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GEORGIA

ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY

Clerk Superior Court, County, Ga.

Blk 02026 Pg 3224-3228

Penalty:

It is ordered that the foregoing presentments of the Grand Jury empanelled for the 2026 April Term of the Superior Court of Athens-Clarke County be entered on the minutes of the Court and published at the expense of the County in the official organ of Athens-Clarke County, Georgia. Exhibits are not to be published, but shall be available for inspection and reproduction in the Office of Clerk of Superior Court Athens-Clarke County.

This 7th day of July, 2026.

**Judge Eric W. Norris
Superior Court, Athens-Clarke County
Western Judicial Circuit**

Filed in Open Court this 7th day of July, 2026.

Elisa Zarate, Clerk of Superior/State Court

On April 13, 2026, twenty five grand jurors, including two alternates, were summoned and selected to serve as members of the Grand Jury for the April 2026 term. The Honorable Patrick Haggard administered the oath of service and formally charged the jurors of the April term with their responsibilities.

The jurors elected Meredith Thomas as foreperson and Matthew Regester as secretary.

The remaining jurors were:

Tamara Evans (Assistant Foreperson)	Dorothy Gardner Douglas Patton	Jonathan Monk Christopher Bozman
Anna Louise Calliham (Assistant Secretary)	Janice Willis Kelly Carruthers	Paul Skelton, Jr. Alexander Pearce
David Long Abraham Arellano	Claudia Morris Mark Beduhn	Yvonne Moon Heather Campbell
Xavier Coates Mary Mealor	David Barnes Michael Wilmore	(Alternate) Clarke Dunne
Alexis Brown	John Sinclair	(Alternate)

This presentment will cover the Grand Jury's Criminal Functions, Civil Functions, Acknowledgements, and Closing Remarks.

I. Criminal Functions

Prior to the final session of the term on July 7th, during the April 2026 term 157 cases were brought before the jury. The outcomes are as follows:

- True Bills: 155
- Split Bills: 0
- No Bills: 2

The cases were reviewed over the course of thirteen sessions, taking place on April 14, April 21, April 28, May 4, May 11, May 19, May 26, June 2, June 9, June 16, June 23, June 30 and July 7.

II. Civil Functions

As part of the April 2026 term, the Grand Jury was charged with inspecting the Athens-Clarke County Jail. As part of this inspection sixteen members of the Grand Jury were given a tour of the jail and its facilities on June 16. The members of the April 2026 term would like to make the following statements concerning this vital civil function.

The Grand Jury recommends future sessions receive a more robust tour of the jail and that jail inspections should be conducted annually. The Grand Jury would recommend future jail

visitations have greater interactions with jail residents. One suggested avenue is to have select jail residents speak before the jury and also see more of the general population as they go about the day. The Grand Jury recommends making in-person visitation possible for residents, the tablets provided are a valuable form of communication, but this jury strongly believes in-person visitation to be an effective rehabilitative measure and beneficial to resident health.

The Grand Jury commends the jails efforts to provide group spaces and group housing for residents, the jurors recommend the jail continue to emphasize these measures. The Grand Jury believes more human to human contact to be a benefit for residents at the jail, even with the associated risks. The Grand Jury commends the Athens-Clarke County Jail's efforts to improve staff morale and a human centered approach to retention. The jurors recognize these are incredibly taxing roles. The jurors also appreciate the recent improvements to the food programs for staff in the Jail. Finally several cases before the Grand Jury had jail workers assaulted via malfunctions in the doors to cells, we highly recommend this be addressed immediately for jail safety.

III. Acknowledgements

The members of the Grand Jury would like to sincerely thank Jeff Burks. Mr. Burks was responsive to the jurors requests, questions, and was exceedingly helpful. This jury would also commend Kalki Yalamanchili and the entire District Attorney's office for their continuous efforts to provide safety and justice for the citizens of the Western Judicial Circuit. The Grand Jury acknowledges that Mr. Yalamanchili has had strong success in rectifying shortcomings in the office upon his election.

The members of the Grand Jury would also extend thanks to all peace officers who testified before the jury their consummate professionalism and duty to the communities they serve is appreciated. The officers did an excellent job of testifying before the Jury in an accessible manner for jurors. Finally the jury thanks all courthouse staff and bailiffs in supporting this critical process.

