



# VIRGINIA STATE CRIME COMMISSION

## 2024 INTERIM EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

The Virginia State Crime Commission was established within the legislative branch of government in 1966. The Crime Commission is a criminal justice agency that is authorized to study, report, and make recommendations on all areas of public safety and protection (Va. Code § 30-156 *et seq.*). The Crime Commission consists of thirteen members – six members of the House of Delegates, three members of the Senate, three non-legislative citizen members appointed by the Governor, and the Attorney General or his designee.

During 2024, staff began work on [budget language](#) that directed the Crime Commission to identify cases at the Virginia Department of Forensic Science (DFS) where Mary Jane Burton, a former forensic examiner from 1973-1988, performed testing or analysis. The budget language was enacted in response to allegations that Ms. Burton engaged in misconduct, including errors and alterations in test results and testimony that was misleading.

The Crime Commission also undertook several new studies, including (i) use of automatic license plate recognition systems (ALPR), (ii) use of surveillance technology by law enforcement (2-year study), and (iii) use of artificial intelligence by law enforcement (2-year study). Staff also assisted the Senate Finance Committee in a review of juvenile court costs, fines, and fees, and consulted with the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) on a sex trafficked youth [pilot](#) program. Further, staff continued work on the sealing of criminal history records. Finally, staff participated as a member of the Virginia Pretrial Advancement Team which was formed as part of the DCJS pilot of the Public Safety Assessment.

The Crime Commission held four meetings on October 22nd, November 14th, December 16th, and January 17th, 2025. At the October meeting, DFS discussed measures it has taken as a result of the allegations against Ms. Burton, along with its ongoing process to notify convicted individuals in her cases. Commission staff provided an overview of its progress on the review and the potential next steps to address the allegations. At the November meeting, members heard from stakeholders on the progress of implementing criminal record sealing processes and heard a presentation from Commission staff on the ALPR study. At the December meeting, members heard a presentation from DCJS on findings from the 2024 Surveillance Technology Equipment Reporting Survey and a presentation from the Joint Commission on Technology and Science on its 2025 legislative package. The Crime Commission endorsed the following legislation at its January meeting to introduce during the 2025 Session:

- Amendments to the sealing of criminal history records ([HB 2723](#) and [SB 1466](#));
- Regulation of ALPR use by law enforcement ([HB 2724](#));
- Review of certain cases of Ms. Burton ([HB 2730](#) and [SB 1465](#)); and,
- Clarifying reporting of surveillance technology by law enforcement ([HB 2725](#)).

The Crime Commission will publish study reports in its 2024 Annual Report by June 30, 2025.