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AGENCY'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

SECTION I: Office Organizational Overview and FY25 Accomplishments

The office of the Attorney General was established in 1699, and there have been at least 50 persons to have served in that role prior to AG Wilson. It has evolved dramatically in that time, but the office derives its authority constitutionally as the state's chief prosecutor, statutorily as the chief lawyer for the state, and in common law as the chief protector of the public interest. These responsibilities have defined the reorganization within the office over the past year; the focus of management is on these assigned duties.

As of September 2025, the Attorney General's Office had 389.65 positions (328.65 classified FTEs, 53 Temporary, 3 unclassified, 1 grant, and 1 agency head). The office is broken into seven divisions: Executive, Solicitor General, Legal Services, Criminal, Crime Victim Services, Victim Advocacy, and Administration.

1. **THE EXECUTIVE DIVISION** acts as the executive decision making and coordination section of the Agency. As a Constitutional Officer, the Attorney General is a coordinator for all legal services in the State. This division also houses the Government Relations, Public Affairs, and Constituent Services sections.

The Public Affairs section keeps the public abreast of what the office is conducting on the Public's behalf. The section also answers media inquiries about specific cases and issues involving the office. In FY25, the public affairs section responded to approximately 1131 media inquiries on behalf of the agency.

The Government Relations section works closely with the State Legislature to make sure our elected officials are aware of important issues our office is handling. The section also works with lawmakers on drafting bills, amending statutes, and addressing the Agency's budget needs.

Lastly, the Constituent Services section receives, and fields calls from the public relating to various requests for information and assistance concerning the Agency and other areas of State Government. Constituent Services also has a "springing" responsibility during declared States of Emergency to coordinate incoming information on Price Gouging for further analysis and forwarding for potential prosecution.

2. **THE SOLICITOR GENERAL DIVISION** represents the State in significant litigation including challenges to the constitutionality of State laws and tidelands ownership and assures consistency of legal positions across division lines. The Division also reviews, and when appropriate, joins in multi-State amicus briefs in litigation and multi-state letters to Congress, federal officials, and others regarding regulatory and statutory issues. The Solicitor General Division also writes such briefs and letters for

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consideration by other states. The Solicitor General supervises the Opinions Section, which provides legal advice to the Governor, members of the General Assembly, and certain other public officials. Most often, this advice is given in the form of a written opinion. The Solicitor General Division issued a total of 54 opinions in FY25 in addition to responding to hundreds of requests for informal advice.

3. **THE LEGAL SERVICES DIVISION** handles a variety of non-criminal matters on behalf of the state. Among the Division's responsibilities are the licensing and regulation of securities professionals and products; enforcing the State's securities laws; enforcing the State's commodities laws; presenting financial outreach programs; regulating the money transmitter and currency exchange industry; enforcing the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement on behalf of the state; representing the state in civil litigation matters; and enforcing the South Carolina Unfair Trade Practices Act. The Division consists of the following sections: Securities, Money Services, Tobacco, Civil Litigation, and Consumer Protection and Antitrust.

The Securities Section assists in fulfilling the Attorney General's duties as Securities Commissioner of South Carolina. This includes registration of broker-dealers, agents, investment advisers, and investment adviser representatives prior to their doing business in this state; registering securities offerings; receiving notice filings for mutual funds, unit investment trusts, and other federal covered securities; investigating allegations of violations of securities laws and taking appropriate action; promoting investor education to help the investing public make informed decisions and avoid being defrauded; and supporting an equitable, competitive, and efficient securities industry that contributes to the economic health of the state and its citizens. As of May 22, 2025, the Securities Section also enforces the State Commodity Code.

The Securities Section had oversight of 4,728 broker-dealers and investment advisers, 271,639 broker-dealer agents, and 12,847 investment adviser representatives, who, along with issuers of securities, collectively paid \$37.2 million to the State in registration fees in FY25. The Securities Section collected over \$335,000 in fines and ordered more than \$111,000 in disgorgement and restitution to be paid to investors. The Securities Section also responded to 719 complaints in addition to addressing referrals from other state agencies. The Securities Section also responded to 112 matters related to vulnerable adults pursuant to the Protection of Vulnerable Adults from Financial Exploitation Act. In FY25, the section held 70 educational outreach events, which reached approximately 8,150 retirees, securities professionals, students, and other citizens of the state.

