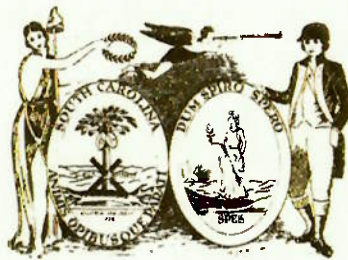


State of South Carolina

Executive Department



FILED

JUL 10 2026

Mark Hammond
SECRETARY OF STATE

Office of the Governor

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO.

2026-14

WHEREAS, as South Carolina's chief magistrate, commander-in-chief, and supreme executive authority, it is the responsibility of the Governor to protect the citizens of South Carolina from foreign and domestic threats and, as such, to promote and implement initiatives and programs to protect our citizens accordingly; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Commerce has identified the following as "foreign adversaries": the People's Republic of China, including the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and the Macau Special Administrative Region (PRC); Republic of Cuba (Cuba); Islamic Republic of Iran (Iran); Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea); Russian Federation (Russia); and Venezuelan politician Nicolás Maduro (Maduro Regime), 15 C.F.R. § 791.4 (2025); and

WHEREAS, according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the PRC engages local and state officials as part of its strategy to use "the local to surround the center," and thus to manipulate local political leaders "to turn Americans against their own government's interests and their society's interests"; and

WHEREAS, foreign adversaries seek to sabotage and corrupt key information software and systems and to steal intellectual property, information on critical infrastructure, and personal information at every level of government; and

WHEREAS, protecting critical infrastructure requires both ensuring that its components are not sourced by foreign adversaries and that individuals with access to that infrastructure do not compromise it, even inadvertently; and

WHEREAS, the State Law Enforcement Division's Fusion Center (SLED FC) has noted that foreign delegation visits are frequently used to target and attempt to gain access to sensitive or classified information, and visits by foreign guests, travel and interaction with foreigners, or conferences and meetings including foreign participants are all opportunities for nefarious behavior on the part of the foreign intelligence entity or person supporting those efforts; and

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WHEREAS, although building relationships and sharing information with our foreign partners is critical for businesses and organizations in South Carolina, this mission-essential activity can present opportunities for foreign entities to collect information that goes beyond the scope of normal business relationships and collaboration; and

WHEREAS, although foreign engagement activities are necessary and beneficial, they also pose risks, and appropriate security precautions should be taken to prevent the loss of classified and proprietary information, as well as the compromise of programs and operations during the course of foreign interactions; and

WHEREAS, although many foreign visitors are in the United States as guests at the request of the government and do not engage in the adversarial collection or compromise of information, individuals acting with ulterior motives can be difficult to detect; and

WHEREAS, preparing for those inherent risks will ensure the safety of personnel, both at home and abroad; and

WHEREAS, government officials are considered high value targets when traveling internationally due to their roles and their access to sensitive information; and

WHEREAS, international travel by South Carolina agency employees and agents can assist in expanding international commerce, building expertise, developing intergovernmental coordination, and can help create and expand state and territorial economies in the United States; and

WHEREAS, as the federal government has taken steps to better secure its systems and personnel, foreign threat actors have increasingly targeted state and local governments through technological means and relationship-building efforts to gain access to intellectual property, government operations, and other sensitive information; and

WHEREAS, other States have developed travel security programs to mitigate risks associated with international travel by government employees, thereby enhancing situational awareness and preparedness among travelers and helping protect state and territorial assets, including information about critical infrastructure and networks; and

WHEREAS, identifying and implementing preventive measures will help reduce South Carolina's exposure and liability should incidents occur abroad, and a foreign travel security program will better prepare and support state employees who may become stranded overseas due to conflict or other unforeseen circumstances; and

NOW, THEREFORE, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of South Carolina and pursuant to the Constitution and Laws of this State and the powers conferred upon me therein, I hereby establish the following programs which shall operate as set forth below:

Section 1. Establishing South Carolina Foreign Visitor Program

A. All access by official foreign visitors must be properly controlled to avoid unauthorized disclosures of confidential, sensitive, or personal information maintained by the Government of South Carolina. To facilitate safe and secure visits, state agencies or state employees who are hosting foreign delegations or official visitors must notify the SLED FC by

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sending an email to sledfvp@sled.sc.gov at least 30 days prior to an official visit and must designate a point of contact for the FC. Upon receipt of that notice, the FC will send a request for the specific information needed to facilitate SLED's Foreign Visitor Program review. The state agency point of contact must respond as soon as possible, but no later than 30 days prior to the visit. SLED FC will notify the agency of any issues or concerns as soon as possible.

