



# ***NEWS RELEASE***

**ATTORNEY GENERAL HENRY MCMASTER**  
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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## **Crimestoppers Tipster Identities Protected By Law**

### ***New Bill Aims to Increase Public Involvement With Unsolved Crimes***

**Columbia, S.C.** – Revealing the identities of citizens who anonymously provide information on unsolved crimes to Crimestoppers' tipsters may soon be a serious crime under a bill proposed today by South Carolina Attorney General Henry McMaster, House Judiciary Chairman Jim Harrison and Richland County Sheriff Leon Lott.

The bill is designed to increase the number of tips and information on unsolved crimes provided to local Crimestoppers organization by the public.

Crimestoppers is a volunteer collaboration between local, state and federal law enforcement, community leaders and the media, which provides an outlet through which anonymous callers or tipsters can provide information about unsolved crimes. Callers who telephone the 24-hour hotline are immediately given a code number. If their tip results in an arrest, the caller is eligible for a cash reward.

The intentional release of confidential tipster information would be a misdemeanor offense punishable by up to one year in jail and a \$1,000 fine or both. When done for monetary or financial gain, the intentional release would result in a felony offense and up to five years in jail.

The proposed legislation would also establish a statewide Crimestoppers Council to coordinate and oversee efforts between local chapters and allow for drug forfeiture monies and court ordered reimbursements to help fund Crimestoppers tipster rewards. Also, Crimestoppers officials and volunteers would receive immunity from civil liability for the unintentional or accidental release of tipster identities or information.

"Our law enforcement officers in this state are outstanding and do a great job. But there will never be enough money and resources for government to do it all," said Attorney General Henry McMaster. "That's why if citizens see a crime or something suspicious they must get involved, call it in, and have confidence that their names and tips will be kept confidential by law."



“I’m confident that there will be widespread support in the General Assembly for giving our local Crimestoppers organizations the support and resources they need to continue providing law enforcement with valuable information to catch criminals,” said House Judiciary Chairman Jim Harrison, the bill’s primary sponsor in the House.

"Crimestoppers plays a significant role in bringing criminals to justice," said Richland County Sheriff Leon Lott. "Crimestoppers gives law enforcement one more tool in giving closure to victims and the communities affected by crime. Support on the state level is critical to the continued success of Crimestoppers in South Carolina."

There are seventeen active Crimestoppers organizations in the state that would come under the proposed South Carolina Crimestoppers Council.

**Midlands Area:** (Newberry, Saluda, Lexington, Fairfield, Richland, Kershaw, Calhoun Counties and Manning PD)

**Pee Dee Area** (Florence, Marion, Dillon, Marlboro, Chesterfield, Darlington, Williamsburg Counties)

**Greenville County**

**Horry County**

**York County**

**Low Country Area** (Charleston, Berkeley, Colleton, Dorchester, Georgetown Counties)

**Anderson County**

**Pickens County**

**Jasper County**

**Hartsville City**

**Orangeburg County**

**Sumter Area** (Lee, Sumter and Clarendon Counties)

**Aiken County**

**Oconee County**

**Spartanburg County**

**Union County**

**Beaufort County**

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