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ALABAMA NEWS | DECISION 2026

Feds want access to state voter rolls

REFLECTOR | The U.S. Department of Justice has sent a confidential draft agreement to more than a dozen states – including Alabama – that would require election officials to remove any alleged ineligible voters found during a federal review of their voter rolls.

The agreement – called a memorandum of understanding, or MOU – would hand the federal government a major role in election administration, a responsibility that belongs to the states under the U.S. Constitution.

A Justice Department official

identified 11 states that have expressed an interest in the agreement during a federal court hearing in December, according to a transcript reviewed by Stateline. Two additional states, Colorado and Wisconsin, have publicly rejected the memorandum of understanding and released copies of the proposal.

The 11 states “all fall into the list of, they have expressed with us a willingness to comply based on the represented MOU that we have sent them,” Eric Neff, the acting chief of the Justice Department’s Voting Section, said at the hearing. He spoke

at a Dec. 4 hearing in a federal lawsuit brought by the Justice Department against California, which has refused a demand for the state’s voter data.

Neff’s courtroom disclosure, which Stateline is the first to report, comes as the Justice Department has sued 21 states and the District of Columbia for unredacted copies of their voter rolls after demanding the data from most states in recent months. The unredacted lists include sensitive personal information, such as driver’s license and partial Social Security numbers.

The states Neff identified are led by Republicans – Alabama, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Tennessee, Utah and Virginia.

The draft memorandum of understanding represents a new effort by the Trump administration to gain access to some states’ voter data without litigation.

The administration’s lawsuits mostly target Democratic states, where election officials refused initial requests for voter data and allege the

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NATIONAL NEWS

Trump declares marijuana ‘less dangerous’ drug

WASHINGTON (AP) | President Donald Trump signed an executive order Thursday that could reclassify marijuana as a less dangerous drug and open new avenues for medical research, a major shift in federal drug policy that inches closer to



Trump

what many states have done.

The switch would move marijuana away from its current classification as a Schedule I drug, alongside heroin and LSD. Cannabis would instead be a Schedule III substance, like ketamine and some anabolic steroids.

Reclassification by the Drug Enforcement Administration would not make it legal for recreational use by adults nationwide, but it could change how the drug is regulated and reduce a hefty tax burden on the cannabis industry.

The Republican president said he had received a deluge of phone calls supporting the move and its potential to help patients. “We have people begging for me to do this. People that are in great pain,” he said.

Similarly, the Justice Department under Trump’s Democratic predecessor, Joe Biden, proposed reclassifying marijuana to a Schedule III substance. Unlike Biden, Trump did not have open encouragement from across his party for the move. Some Republicans have spoken out in opposition to any changes and urged Trump to maintain current standards.

Such a switch typically requires an arduous process, including a public comment period that has drawn tens of thousands of reactions from across the U.S. The DEA was still in the review process when Trump took office in January. Trump’s order is expected to speed the process along, though it was not immediately clear how long it might take.

Many states have legalized the recreational use of marijuana for adults or allow it for medical purposes. But U.S. laws have

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COMMENCEMENT



Gadsden State Community College President Alan Smith speaks at the commencement ceremony for graduating students Thursday, Dec. 18, 2025 inside the Richard Lindsey Arena on the campus of Gadsden State Cherokee in Centre. For more photos from the event please visit the GSCC page on Facebook.

CHEROKEE COUNTY | SHERIFF’S DEPARTMENT

Shaver, Summerford hand out awards at Christmas gathering

By Terry Dean
POST-HERALD NEWS EDITOR
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CENTRE | Working like a “well-oiled machine” in the name of public safety. That is how Sheriff Jeff Shaver described his crew during the recent Cherokee County Sheriff’s Office Christmas dinner held at the ROC in Centre.

“We are never closed, we never go home,” said Shaver.

“I think we have had a good year, made a lot of progress this year,” said Chief Deputy Josh Summerford, who officially opened the gathering. “We have had a safe year and just had a



Shaver

good year of people working together as a team. We did a lot of really good work.”

“Let me thank all of the families that are here,” said Summerford. “All these people here could not do their jobs without your support.”

“It is great to be here,” said Shaver. “Every year we talk about this event that seems to get bigger and bigger. We are proud of you here with us. I would like to thank each and every one of you for the hard work this year. You have done a great job.”

On behalf of the sheriff’s office, Summerford and Shaver presented this year’s awards and recognition.

Shaver promoted Deputy Seth Rochester to investigator. He noted Rochester has consistently demonstrated dedication, professionalism, and a strong commitment to serving.

Lt. Bo Jolly earned the Highest Number of Civil Processes Served award.

Deputy Gavin Johnston had the Most Warrantless Arrests over the past year.

Earning the award for the Most Trip Miles this year was Deputy Rex Leath.

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LEGACY GOVERNOR

Steve Flowers writes about Kay Ivey



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JEFF GLUCK COLUMN

Time for a new France to lead racing series



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