**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND SECTION 14‑7‑845 OF THE 1976 CODE, RELATING TO POSTPONEMENT OF JURY SERVICE, TO PROVIDE THAT PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOL EMPLOYEES OR ANYONE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE EDUCATION OF A CHILD MAY REQUEST A POSTPONEMENT OF JURY SERVICE; AND TO AMEND SECTION 14‑7‑860, RELATING TO EXCUSE OF JURORS FOR GOOD CAUSE, TO MAKE TECHNICAL CHANGES.

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

SECTION 1. Section 14‑7‑845 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“Section 14‑7‑845. (A) If a student selected for jury service during the school term requests, his service must be postponed to a date that does not conflict with the school term. For purposes of this subsection, a student is a person enrolled in high school or an institution of higher learning, including technical college.

(B) If a public or private school employee, or a person primarily responsible for the elementary or secondary education of a child in a home or charter school, selected for jury service during the school term requests, his service must be postponed to a date that does not conflict with the school term. For purposes of this subsection, a school employee is a person employed as a teacher, certified personnel at the building level, or bus driver by a school, a school system, or a school district offering educational programs to grades K‑12 and to institutions of higher learning, including technical colleges.

(C) A person selected for jury service who requests a postponement pursuant to subsection (A) or (B) must provide evidence of school enrollment or employment, or evidence of educational responsibilities during a home or charter school term coinciding with the dates of jury duty.”

SECTION 2. Section 14‑7‑860 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“Section 14‑7‑860. (A) The presiding judge for cause shown may excuse any person from jury duty at any term of court if the judge considers it advisable. But no juror who has been drawn to serve at any term of the court may be excused except for good and sufficient cause, which, together with his application, must be filed in the office of the clerk of court and remain on record.

(B) A person who:

(1) has legal custody and the duty of care for a child less than seven years of age;

(2) is the primary caretaker of a person aged sixty‑five or older; or

(3) is the primary caretaker of a severely disabled person who is unable to care for himself or cannot be left unattended; and desires to be excused from jury duty must submit an affidavit to the clerk of court ~~stating~~.

The affidavit must state that he is unable to provide adequate care for the child, person aged sixty‑five or older, or disabled person while performing jury duty, and must be excused by the presiding judge from jury service.

(C) The provisions of Section 14‑7‑870 do not apply to any juror described in this subsection who: (a) has a child less than seven years of age, (b) is the primary caretaker of a person aged sixty‑five or older, or (c) is the primary caretaker of a severely disabled person who is unable to care for himself or cannot be left unattended.

(~~C~~D) Upon submitting an affidavit to the clerk of court requesting to be excused from jury duty, a person either may be excused or transferred to another term of court by the presiding judge if the person performs services for a business, commercial, or agricultural enterprise, and the person’s services are so essential to the operations of the business, commercial, or agricultural enterprise that the enterprise must close or cease to function if the person is required to perform jury duty.

(~~D~~E) A person who violates the provisions of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be punished by a fine not to exceed one thousand dollars or imprisoned not more than thirty days, or both.”

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

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