

Cody Mitchell Update
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Tax Conformity with the One Big Beautiful Bill

The House also passed H.3368 to ensure South Carolina W D [S D \ H from several pro-worker tax provisions included in President Trump's One Big Beautiful Bill. By updating South Carolina's tax code, we are ensuring that hardworking families, workers, and small businesses can take advantage of policies that allow them to keep more of the money they earn. This is about putting American Z R U N H U V Carolina and making sure our state remains competitive for jobs, investment, and economic

growth.

The Bottom Line

Last week's work in the House represents a major step forward for South Carolina families. House Republicans delivered responsible budgeting, historic tax relief, and pro-worker policies that help people keep more of their hard-earned money. By keeping government focused on its core responsibilities while lowering taxes and investing wisely, we are continuing to build a stronger and more affordable South Carolina. As always, I appreciate the opportunity to represent you and to keep you informed about the work being done in Columbia. I welcome your

feedback and encourage you to reach out if you have any questions or would like more information on these or other issues before the General Assembly.

To keep up with my legislative updates:
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Feds unseal \$80M whistleblower case against former Lowcountry military contractor



The former W International metal fabricating site in Goose Creek is the subject of an \$80 million whistleblower lawsuit unsealed Monday in federal court in Charleston. The company's assets were acquired last year by Navy contractor Newport News Shipbuilding. This photo is from the company's January 2025 announcement. (Courtesy of Huntington Ingalls Industries)

By: David Wren

A former Goose Creek metal fabricator and its founder are accused in court documents of bilking millions of dollars from federal contracts for the construction of the U.S. Navy's next-generation nuclear submarine, overbilling the government for labor and materials while its executives pocketed much of the money.

W International and company CEO Ed Walker are the key defendants in a whistleblower case unsealed Monday in federal court in Charleston. The case has been sealed from public view since 2022, when the government Z D V A U V wrongdoing at W International.

Walker could not be reached for comment Monday. He lives in Michigan, according to the lawsuit.

The lawsuit names John Klausmeier as the whistleblower in the case. Klausmeier previously worked at W International when it was based in Michigan and moved to South Carolina in 2019 to become chief operating R I A F H U O D X V P H L 2021.

Klausmeier is represented by former U.S. Attorney Bill Nettles, who declined to comment.

The federal government, which took over the case, is asking for a jury trial, which has not been scheduled.

The alleged fraud dates to 2019, when Walker moved W International to Bushy Park Road in the Charleston International Manufacturing Center with the aim of obtaining government shipbuilding contracts.

W International's assets were acquired last year by military contractor Newport News Shipbuilding, which builds Navy warships, including aircraft carriers. Newport News Shipbuilding is not a part of the lawsuit.

According to court documents, W International received \$80 million from federal government programs in 2019 and 2020 to help establish a metal fabrication A U P W K D the Navy's Columbia-class submarines, the newest design

replacing aging models. Some of those federal funds were administered by another defendant: General Dynamics Electric Boat, the military's main submarine contractor and W International's top customer.

Q W H U the price" of equipment it sold to Electric Boat, court documents state, and charged for labor that didn't take place.

For example, Electric Boat purchased hundreds of welding/leveling tables — a type of adjustable metal table — from W International at a cost of \$15,000 per table. W International's actual cost for the tables, including labor, was \$2,100 apiece.

W International also took federal money to purportedly train and certify welders, although court documents state the company "provided little training to its employees" at the Goose Creek site. Instead of setting up a training program for welders, W International primarily trained its welders "on the job," the lawsuit states.

R f W Q H U price of equipment and double-billed for labor costs under another federal program meant to help private companies produce materials for national defense. W International outsourced the production of some of that equipment to a purported third party that was, in fact, a wholly owned subsidiary of Walker's company, court documents state.

W International "engaged in bid rigging to further increase its S U R A W V material costs and labor costs," the lawsuit states.

As a result of the alleged fraud, the quality of W International's products "suffered greatly, which K D V M H R production of the submarine A H H W D Q workers and sailors," according to court documents.

W International was originally located in Michigan, where it hoped to supply the automotive industry with fabricated metal products. But the company racked up millions of dollars in debt and was unable to pay its employees, vendors and suppliers, according to the lawsuit.

Walker then shifted focus, looking

to take advantage of lucrative Navy contracts at a new site in the Lowcountry, the lawsuit states.

South Carolina's Department of Commerce heralded the move, stating in late 2018 that W International planned to invest \$35.2 million and create 600 jobs at the Goose Creek site. The state also approved tax credits and a \$2 million grant to help the company get its foothold.

