlay stated that Committee staff would check back with Ms. McKnight in the future to insure that her retirement plans were not interrupted.

II. Chairman Finlay asked if there were any representatives from DJJ who had not been sworn in previously, and he reminded those that had previously been sworn in (Sylvia Murray, Brett Macgargle, Elizabeth Hill, and Katherine Pierson) that they were still under oath. The following individuals were then sworn in by Chairman Finlay: Andy Broughton, Daniel Johnson, Jo Crosby, and Sharonda Sutton.

Chairman Finlay invited the agency to provide an explanation of any steps that had been taken regarding recent issues.

Sylvia Murray thanked the Subcommittee. She thanked Ms. McKnight for her service with DJJ. She testified about the agency improvement plan (available on Committee website).

Representative Brannon was in attendance at the meeting and was asked by Chairman Finlay to lend his expertise in family court and DJJ. Representative Brannon asked Ms. Murray several questions which she answered.

Chairman Finlay, Representative Felder and Representative Tallon then asked Ms. Murray and Ms. Hill additional questions, which they answered.

Representative Bowers moved that Chairman Finlay request the Legislative Audit Council to audit the Program Evaluation Report and agency response.

Rep. Bowers’ motion that Chairman Finlay request that the Legislative Audit Council audits DJJ:	Yea	Nay	Not Voting
Rep. Bowers	✓		
Rep. Felder	✓		
Rep. Tallon	✓		
Rep. Finlay	✓		

- III. Chairman Finlay briefly described the topics of the next meeting, during which the Subcommittee will discuss the Performance Based Standards process and the agency's performance outcomes.
- IV. With no further business, the Subcommittee adjourned.