

News Roundup

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[Yesterday afternoon](#), the House passed the bipartisan federal criminal justice reform bill known as the “First Step Act,” sending the bill to President Donald Trump who has said that he will sign it into law. The News Roundup previously discussed some of the provisions of the bill in [this post](#). Among other things, the bill gives judges increased discretion in sentencing certain offenses and aims to place prisoners in facilities closer to their homes so that families can visit more often. This is the final blog post of the year, we’ll resume posting on Monday, January 7. Enjoy the holidays and keep reading for more news.

Wake Ends ICE Cooperation. WRAL [reports](#) that new Wake County Sheriff Gerald Baker will end the county’s cooperation with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement by no longer honoring ICE detainer requests. As many readers know, in cases involving a person believed to be in the country illegally, ICE sometimes asks local law enforcement agencies to detain the person after they normally would be released from state custody. Some agencies choose to honor such requests and others do not. In a statement, ICE said that in response to the decision it plans to increase its presence in the Raleigh-Durham area so it can arrest more people in neighborhoods and at work sites.

School Safety Report. After the [mass shooting](#) at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in February, President Donald Trump established the Federal Commission on School Safety for the purpose of studying and recommending ways to make schools more secure. The Commission released its report this week, detailing best practices and policy recommendations for improving school safety. The report is available [here](#) and a PBS NewsHour report offering perspectives on it is available [here](#).

Animal Law. The Winston-Salem Journal [reports](#) that free-running dogs have attacked two people in recent weeks in the same general area of the city. At the beginning of the month, a woman was attacked by a pack of dogs on East Sprague Street and had to be treated at an emergency room. Days earlier in an unrelated incident, a dog attacked a student at the nearby Hanes Magnet Middle School and was shot by a school resource officer.

These incidents provide an opportunity to tell you that the *North Carolina Guide to Animal Services Law* was just delivered from the publisher to the School of Government and is available for purchase. Aimee Wall and I cowrote this extensive revision of Aimee’s previous book on the topic. [Check it out here](#).

Bump Stocks. The Las Vegas Review-Journal [reports](#) that the Department of Justice has promulgated a final rule that will ban bump stocks when it goes into effect in March. Acting Attorney General Matthew Whitaker signed the rule on Tuesday. When fitted to a semi-automatic rifle, bump stocks cause the rifle to function like an automatic weapon by bumping the shooter’s finger against the trigger. The devices were used in the Las Vegas [mass shooting](#) last year that killed 58 people and wounded more than 500 others.

Jury Scam. WRAL [reports](#) that a Wake County couple is warning other people not to fall for a jury duty scam that cost them thousands of dollars. The couple received a call from someone claiming to be a Wake sheriff’s deputy who said that the wife had missed jury duty and that she would be taken to jail if they did not deliver prepaid gift cards to the courthouse. As the couple drove to the courthouse, they read the gift card numbers to the scam caller who then abruptly hung up. The North Carolina Attorney General has received 95 complaints this year about this sort of scam.

Give to the SOG. The mission of the School of Government is to improve the lives of North Carolinians by engaging in practical scholarship that helps public officials and citizens understand and improve state and local government. Readers of this blog are well aware of the School's efforts to that end in the areas of criminal law and administration of justice. With the year drawing to a close, we are encouraging people who use our services to make a tax deductible contribution to the School. Contributions can be made to various funds, and those relevant to readers include the School of Government Foundation, the Indigent Defense Education Fund, and the NC Judicial College. You can choose among these funds and many others at the following link, we appreciate your support: [Give to SOG](#).

If Only in My Dreams. The News Roundup has reported on a wide range of unusual thefts – from [giant chicken statues](#) to [Grandma's fine china](#) to [Grandma's frozen bacon](#), I thought I had seen it all. But criminal gumption knows no bounds, as St. Louis resident Meghan Panu discovered when someone [stole her entire house](#) on Saturday.

Thanks to all of our readers for engaging with our work and with the blog. We appreciate your support and hope you enjoy the holidays.