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Solicitor Wilson's Statement Regarding Ongoing Investigations

Charleston, S.C. --- Members of the media have shared allegations made by some involved in ongoing law enforcement investigations and prosecutions, to include the protests of Congresswoman Nancy Mace. Protestors are not new to me or my office, and this protest is no different than the others. As for me and my staff, we will continue to make decisions based on the facts and evidence before us, not on politics or its surrounding rhetoric. We will continue to make decisions rooted in the highest ethical standards. Simply put, we will not play a part in the circus sideshow of misguided protestors.

My office has not received SLED's investigative file regarding the Mace-Bryant investigation which previously was acknowledged by SLED Chief Mark Keel. I do not anticipate receiving their file for many days or even weeks. SLED has briefed me throughout the investigation, but Solicitors do not conduct criminal investigations nor make arrests, which are based on probable cause. Unlike other states, South Carolina's law does not give Solicitors authority or control over law enforcement's criminal investigations. Once law enforcement has finished their investigation and made an arrest, however, Solicitors step in to decide whether to prosecute charges based on the much higher legal standard of proof of guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

In a matter separate but related to SLED's investigation, my office is prosecuting defendant Eric Bowman for Harassment. This case was investigated by Sullivan's Island Police Department (SIPD). Late last week, the victim brought forth allegations to SIPD from an event in 2016. SIPD is investigating that matter, and it remains to be seen whether they will seek arrest warrants. Regardless of whether an arrest is eventually made, information and evidence regarding the interactions of the Defendant and Victim cannot be segregated into silos by case number. We are required by law and ethical rules to provide all relevant information to the Defense, and we have in this matter. Withholding such information can jeopardize our prosecutions and our law licenses.

As a lawyer and prosecutor, I am subject to special rules limiting my ability to make public comments about pending cases and defendants in criminal matters. For these reasons, my office cannot comment on the merits of the case. By law, the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until he is proven guilty.

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