The Money Services Section is responsible for protecting the interests of South Carolina consumers who use a money service business (MSB) by ensuring that the overall financial condition of the MSB is sound and the MSB is properly monitoring transactions to deter the occurrence of money

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laundering, terrorist funding, and/or other financial crimes. In FY25, it had oversight over 209 MSBs. The Money Services Section collected over \$1.6 million in fines in FY25.

The Tobacco Section works with issues related to the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) entered by multiple states and major tobacco manufacturers. Pursuant to the MSA, these states settled claims for the future costs of tobacco-related health expenses. For payments provided, each state agreed to “diligently enforce” its respective Tobacco Escrow Fund Act. South Carolina was among the states that settled the manufacturers’ multi-year litigation effort; that settlement now ensures future payments to the state and saves the expense of the litigation. The Tobacco Section enforces the requisite statutes to maximize the yearly MSA payment, which was over \$66.8 million in 2025. The Tobacco Section maintains the South Carolina Tobacco Directory by certifying and monitoring 23 tobacco product manufacturers, as of June 30, 2025. The Tobacco Section enforces the non-participating manufacturers’ statutory obligation to deposit escrow funds into accounts held for the benefit of South Carolina. The section is participating in a data clearinghouse to verify the State’s compliance with both the settlement agreement and the MSA.

The Civil Litigation Section (Civil) represents the State’s interests in a wide variety of civil legal matters. Matters handled by this section include those related to contested civil matters, constitutional challenges, elections, the environment, foreclosures, extraditions/detainers, employee grievance hearings, sex offender registry issues, state agencies’ Form 1 requests to hire outside counsel, the South Carolina Underground Facility Damage Prevention Act (SC811), FOIA requests, opinion letters required in connection with bond issuances by the state, and civil asset forfeitures. Additionally, Civil is frequently called upon to represent members of South Carolina Judicial Department. Civil is uniquely skilled in handling novel issues that arise.

In FY25, Civil handled over 1,500 state agency Form 1 requests to hire outside counsel and 214 FOIA requests.

The Consumer Protection and Antitrust Section handle allegations of free market violations and unfair and/or deceptive business practices, and regulation and enforcement of non-profits and charitable trust matters. These cases can be managed internally individually, through multistate groups, or through the assistance of outside counsel in federal or state courts and on behalf of consumers or state agencies. While most cases handled by this section involve antitrust and unfair trade practices claims, the section also handles charitable trust matters. The Office transferred \$6,661,583.72 million to the State Litigation Recovery Fund in FY25 from Consumer Protection and Antitrust litigation. Pursuant to settlements the Office negotiated, \$43,839,172.25 million was transferred to the South Carolina Opioid Recovery Fund Board and \$4,423,437.75 million was transferred to SC Medicaid.

3. THE CRIMINAL DIVISION consists of two subdivisions – Post-Adjudication and Criminal Prosecution, each consisting of separate units. The Post-Adjudication Unit consists of the

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following sections: Criminal Appeals, Post-Conviction Relief (PCR), Capital, Collateral and Federal Habeas Corpus Litigation, and Sexually Violent Predator Litigation. The Prosecution Section consists of multiple sections in separate units. Two sections handle cases adopted by the Solicitors, by request, as well as specialty areas of prosecutions.

The Criminal Prosecution Sections

The State Grand Jury Prosecution Unit (SGJ) of the South Carolina Attorney General's Office is a unit which primarily handles presenting complex investigations to the State Grand Jury and then prosecuting cases indicted by the State Grand Jury. The State Grand Jury has limited but statewide jurisdiction by statute to investigate fourteen different types of cases, including public corruption, multi-county drug trafficking organizations, criminal gangs, securities fraud, money laundering, and human trafficking.

The SGJ's recent investigations, indictments, and convictions focus on opioid and methamphetamine trafficking, particularly cartel-related activity, as well as opioid-related murders linked to fentanyl. It uses aggressive investigative techniques and analysis, such as wiretaps and detailed financial analysis, to partner with law enforcement in developing and prosecuting these complex cases. It has created a signature partnership with SLED and SCDC to disrupt criminal enterprises within state prisons, which has addressed corruption and gang activity and prosecuted individuals involved in crime from narcotics trafficking to fraud to creation and distribution of child sexual images. The SGJ continues to play a key role in high-profile cases, such as the Murdaugh case and related investigations, and has secured convictions by trial or plea in trafficking, gang, corruption, and white-collar cases. Since 2017, requests for service to the unit and its output have more than tripled. It continues to collaborate with federal, state, and local agencies and be the glue that holds multi-jurisdictional task forces together.

