**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 41‑21‑110 TO CHAPTER 21, TITLE 41 SO AS TO ENACT “THE FUTURE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS ACT OF SOUTH CAROLINA” AND TO ESTABLISH THE JUNIOR FIREFIGHTERS PROGRAM.

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

SECTION 1. This act shall be known and cited as “The Future Volunteer Firefighters Act of South Carolina”.

SECTION 2. Chapter 21, Title 41 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 41‑21‑110. (A) The Director of the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, in cooperation with the State Firefighters Association, shall establish a junior firefighters program, consistent with all applicable state and federal child labor laws, for the purpose of encouraging, educating, and training qualified youth to enter the fire service as a career. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, qualified youth under eighteen years of age shall be allowed to participate in training activities offered by local fire departments, the Office of the State Fire Marshall, and the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation. As used in this subsection, the term ‘qualified youth’ means an uncompensated fire department or rescue squad member who is between fourteen and eighteen years of age.

(B) Participants in the junior firefighters program are not considered employees of the State and are not considered eligible for unemployment compensation upon termination from the program; however, participants are entitled to all other work benefits, including workers’ compensation or its equivalent.”

SECTION 3. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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