**South Carolina General Assembly**

126th Session, 2025-2026

**H. 4144**

**STATUS INFORMATION**

General Bill

Sponsors: Reps. W. Newton, Jordan, J.E. Johnson, T. Moore, Lawson, Bernstein, Caskey, Bauer, Govan, Brittain, Montgomery and Ligon

Companion/Similar bill(s): 357

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Introduced in the House on March 5, 2025

Currently residing in the House

Summary: Mail Theft

**HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS**

Date Body Action Description with journal page number

3/5/2025 House Introduced and read first time ([House Journal‑page 39](h:\hj\20250305.docx))

3/5/2025 House Referred to Committee on **Judiciary** ([House Journal‑page 39](h:\hj\20250305.docx))

3/6/2025 House Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Ligon

View the latest  [legislative information](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/billsearch.php?billnumbers=4144&session=126&summary=B)  at the website

**VERSIONS OF THIS BILL**

[03/05/2025](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess126_2025-2026/prever/4144_20250305.docx)

A bill

TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING SECTION 16‑13‑190, SO AS TO CREATE THE OFFENSE OF MAIL THEFT AND PROVIDE GRADUATED PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Chapter 13, Title 16 of the S.C. Code is amended by adding:

Section 16‑13‑190. (A) As used in this section:

(1) “Mail” means any letter, postal card, parcel, package, bag, or other material, along with its contents, that has postage affixed by the postal customer, and:

(a) has been accepted for delivery by the postal service;

(b) the postal customer has left or deposited for collection by the postal service; or

(c) that the postal service has delivered to, but has not yet been received by, the person to whom it is addressed.

(2) “Mail receptacle” means a mailbox, post office box, rural box, letter box, lock drawer, mail bag, vehicle, or any place, area, or item intended or used by postal customers or a postal service for the collection, deposit, or delivery of mail.

(3) “Postal service” means the United States Postal Service, a private mail carrier, or a common carrier delivery service.

(B) A person commits the crime of mail theft if the person does any of the following:

(1) knowingly, wilfully, and with the intent to deprive, injure, damage, or defraud another:

(a) takes, destroys, hides, or embezzles; or

(b) obtains mail by fraud or deception;

(2) buys, receives, conceals, or possesses:

(a) stolen mail and knows or reasonably should have known that the mail was unlawfully taken or obtained;

(b) any key designed to provide access to a lock adopted by the United States Postal Service that provides access to any mail receptacle in any neighborhood or apartment panel used for the purpose of centralized mail without being authorized by the United States Postal Service to do so; or

(c) a counterfeit device or key designed to provide access to a lock adopted by the United States Postal Service that provides access to any mail receptacle in any neighborhood or apartment panel used for the purpose of centralized mail;

(3) knowingly, wilfully, and with the intent to steal any mail inside of a mail receptacle, damages, opens, tears down, takes, or destroys any mail receptacle; or

(4) enters into an agreement, confederation, or conspiracy to violate any of the provisions of this subsection and does any overt act towards carrying out such unlawful agreement, confederation, or conspiracy.

(C) A person who violates any provision of subsection (B), except as otherwise provided in subsection (D)(1), is guilty of a felony and, upon conviction, must be fined not more than ten thousand dollars or imprisoned not more than ten years, or both.

(D) A person who, without intending to defraud the victim, knowingly, wilfully, and with the intent to deprive, injure, or damage another takes, destroys, or hides mail, or buys, receives, conceals, or possesses stolen mail that they know or reasonably should have known was unlawfully taken or obtained:

(1) for a first offense, is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be fined not more than five thousand dollars or imprisoned for not more than three years, or both; and

(2) for a second or subsequent offense, is guilty of a felony and, upon conviction, must be fined not more than ten thousand dollars or imprisoned not more than ten years, or both.

(E) In addition to the penalty assessed under subsection (C), the court shall order the person convicted of mail theft pursuant to this section to pay restitution to the victim in an amount determined by the court.

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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