Under the federal False Claims Act, the government is seeking restitution of up to three times the amount of the alleged fraud. Whistleblowers typically receive between 15% and 30% of that amount for bringing the matter to investigators. R I S R p i n o l , H I Q m m p i s t o l , D a . 4 5 caliber pistol, a .22 caliber U L A H

The government has named Electric Boat as a defendant because, as the Navy's primary submarine contractor, the Connecticut company knew or should have known about the alleged fraud. A spokeswoman for Electric Boat did not respond to a request for comment.

The other defendant in the case is Precision Material Handling Equipment LLC, the Walker-owned company that produced some of the welding/leveling tables that W International sold to the government.

SC Daily Gazette reporter D Y L G International's troubles in 2024, after obtaining a copy of a civil investigative demand letter issued to the company by the Department of Justice.

That 12-page letter, which is similar to a subpoena, said investigators were looking into potential violations of the federal False Claims Act, which is meant to deter and punish defense contractor fraud.

In the midst of the federal investigation, G Newport News Shipbuilding — a division of Huntington Ingalls Industries — completed its acquisition of W International's assets in early 2025. Newport News Shipbuilding, the Navy's largest shipbuilder, said it did not acquire any of W International's legal or A Q D Q F L D C

Operations continue with Newport News Shipbuilding, which kept most of W International's employees. State tax incentives transferred to the buyer.

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Multiple Charges from Search Warrant

Jertavice Jerone Southers, 38, of Lancaster was arrested and charged with multiple offenses

L Q Y R O Y L and two children in his care last Wednesday, March 11, 2026. The Lancaster Police Department requested the assistance of the Lancaster & R X Q W \ Tuesday in locating a juvenile female with a pending charge related to the discharge of a A U H D U P week before. No one was injured when the shots were A U H G of the Lancaster County Department of Probation, Parole, and Pardon Services, D Q G V K and violent crime investigators went to the juvenile's home on South Avenue in the city and located and detained the juvenile without incident early last Wednesday morning. While in the home, items were observed that led to the issuance of a search warrant for the property. Southers lives in the home. R V V O

During the search, investigators located and seized 13.97 grams of suspected Fentanyl, 4.22 grams of suspected Cocaine, 5.8 grams of suspected Crack Cocaine, a Tramadol pill, scales, and a smoking pipe. They also found a .40 caliber R p i n o l , H I Q m m p i s t o l , D a . 4 5 caliber pistol, a .22 caliber U L A H The drugs, drug paraphernalia, A U H D U P

were accessible to anyone in the home, including two female minors, ages 13 and 14, who live there. Southers was and was taken into custody. His record of convictions makes it unlawful for him to possess A U H D U P V

6 Southers U L was I transported to the Lancaster County Detention Center and charged in warrants ZZ LL WW KK L Q 4-14 Grams, Possession with Intent to Distribute Cocaine, L Possession with Intent to Distribute Crack Cocaine, Possession with Intent to Distribute Tramadol, H Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance in Proximity to a School or Park (Stafford Belk Park) (four counts), Possession of a Firearm during the Commission of a Violent Crime (two counts), Possession of a Firearm or Ammunition by a Person Convicted of Certain Drug Crimes (two counts), Possession of a Firearm or Ammunition by a Person Convicted of Certain Crimes (two counts), Unlawful Conduct Toward a Child (two counts), and Contributing to the Delinquency of a Minor. Southers saw a magistrate last Thursday morning, and bond was denied. He remains in jail.

"This began as a joint effort by the police department D I Q G G Y W D K U H I X S D M X Y H P U D L I Crime tips may be made anonymously.



the city a few days before," said Sheriff Barry Faile. "It quickly ballooned into much more with the recovery of four A U A H F D H U P O V D U Fentanyl, Cocaine, and Crack Cocaine just lying about in this house occupied by multiple people, including minors. Young people often model the behavior of the adults in their lives. In this case, we intend to hold both responsible for their criminal activities."

All defendants are presumed innocent unless proven guilty in court.)

Anyone with information about this or any other case should call the Lancaster County Sheriff's 2 I A F H D W select Option 4 or submit a tip in one of the following ways: use the link www.p3tips.com/983 or download the P3Tips mobile app available for both Apple and Android devices. Crime tips may be made anonymously.

LANCASTER POLICE DEPT. MISSING Juvenile Lovesia Carroway 15 Years Old Race - Black Eyes - Brown Hair - Black Hgt - 5'1 Wgt - 120 MISSING JUVENILE The Lancaster Police Department is asking for the public's help in locating Lovesia Carroway, age 15. Lovesia was last seen on March 9, 2026 on Pleasant Hill Street in Lancaster. She is believed to have been taken by a parent who does not have legal custody of her and in the Hartsville, South Carolina area. If you have any information about Lovesia's location, please contact the Lancaster Police Department at 803 283 3313. Call 911 if you have an emergency or see her immediately. If you have any information that could help us locate her, please contact Lancaster Police Department at: CALL US 803-283-3313