B. In addition, should any state agency receive a request from any federal law enforcement agency or any government entity (foreign or domestic) relating to foreign relations or any information that involves foreign interaction, the agency must direct the request and all questions related thereto to SLED FC via email to sledfvp@sled.sc.gov.

Section 2. Establishing South Carolina Foreign Travel Program

A. South Carolina state officials traveling outside of the United States (Travelers) may encounter safety and security concerns depending on the destination of travel and the current circumstances in that country during the trip. SLED FC is uniquely equipped to evaluate and communicate such safety and security concerns to Travelers pursuant to the South Carolina Foreign Travel Program.

B. Traveling abroad by state employees provides foreign intelligence entities an opportunity to target state employees on said entities' own soil or in another country in which they operate. State employees traveling on state government official business may be subject to extensive inspection and questioning by authorities at ports of entry, their activities may be monitored in country, and hotel rooms and safes may even be surreptitiously accessed. To protect our employees and the information they possess, the SLED FC will facilitate a review of safety and security concerns when state employees travel out of the United States on official business. To facilitate this process, any state employee traveling out of the country on official business must send an email communicating such to the SLED FC at TravelSecurity@sled.sc.gov. This must be accomplished as far in advance as possible but no later than 30 days prior to the out-of-state travel.

C. Upon receipt, SLED FC will review and evaluate the information and will contact the Traveler to gather more information if needed. SLED FC will then provide necessary information regarding any known issues in the destination of travel or brief the Traveler with safety and security information prior to the foreign travel. All state officials must cooperate with SLED FC to facilitate this exchange of information.

D. As part of the Foreign Travel Program, the Traveler may be asked to schedule a short debriefing with SLED FC upon the Traveler's return from foreign travel. This debrief will be solely related to safety and security issues or concerns that the Traveler may have encountered during the foreign travel. All Travelers must cooperate with SLED FC upon request as a part of the South Carolina Foreign Travel Program.

E. On a monthly basis or as otherwise requested by him, SLED FC shall inform and advise the Governor regarding all findings, conclusions, and concerns relating to the safety and security of Travelers, the citizens of South Carolina, the State of South Carolina, and the United States of America as formulated or developed in connection with this Program, including the strengths and weaknesses of said Program and any recommendations in response thereto. Concerns of imminent threats or dangers shall be reported to the Governor immediately and handled pursuant to applicable security protocols.

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Section 3. General Provisions

A. This Order is not intended to create, and does not create, any individual right, privilege, or benefit, whether substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the State of South Carolina, its agencies, departments, political subdivisions, or other entities, or any officers, employees, or agents thereof, or any other person.

B. If any section, subsection, paragraph, subparagraph, sentence, clause, phrase, or word of this Order is for any reason held to be unconstitutional or invalid, such holding shall not affect the constitutionality or validity of the remaining portions of this Order, as the undersigned would have issued this Order, and each and every section, subsection, paragraph, subparagraph, sentence, clause, phrase, and word thereof, irrespective of the fact that any one or more other sections, subsections, paragraphs, subparagraphs, sentences, clauses, phrases, or words hereof may be declared to be unconstitutional, invalid, or otherwise ineffective.

C. This Order shall be implemented consistent with and to the maximum extent provided by applicable law and shall be subject to the availability of appropriations. This Order shall not be interpreted, applied, implemented, or construed in a manner so as to impair, impede, or otherwise affect the authority granted by law to an executive agency or department, or the officials or head thereof, including the undersigned.

D. I hereby expressly authorize the Office of the Governor to provide or issue any necessary and appropriate additional or supplemental guidance, rules, regulations, or restrictions regarding the application of this Order or to otherwise provide clarification regarding the same, through appropriate means, without the need for further Orders.

E. This Order is effective immediately and shall remain in effect unless otherwise expressly stated herein or modified, amended, extended, or rescinded by subsequent Order.



GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND THE
GREAT SEAL OF THE STATE OF
SOUTH CAROLINA, THIS 10th DAY OF
JULY, 2026.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Henry Dargan McMaster".

HENRY DARGAN MCMASTER
Governor

ATTEST:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Mark Hammond".

MARK HAMMOND
Secretary of State