



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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SCDC Director Byars Announces His Retirement

(Columbia, S.C.) South Carolina Department of Corrections Director William R. Byars, Jr. announced today that he is retiring effective September 30, 2013. Byars has served as the director at SCDC since January, 2011, when he was appointed by Governor Nikki Haley and confirmed by the state Senate.

During his three-year tenure, Byars helped eliminate deficit spending at one of the state's largest agencies. He oversaw reorganization of many programs and services for inmates and a consolidation effort that has closed some prison facilities while maintaining staffing levels and creating better overall efficiency in the operation of the correctional system. Through his leadership, SCDC has seen its inmate population decline from 23,300 in 2011 to less than 22,000 inmates today in 26 institutions across the state. Recidivism rates were also lowered during that time frame from 30.6 % in 2011 to 27.5 % today, a 20-year low.

"After many wonderful years in public service, I've decided that the time is right to finally slow down and enjoy more time with my family," said Byars. "I have had the pleasure of working under four governors in various capacities and have especially enjoyed my relationship with Governor Haley over the last three years. She has taken a particular interest in the Department of Corrections and has worked closely with us in helping make some much needed improvements to our facilities and equipment and in getting salary increases for correctional officers at our maximum security prisons."

Byars praised the employees of the Department of Corrections for their efforts in working with him during his tenure. "The employees at SCDC have a tough, often dangerous job to do, and I have found them to be uniformly dedicated to the state and true public servants. I am very pleased with what we have been able to accomplish together and am confident that the momentum we have started will continue going forward."

Prior to his appointment at Corrections, Byars served for eight years as Director of the South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice. Byars came to DJJ after working as Director of the Children's Law Office at the University of South Carolina School of Law. Byars also served for ten years as a Family Court Judge for the Fifth Judicial Circuit.

"Judge Byars' service to our state has been beyond exemplary and South Carolina is a better place because of it," said Governor Nikki Haley. "His accomplishments at both the Department of Corrections and DJJ stand out as models for instituting reform minded government that effectively and efficiently work for taxpayers. We will miss his tireless dedication and professionalism and wish him and his family the very best in all their future endeavors."

Page 2 - Byars' Retirement

Governor Haley is currently in active discussions with potential candidates to fill the vacancy left by Judge Byars' retirement.