The Internet Crimes Against Children Section (ICAC) is one of sixty-one task forces spread across the country that work together as a cohesive national group. ICAC serves as the statewide Task Force headquarters for South Carolina coordinating all investigative, prosecutorial, and education efforts in the state to combat the sexual exploitation of children using any means of technology. ICAC blends state and federal resources to form relationships with agencies at the local, state, and federal levels.

Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force spans across 130 agencies statewide as of FY25. The task force held 209 presentations, which reached 24,375 constituents across the state to educate children parents and community on how to recognize and avoid technology related child solicitation and exploitation. The task force investigated 14,321 cases and responded to 12,547 cyber tips of solicitation of

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minors. The ICAC digital forensics unit at the Attorney General's Office examined 2,293 items in 152 different cases to find 220,356 files of child sexual abuse material.

The General and Special Prosecution Sections consists of prosecutors who handle cases involving special victims, law enforcement issues, white collar crimes, general prosecution matters, and violence against women. These sections handled 246 cases in FY25.

The sections are listed below.

The Special Victims Prosecution Section handles matters referred to the office as either conflicts of interest or for the specialized training and experience of the attorneys in the unit. This includes relationship crimes such as domestic violence, criminal sexual conduct, harassment, and stalking, as well as human trafficking, child abuse and neglect, and other cases involving vulnerable populations. In FY25, this section handled 69 cases and opened 74 new ones.

The Law Enforcement Integrity Prosecution Section reviews and prosecutes officer involved shooting and use of force cases, as well as law enforcement involved misconduct, other criminal cases, and in-custody deaths. These matters are referred to the office by various solicitors or law enforcement agencies. In FY25, the section opened 5 officer involved shooting cases and closed 3.

The General Prosecution Prosecutors Section handles cases referred to the office based upon requests from Solicitors or the judiciary due to a conflict of interest. They handle a variety of cases from violent crimes like murder to the unauthorized practice of law, financial crimes and environmental matters throughout the state.

The Medicaid Recipient Fraud Unit (MRFU) of the South Carolina Attorney General's Office (AGO) works with the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to enforce the laws against fraudulent use of Medicaid benefits. The MRFU's mission is to combat Medicaid beneficiary fraud via in-depth investigations that result in deterrence, recovery of funds owed the state, future cost avoidance, and criminal prosecution. The unit closed 79 cases in FY25.

The Vulnerable Adult & Medicaid Provider Fraud Unit (VAMPF) is South Carolina's Federally certified Medicaid Fraud Control Unit. The Unit operates in part on funds from a federal grant, investigates and prosecutes cases of Medicaid Provider Fraud in South Carolina; patient abuse, neglect, and /or exploitation occurring in residential care facilities and other matters within its jurisdiction as set forth in C.F.R. 1007.

Violence Against Women Section (VAWA), operating under a federal grant and state funding, develops strategies and procedures for the prevention, response and prosecution of domestic violence, sexual assault, harassment, and stalking. During FY25, the program developed advanced training for service providers, gave formal presentations to community partners, and created sector-specific resources in the

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investigation on violent crimes. VAWA hosted the 27th annual Silent witness ceremony to honoring 30 domestic violence victims who lost their lives. The ceremony also acted as a clearinghouse for related data. The unit supported Sexual Assault Response (SART) teams and Domestic Violence Coordinating Councils (DVCCs).

The South Carolina Human Trafficking Section was established by SC Code Ann. 16-3-2050(B)(1) and states the Attorney General will chair a task force to address the crime in South Carolina including both US Citizen and Foreign National victims. The Task Force efforts are in coordination with federal, state, and local partners. The statewide human trafficking plan was disseminated in June of 2014. The law requires the Task Force coordinate the implementation of the State Plan and submit annual reports to the Governor, President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House. The State Task Force must also meet a minimum of four (4) times annually.

In FY25, the State Task Force, under legislative mandate, partnered with Safe House Project (SHP), a national non-profit, to certify agencies that provide services to human trafficking victims and survivors. South Carolina is the first state in the nation to require SHP certification as the State Task Force strives to ensure victim-centered, trauma-informed services. The State Task Force partnered with the SC Trucking Association to distribute 50,000 decals, available in both English and Spanish, to trucking companies across the state. Regional Task Forces supported an initiative to distribute 50,000 personal items, with National Hotline information, to unhoused and runaway shelters. The Task Force launched the first phase of its statewide Hispanic awareness campaign. State Task Force, along with the Law Enforcement subcommittee, hosted five two-day advanced law enforcement trainings. Task Force staff and prosecutors provided 98 presentations statewide, reaching approximately 5,155 attendees.

