

Senator Jeff Zell

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Committees:

Agriculture and Natural Resources
Family and Veterans' Services
Fish, Game and Forestry
Judiciary
Medical Affairs



***Clarendon County
Legislative Delegation***

Friday, August 15, 2025

Rep. Fawn M. Pedalino

Clarendon Delegation Chair

District No. 64 – Clarendon &
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Committees:

Labor, Commerce and Industry
Rules

The Honorable Alan Wilson
Attorney General of South Carolina
P.O. Box 11549
Columbia, SC 29211

Re: Ensuring Justice for the Victim's Family, Accountability in the Michael Wilson Pearson Case, and Review of Prosecutorial Conduct

Dear Attorney General Wilson,

As the elected members of the Clarendon County Legislative Delegation, we are writing to you regarding the 2010 violent assault and robbery that left a respected Clarendon County resident severely injured.

Recent developments, including reporting in *The Post and Courier* and statements from the Honorable Judge Robert Hood, have brought forward new information that raises plausible doubt about the role of the defendant, Mr. Michael Wilson Pearson, in this case. While we are not in a position to determine guilt or innocence, the seriousness of the allegations and the nature of the evidence now being discussed make it imperative that the matter be reviewed without delay.

Justice in this case must mean two things: ensuring the victim's family receives closure through the prosecution of the correct individuals and making certain that no one remains incarcerated for a crime they did not commit. These goals are not in conflict; both are essential to restoring faith in the criminal justice system. While we fully respect the independence of the judicial process and the prosecutorial discretion vested in solicitors, the allegations outlined in the public record demand urgent review and, if necessary, corrective action to preserve public trust in the integrity of our criminal justice system.

In addition to questions surrounding Mr. Pearson's conviction, we are concerned by public allegations regarding the conduct of the 3rd Circuit Solicitor's Office. Reports indicate that the solicitor may have been aware of information suggesting Mr. Pearson's possible innocence and later discussed conditions including waiving the right to civil litigation and refraining from returning to Clarendon County in connection with his potential release. While the solicitor denies these allegations, the appearance of such discussions in a matter involving potential wrongful conviction is troubling and warrants independent examination.

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Our concerns include, but are not limited to:

1. **Plausible Doubt as to the Defendant's Involvement** – Sworn statements, including a co-defendant's confession naming other individuals, along with physical evidence and investigative records, raise credible questions that must be fully addressed.
2. **Delay in Pursuing New Leads** – Court filings indicate that exculpatory evidence and alternative suspect information have been available since at least Fall 2023. Any delay in reviewing and acting on such evidence risks leaving the true perpetrators unaccountable and prolongs uncertainty for the victim's family.
3. **Allegations of Improper Prosecutorial Conduct** – The reported discussions of unrelated conditions tied to cooperation, if verified, would raise serious ethical concerns and could undermine confidence in the pursuit of justice in this case.
4. **Public Trust in the Justice System** – The perception that a person may be wrongfully imprisoned while credible suspects remain at large, combined with questions about prosecutorial conduct, risks lasting harm to public confidence.

Given these concerns, we respectfully request that your office:

- Conduct an immediate review of all available evidence and investigative leads in this case.
- Determine whether all responsible parties have been properly identified and charged.
- Investigate the allegations regarding the conduct of the 3rd Circuit Solicitor's Office.
- Take appropriate action to ensure both the victim's family and the public can be confident that justice is being served.

The people of Clarendon County deserve certainty that the correct individuals are being held accountable, and that no one is serving time for a crime they did not commit. This requires a thorough, impartial review of the case in light of new information and assurance that prosecutorial actions are beyond reproach.

We appreciate your immediate attention to this matter and stand ready to assist in ensuring that justice is served in both fact and perception.

Respectfully,



Representative Fawn Pedalino

Chairman, Clarendon County Legislative Delegation



Senator Jeffery Zell
South Carolina Senate

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