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Subject: Press Conference: Announcing Victims Services Consolidation Package
Location: Crime Victims' Memorial Garden by Riverfront Park in Columbia, SC (near the Little Red School House) – 1704 Gist Street; Columbia, SC 29201.
When: 11/3/2016 10:00:00 AM - 10:30:00 AM

Advance: Colin Duncan
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Crime Victims Services Consolidation Announcement

Date: Thursday, November 3, 2016

Time: 10:00 – 10:30 a.m.

Location: Crime Victims' Memorial Garden by Riverfront Park in Columbia, SC (near the Little Red School House) – 1704 Gist Street; Columbia, SC 29201.

Purpose: To announce the crime victims' services consolidation package, which includes merging multiple state entities into a new Crime Victims Services Division at the Attorney General's Office.

Attendees:

- Governor Nikki Haley
- Attorney General Alan Wilson
- Senator Katrina Shealy
- Senator Thomas McElveen
- Rep. Beth Bernstein
- Chief Mark Keel
- Director Leroy Smith
- Paul Koch (Representing Director Marcia Adams)
- Veronica Kunz, Crime Victims' Ombudsman
- Larry Barker, State Office of Victims Assistance
- Laura Hudson
- Sara Barber
- Numerous other stakeholders.

Suggested Speaking Order:

1. Nikki Haley – To make historic announcement of consolidating crime victims services and to recall the importance of crime victims as why we are here by introducing SC's voice for victims (Laura Hudson).
2. Laura Hudson – To provide additional details about the consolidation package and to introduce the next leader of crime victims (Alan Wilson).
3. Alan Wilson – To talk about the future of what consolidation will mean for SC under the Attorney General's Office.
4. Sara Barber – To explain how monumental this change will be for victims and advocates.

Bipartisan Legislative Support, thus far:

- Senate: Massey, Shealy, Grooms, Hutto, McElveen.
- House: Lucas, Delleney, M. Smith, Rutherford, J. Smith, Bernstein, Weeks.

Three Big Points (Talking Points Summary):

- 1st – Today is a great, historic day in SC, because we are giving a home to crime victims services for the first time in state history since 1998 (Bill of Rights)—for too long, we had a fractured, fragmented, and inefficient system.
- 2nd – "Crime Victims Services" will be the consolidation of existing services to streamline government, including victim compensation, grants, provider training and certification, and the crime victims' ombudsman.
- 3rd – Remember why we are here, to wrap our arms around victims and their families, and no one is better at that

- than Laura Hudson.

Talking Points:

- Today is a great day in South Carolina, because we are giving crime victims services a home in South Carolina for the first time in our state's history.
- For too long, we have allowed agencies and programs to be spread throughout state government, delivering poor results to taxpayers and to crime victims.
- When our Domestic Violence Task Force started looking at that reality, our state had to look in the mirror—2nd highest in the nation for the rate of women killed by men and 8th highest in the nation for the rate of violent crime.
- What we saw was a fractured, fragmented, and inefficient system with multiple agencies providing multiple services with no central, statewide, unified effort.
- Today, that changes—today, we are announcing a proposal to consolidate crime victim services to one office at one place under one leader, our Attorney General.
- The **“South Carolina Crime Victims Services”** will consolidate existing agencies and services: (1) victim compensation, (2) victim assistance grants, (3) victim service provider training and certification, and (4) the crime victims ombudsman—taking parts from the Department of Administration (CVO and SOVA) and the Department of Public Safety and putting them together under our Attorney General.
- This will bring together approximately 55 employees and have NO fiscal impact.
- To make sure this will occur as smoothly as possible, **I am issuing an Executive Order to establish a Transition Team** that will address all administrative matters affected with consolidating these agencies, including HR, IT, and Finance, and that report will be submitted to me in January.
- I want to be sure that as this package moves through the General Assembly, every “I” will be dotted and every “t” crossed—that’s what the Department of Administration is for and they’ll lead this effort along with DPS and the Attorney General’s Office.
- This will be the most historic, monumental reform for crime victims since 1998 when the Victims’ Bill of Rights was added to our State Constitution (with 89% majority vote).
- Victims have rights, and government is there to secure those rights and see that justice is carried out.
- We have the responsibility to lift up crime victims and wrap our arms around them and their families as they endure terrible, heartbreaking tragedies.
- We are at this beautiful Memorial Garden for Crime Victims in our capital city, and while we never want anything bad to happen, we know that bad things happen and people are hurt—when they are, they need to know that we have their back and people are fighting for them.
- **I can think of no better champion / fighter in our state for crime victims than Laura Hudson.**
 - Nobody knows victims’ issues in South Carolina better than Laura—in every major milestone for victims’ rights, Laura has been there and fought for every reform.
 - As I do, every member of the General Assembly respects her, listens to her, and learns from her.
 - She has been the true architect of this reform, building consensus and bringing everyone to the table, and I cannot thank her enough.
- I would like her to come forward and say a few words on behalf of all crime victims before passing the torch to our next leader of crime victims services, our Attorney General.