The Post-Adjudication Sections

Criminal Appeals Section represents the interests of the State of South Carolina in the South Carolina Supreme Court, the South Carolina Court of Appeals, and the United States Supreme Court in all appeals from criminal convictions in South Carolina, except appeals arising from murder convictions. Criminal Appeals also represents the interests of the State of South Carolina in some post-conviction relief appeals. A criminal defendant may appeal to the state appellate courts from a criminal conviction or sentence asserting that error was committed during trial, which may require the case to be remanded to the trial court or the conviction or sentence be vacated or reversed. Additionally, Criminal Appeals provides advice and training to prosecutors and others throughout the state.

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Post-Conviction Relief Section (PCR) handles all non-capital post-conviction relief actions and the appeals from those actions, as well as other collateral attacks on criminal convictions in state court. In South Carolina, a post-conviction relief proceeding is a collateral attack on a criminal conviction. This means the action is not necessarily to challenge not the sufficiency of the conviction itself, but the general process surrounding the conviction such as counsel's representation, the actions of the prosecutors, or other aspects of the criminal proceeding. The remedy or relief from a grant of post-conviction relief is typically a new trial, although resentencing or dismissal of charges is possible in rare scenarios. The post-conviction relief process is governed largely by the Uniform Post-Conviction Procedures Act, S.C. Code Ann. § 17-27-10 et seq. The convicted person filing the application is referred to as an "applicant." Once the application is completed, it must be filed with the Clerk of Court in the county of conviction within one year of sentencing or the conclusion of a direct appeal. The filed application will then be sent to the Attorney General's Office.

The Attorney General's Office represents the State and will respond to the claims raised in the application. If the allegations listed in the application require an evidentiary hearing, an attorney will be appointed to represent the applicant. A judge will issue a final order in all cases, regardless of whether a hearing is held on the application. Once a final order is issued, the non-prevailing party may file an appeal of the final order. In FY25, the unit had an active caseload of 2,280 pending post-conviction relief actions in the circuit court and 488 pending post-conviction relief appeals in the appellate courts.

The Capital Collateral Litigation Section was created in 1995 from the Direct Appeal and PCR Unit to coordinate the handling of all murder conviction appeals, all death penalty litigation, and all federal habeas corpus litigation involving any South Carolina state convictions. The unit ensures just and accurate results in criminal litigation in state and federal courts on South Carolina convictions, including death penalty sentences. The unit timely presents the State's position in a cogent, efficient, and persuasive manner and addresses all relevant issues concerning the conviction and sentence. These issues include the correctness of the judicial proceedings, the quality of defense counsel actions, and the actions of the prosecution and their combined effect on the result. The Section addresses the quality of the trial prosecutor's decisions and actions in court and the Office's role as ministers of justice to address the confidence of the judgment.

The Sexually Violent Predator Section (SVP) was developed because the existing civil commitment process is inadequate to address the special needs of sexually violent predators and the risks that they present to society. The General Assembly determined that a separate, involuntary civil commitment process for the long-term control, care, and treatment of sexually violent predators is necessary. (S.C. Code of Laws §44-48-20) The Attorney General's SVP Unit is charged with providing the

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timely, efficient, and effective litigation of civil commitment proceedings, as well as committees' mental status annual reviews as required by Title 44, Chapter 48 of the South Carolina Code. In FY25, the Unit received 80 new periodic review reports and 26 new pre-commitment cases. As of June 30, 2025, there were 238 residents in the SVP treatment facility, all of whom are required to have periodic reviews that will be processed by the Unit.

4. **THE STATE DIVISION OF CRIME VICTIM SERVICES** is divided into four departments that assist victims of crime in the state through direct victim compensation, federal victim assistance grants to crime victim providers, the crime victim ombudsman office, and the training and statistical analysis of crime victim advocates across the state.

The Department of Crime Victim Compensation (DCVC) has a two-fold mission. DCVC provides financial assistance to eligible crime victims and their families for expenses incurred as the result of a crime. DCVC, through its auditing section, also monitors entities who receive Act 141 funds to ensure those funds are used for victim services. In FY25 DCVC paid out a total of \$5,913,689 on 5,547 claims. The average time to process those claims was 64 days. The auditing section performed budget reviews on 364 entities and recouped \$474,994 for the State Victim Assistance Program (SVAP) fund in FY25.

