

State of South Carolina

Executive Department



Office of the Governor

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 2025-09

WHEREAS, a Grand Jury convened in the Florence Division of the United States District Court for the District of South Carolina has returned an Indictment charging Mike A. Brown, a member of North Charleston City Council representing District One, with one count of Conspiracy to Commit Bribery with Respect to Programs Receiving Federal Funds and Honest Services Wire Fraud, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 371; one count of Bribery with Respect to Programs Receiving Federal Funds, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 666(a)(1)(B), (b) and 18 U.S.C. § 2; and one count of Honest Services Wire Fraud, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1343, 18 U.S.C. § 1346, and 18 U.S.C. § 2; and

WHEREAS, article VI, section 8 of the South Carolina Constitution provides, in relevant part, that “[a]ny officer of the State or its political subdivisions . . . who has been indicted by a grand jury for a crime involving moral turpitude . . . may be suspended by the Governor until he shall have been acquitted” and “[i]n case of conviction the office shall be declared vacant and the vacancy filled as may be provided by law”; and

WHEREAS, Mike A. Brown, as a member of North Charleston City Council in the office and seat representing District One, is an officer of the State or its political subdivisions; and

WHEREAS, under South Carolina law, moral turpitude “implies something immoral in itself, regardless of whether it is punishable by law as a crime,” involves “an act of baseness, vileness, or depravity in the private and social duties which a man owes to his fellow man, or to society in general, contrary to the accepted and customary rule of right and duty between man and man,” or otherwise includes conduct “contrary to justice, honesty[,] and good morals,” *State v. Horton*, 271 S.C. 413, 414–15, 248 S.E.2d 263, 263–64 (1978); *see also Baddourah v. McMaster*, 433 S.C. 89, 112, 856 S.E.2d 561, 573 (2021) (“Under South Carolina’s moral turpitude framework, we focus ‘primarily on the duty to society and fellow man [that] is breached by the commission of the crime.’”); and

WHEREAS, upon consideration of the circumstances presented, to include the particularized facts alleged in the Indictment and the statutory definition and classification of the offense, the undersigned has determined that the aforementioned Indictment charges Mike A. Brown with “a crime involving moral turpitude” for purposes of article VI, section 8 of the South Carolina Constitution, *see Baddourah*, 433 S.C. at 108, 113–14, 856 S.E.2d at 571, 574; and

WHEREAS, for the foregoing reasons, and in accordance with article VI, section 8 of the South Carolina Constitution, the undersigned is authorized to suspend Mike A. Brown from office as a member of North Charleston City Council until such time as he shall be acquitted or convicted or until a successor is elected and qualifies as provided by law, whichever event occurs first.

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 suspend Mike A. Brown from office as a member of North Charleston City Council representing District One until such time as he shall be formally acquitted or convicted or until a successor is elected and qualifies as provided by law, whichever event occurs first. This action in no manner addresses the guilt or innocence of Mike A. Brown and shall not be construed as an expression of any opinion on such question. This Order is effective immediately.



GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND THE GREAT SEAL OF THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA, THIS 26th DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2025.

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