



7360 February

The State of South Carolina  
**OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**

CHARLES M. CONDON  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

May 9, 2002

The Honorable Susan J. Chewning  
Coroner, Charleston County  
4050 Bridge View Drive, Suite 500  
North Charleston, South Carolina 29405

**Re: Bonuses/Moonlighting for Coroner Employees**

Dear Coroner Chewning:

You have asked this Office for an opinion on the following questions:

... whether it is legal for me as an elected official to pay bonuses to my employees in order to remunerate them for additional duties they perform as public employees, which duties are not part of their County job descriptions; and

Can I, as Coroner, or nurses who are employed by me and serve as Deputy Coroners, receive payments for articles we write for nursing magazines on the topic of forensic nursing if these articles are written outside of work, at times when we are not working for the County.

Each of your questions will be addressed in turn.

**Bonuses**

Article III, Section 30 of the State Constitution provides:

The General Assembly shall never grant extra compensation, fee or allowance to any public officer, agent, servant or contractor after service rendered, or contract made, nor authorize payment or part payment of any claim under any contract not authorized by law ...

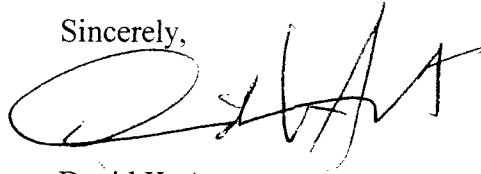
Even though Article III, Section 30 by its terms prohibits only action by the General Assembly, this Office has concluded that this constitutional provision also serves to limit political subdivisions, such as counties, at least in the powers delegated to them by the General Assembly.

Request Letter

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officially published in the manner of a formal opinion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Avant', written over a large, loopy initial 'D'.

David K. Avant  
Assistant Attorney General