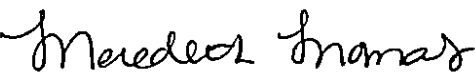
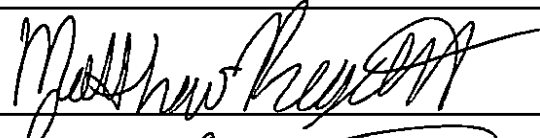
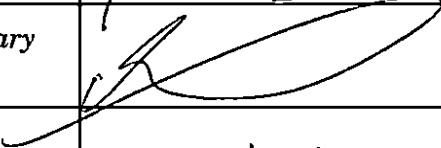
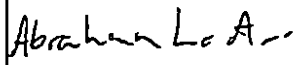
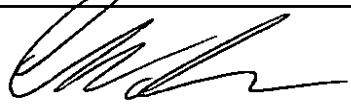
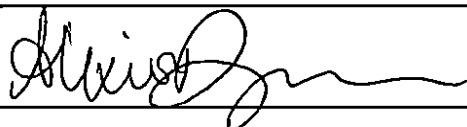
IV. Closing Remarks

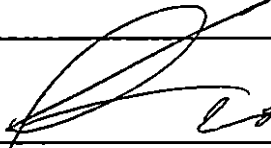
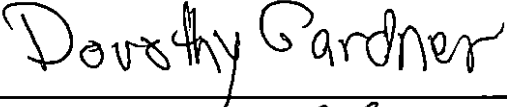
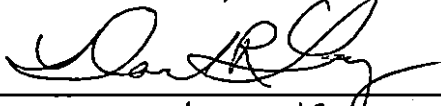
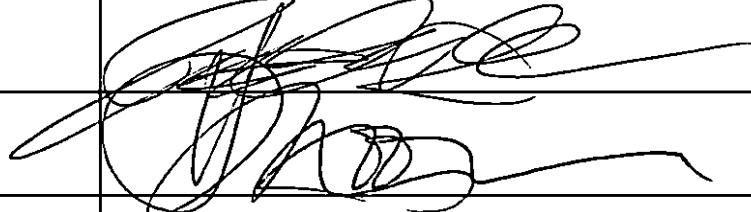
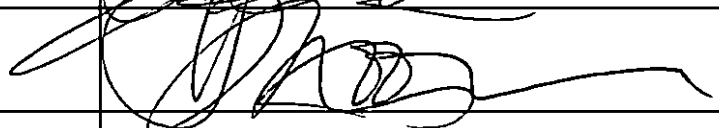
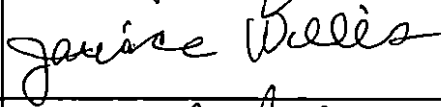
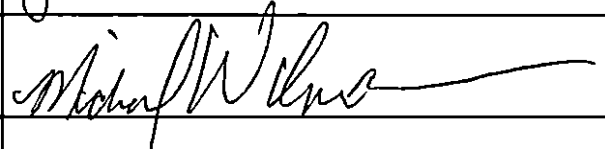
The Grand Jury process is a critical one, where citizens assess probable cause on serious cases and provide crucial oversight of many government roles. During this necessary service, members of the jury are presented lurid details of violent crimes. The jury would recommend a few measures of support to make the experience less emotionally taxing for all parties involved. The Jury suggests a list of charges to be covered to start the session. This would give the Jury time to prepare for charges that can be especially taxing. The Jury also suggests wellness checks be facilitated by the court at the conclusion of each day. The Grand Jury believes these two suggestions could be beneficial for future jurors. The Grand

Jury would also emphasize that the victims, bystanders, peace officers, attorneys are exposed to deeply lurid and weighty subjects, we would urge greater support for these members of the community as well.

Finally the Grand Jury has three recommendations for the police departments in the Western Judicial Circuit. The Grand Jury found officers did not receive proper incentivization or reward for completing specialized training, such as recognizing signs of child and/or sexual abuse. We firmly recommend that officers continue to receive free training for deepening their knowledge and practice as well as financial incentives to do so. For the police departments and in general, the Grand Jury recommends more explanation on how Georgia's 911 Medical Amnesty Law applies and does not apply to non-violent or victimless crimes brought before the jurors. The Grand Jury further recommends that the police departments review their internal policies to help ensure consistent treatment of people experiencing a medical crisis.

Respectfully submitted this 7th day of July, 2026:

Meredith Thomas <i>Foreperson</i>	
Matthew Regester <i>Secretary</i>	
Tamara Evans <i>Asst Foreperson</i>	
Anna Louise Calliham <i>Asst Secretary</i>	
Abraham Arellano	
David Barnes	
Mark Beduhn	
Christopher Bozman	
Alexis Brown	

Kelly Carruthers	
Xavier Coates	
Dorothy Gardner	
David Long	
Mary Mealor	
Jonathan Monk	
Yvonne Moon	
Claudia Morris	
Douglas Patton	
Alexander Pearce	
John Sinclair	
Paul Skelton, Jr.	
Janice Willis	
Michael Wilmore	
Heather Campbell (Alternate)	
Clarke Dunne (Alternate)	