BACKGROUND:

NO fiscal impact.

Affects 55 employees.

Joining 27 other states that merge victim compensation and victim assistance grants together.

Timing of the Consolidation:

1. Nov. 3, 2016 – Announcement is made; Governor issues Executive Order establishing a Transition Team.
2. December 2016 – Legislation to be pre-filed.
3. January 2017 – Transition Team submits Transition Plan (HR, IT, Finance components).
4. Spring 2017 (?) – Projected passage of the bill; Governor also to issue Executive Order moving grant administration from DPS to Attorney General’s Office.
5. July 1, 2017 – Projected official start date of the new Crime Victims Services.

Overview of “South Carolina Crime Victim Services”:

The State Office of Victim Assistance, the Crime Victim's Ombudsman, the Division of Victim Assistance Grants with the Department of Public Safety will be consolidated under the leadership of the Attorney General to form the Crime Victim Services of South Carolina.

Will serve as a central agency responsible for the provisions of Victim Services in South Carolina to promote victim rights as afforded by our State Constitution and statutes, provide a cohesive support system to victim service programs in both the state and private sector, and to ensure oversight of services provided to victims. A collaborative effort to share the responsibility through government, survivors, and community that will greatly enhance the public good.

Specific functions: victim compensation, victim services grant funding to state and private organizations, training and certification of victim service providers, oversight of victim services, and guidance to the state regarding policies impacting crime victims based upon statistical data of victimization and availability and quality of services to crime victims.

Focus:

1. Compensation: Continue the work of the State Office of Victim Assistance in providing assistance to victims with medical expenses, mental health counseling expenses, funeral expenses, and lost wages. Continue training victim services providers of the process of obtaining compensation funds for victims. To provide oversight of fees, fines, and assessments to ensure compensation and services are adequately provided to crime victims across the state.
2. Victim Assistance Grants: Continue the work of the Department of Public Safety in administering federal justice victim grants: VOCA (Victims of Crime Act), VAWA (Violence Against Women Act), & SVAP (State Victims Assistance Program) grants to ensure victim service organizations can provide the necessary services to promote healing and safety for all crime victims.
3. Training Certification and Statistical Analysis and Research: Continue the work of the Office of Victim Services Education and Certification in training best practices to ensure providers and programs across the state are responding equally, respectfully, and compassionately to all victims and to the extent possible, to protect them from further victimization. Provide support to victim service providers to lessen burnout in the field. With a renewed focus in victim services, the collaborative effort demands review of statistical data regarding crime victimization and quality and availability of crime victim services to ensure services are adequately provided and rights are protected in every county.
4. Crime Victim Ombudsman: Continue the work of the ombudsman through the investigation of victim complaints in order to protect the rights of the victim afforded by the State Constitution and the SC Code of Laws.