

Executive Order No. 2019-37

WHEREAS, a Grand Jury convened in Colleton County has returned an Indictment charging Robert Anderson Strickland, Jr., Sheriff of Colleton County, with one count of Domestic Violence, Second Degree, in violation of section 16-25-20(C) of the South Carolina Code of Laws, as amended; and

WHEREAS, Robert Anderson Strickland, Jr., as Sheriff of Colleton County, South Carolina, is an officer of the State or its political subdivisions; and

WHEREAS, article VI, section 8 of the South Carolina Constitution provides, in relevant part, that “[a]ny officer of the State or its political subdivisions . . . who has been indicted by a grand jury for a crime involving moral turpitude . . . may be suspended by the Governor until he shall have been acquitted” and “[i]n case of conviction the office shall be declared vacant and the vacancy filled as may be provided by law”; and

WHEREAS, under South Carolina law, moral turpitude “implies something immoral in itself,” *State v. Horton*, 271 S.C. 413, 414, 248 S.E.2d 263, 263 (1978), and “involves an act of baseness, vileness, or depravity in the social duties which a man owes to his fellow man or society in general, contrary to the accepted and customary rule of right and duty between man and man,” *State v. Major*, 301 S.C. 181, 186, 391 S.E.2d 235, 238 (1990); and

WHEREAS, Domestic Violence, Second Degree, as charged in the aforementioned Indictment, is “a crime involving moral turpitude” for purposes of article VI, section 8 of the South Carolina Constitution; and

WHEREAS, section 23-11-40(C) of the South Carolina Code of Laws, as amended, provides, in pertinent part, that “[i]f any vacancy occurs in the office [of sheriff in any county of this State] at any time and is created by suspension by the Governor upon any sheriff’s indictment, the Governor shall appoint some suitable person . . . to hold the office until the suspended sheriff is acquitted, or the indictment is otherwise disposed of, or until a sheriff is elected and qualifies in the next general election for county sheriffs, whichever event occurs first”; and

WHEREAS, Charles Lytle Ghent, of Edisto Beach, South Carolina, is a fit and proper person to serve as Sheriff of Colleton County.

NOW, THEREFORE, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of South Carolina and pursuant to the Constitution and Laws of this State and the powers conferred upon me therein, I hereby suspend Robert Anderson Strickland, Jr. from the office of Sheriff of Colleton County until such time as he shall be formally acquitted or convicted. Accordingly, pursuant to article VI, section 8 of the South Carolina Constitution and section 23-11-40(C) of the South Carolina Code of Laws, I hereby appoint Charles Lytle Ghent to serve as Sheriff of Colleton County until Robert Anderson Strickland, Jr. is acquitted, or the indictment is otherwise disposed of, or until a sheriff is elected and qualifies in the next general election for county sheriffs, whichever event occurs first.

This action in no manner addresses the guilt or innocence of Robert Anderson Strickland, Jr. and shall not be construed as an expression of any opinion on such question. This Order is effective immediately.

**GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND THE
GREAT SEAL OF THE STATE OF SOUTH**

**CAROLINA, THIS 21st DAY OF
NOVEMBER, 2019.**

**HENRY MCMASTER
Governor**