

Keeping the bad guys behind bars

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WCBD

Solicitor Scarlett Wilson has her powers and her setbacks when it comes to ridding the Lowcountry of drug dealers.

At her side are staff and associated police departments who can hunt down drug dealers, gather evidence and monitor former offenders positioning themselves to break the law again..

The challenges she faces are policies and funding.

“There are just not enough parole and probation officers out there to do the volume of work that exists,” says Wilson.

A lengthy investigation with her office and the Charleston Police Department resulted in 16 arrests Thursday and Friday with 14 more suspected drug dealers eluding warrants.

About half of these people are repeat offenders who are either out on bond, out on parole or out on probation, according to Wilson.

While bond judges, parole boards and state budget officials will impact the long term effectiveness of the drug sweep, Wilson says she'll play the cards she has in her hand.

“For those people we arrested who are out on bond for serious offenses, we will ask to have their bonds revoked,” says Wilson.

Wilson also says the Solicitor's Office has and will continue do everything in their power to turn arrests into convictions. “We gather video and audio recordings as evidence and we're putting together very solid cases,” says Wilson.

Concentrate on what you can do and keep reminding the Statehouse what you want.

“We need to enable law enforcement to search people out on parole,” says Wilson, referring to a bill that Governor Sanford vetoed which would give police the power to execute certain searches without warrants.

The Senate overrode Sanford but the House failed to do the same.

Wilson is realistic about the outcome of the drug sweep. She says, “I'm not going to try to fool people that all (of those arrested) won't get out on bond cause some will make bond, but they're going to be watched very closely.”