The Department of Crime Victim Assistance Grants provides Federal and State grant funding support to agencies that provide direct services to crime victims in South Carolina. The Department of Crime Victim Assistance Grants awarded nearly \$26.2 million in sub-grants to crime victim service providers across the state of South Carolina in FY25. Through this funding, victims received victim advocacy, residential shelters, forensic exams, emergency assistance, and human trafficking victim assistance among other services.

The Department of Crime Victim Ombudsman responds to requests from citizens and members of the criminal justice community to solve specific problems involving the rights of victims of crime and promotes systemic improvements in agencies which serve and interact with crime victims. The Department of Crime Victim Ombudsman aided in 879 crime victim cases in FY25. The Department of Crime Victim Ombudsman also oversees the development and implementation of the Address Confidentiality Program. This program is for victims of domestic violence, human trafficking, stalking, harassment, and sexual offenses. Through the Address Confidentiality Program those victims can be given a substitute address to use when interacting with state and local government, thus keeping their true address out of public records and concealed from their abuser. The program also provides mail forwarding services for participants. In FY24, Address Confidentiality Program staff successfully created policies and procedures to prepare for

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the launch of the program in FY25.

The Department of Crime Victim Services Training, Provider Certification, and Statistical Analysis monitors and approved training and certification for victim services providers. Additionally, the Department provides statistical information and analysis to the Crime Victim Services Division and other agencies as requested. The Department registered 540 new Victim Service Providers in FY25.

5. **THE VICTIM ADVOCACY DIVISION** is statutorily mandated by SC Code 16-3-1505 – 1560 and the South Carolina Victim's Bill of Rights to keep crime victims apprised of cases represented by the South Carolina Victim's Bill of Rights to keep crime victims apprised of cases represented by the South Carolina Office of the Attorney General. In prosecution cases, victims are provided notifications of bond matters, plea negotiations, accompanied to trial/plea hearings and assisted in filing crime victim compensation claims. Victims are provided status updates and court accompaniment in post-adjudication matters including appellate matters, Post-Conviction Relief filings, federal habeas petitions, and notices relating to the Sexually Violent Predator Act. Appropriate referrals are provided to mitigate mental, physical, and financial distress. Advocates provide social support and guidance through the criminal justice process. The Director serves as a member of the South Carolina Victim Services Coordinating Council.

6. **STATE GRAND JURY CLERK'S OFFICE** provides services for the adjudication of State Grand Jury cases prosecuted through the South Carolina Judicial System. The Clerk's Office provides support to judges and their staff, defendants and their attorneys, prosecutors, and law enforcement entities during the adjudication process of criminal and civil cases through the State Grand Jury. Assists in the selection of jurors who serve on the State Grand Jury. The Clerk of Court's appointment by the judiciary and duties are established by statute, S.C. Code Sections 14-7-1666, 14-7-1680, 14-7-1720, and 14-7-1750.

7. **THE ADMINISTRATION DIVISION** is divided into five departments: Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology/Records, Procurement, Reception, and Support Services. The Division provides support to agency employees by managing the recruitment of new employees, coordinating employee relations, providing opportunities for employee growth, procuring necessary equipment and services, managing agency budget and cash flow, coordinating travel and training, and maintaining vital records systems. The Administration Division will continue to focus on streamlining the agency onboarding and orientation process to promptly improve access to essential internal resources while ensuring a smooth welcoming transition. The Division aims to include administration departments in the onboarding orientation and training process to ensure new employees receive the tools, system access, and agency support they need for the best performance. The Information Technology Team will also focus on upgrading the case management system and replacing the document management system. Information Technology

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successfully identified and replaced the Claims Management System for Crime Victim Services Compensation, which will streamline and improve processes.

SECTION II: Risk Assessment and Mitigation Strategies

The Agency has established eight division level goals that directly contribute to the agency's ability to carry out its mission and serve the citizens of South Carolina. Should the divisions not obtain the established goals a direct negative impact will be felt by the agency and the citizens of South Carolina.

The biggest direct impact to the agency in not achieving their established goals would be an increase in crime throughout the state, a backlog of critical and highly complex criminal and civil cases, and a decrease in statewide trainings, outreach, and support to include funding to critical prevention areas, such as Human Trafficking, Violence Against Women, Internet Crimes Against Children, and Crime Victim Assistance. The Agency is also in direct partnership with local county and state government offices for prosecutorial and investigative assistance. These agencies would feel a direct negative impact and reduction in productivity due to the agency's inability to meet established goals.