**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND SECTION 6‑1‑80, CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, RELATING TO A POLITICAL SUBDIVISION ADOPTING A BUDGET, SO AS TO REQUIRE THE POLITICAL SUBDIVISION TO GIVE NOTICE IN ADDITIONAL WAYS, INCLUDING SENDING ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS OR MAKING TELEPHONE CALLS TO REGISTERED VOTERS; AND TO AMEND SECTION 30‑4‑80, RELATING TO NOTICE OF MEETINGS UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT, SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS MUST GIVE NOTICE OF THEIR MEETINGS IN ADDITIONAL WAYS, INCLUDING SENDING ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS AND MAKING TELEPHONE CALLS TO REGISTERED VOTERS, AND TO PROVIDE THAT NOTICE MUST BE GIVEN AT LEAST TWENTY‑FOUR HOURS BEFORE THE MEETING OR BY 4:00 PM ON THE DAY BEFORE THE MEETING, WHICHEVER IS EARLIER.

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

SECTION 1. Section 6‑1‑80(A) of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“(A) A county, municipality, special purpose or public service district, and a school district shall provide notice to the public by:

(1) advertising the public hearing before the adoption of its budget for the next fiscal year in at least one South Carolina newspaper of general circulation in the area;

(2) posting the notice at the principal office of the public body holding the hearing, or if no such office exists, at the building in which the hearing is to be held; and

(3) sending an email message, text message, or other electronic message, or by making a telephone call to every citizen registered to vote in the jurisdiction, except for those persons who opt out of the notification.

This notice must be given not less than fifteen days in advance of the public hearing and, for purposes of item (1), must be a minimum of two columns wide with a bold headline.”

SECTION 2. Section 30‑4‑80 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding an appropriately numbered subsection at the end to read:

“( )(1) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, all public bodies which are political subdivisions of this State must give written public notice of their regular meetings at the beginning of each calendar year. The notice must include the dates, times, and places of such meetings. The agenda, if any, for regularly scheduled meetings must be posted on a bulletin board at the office or meeting place of the public body at least twenty‑four hours prior to such meetings or by 4:00 p.m. on the day before the meeting, whichever is earlier. All public bodies must post on such bulletin board public notice for any called, special, or rescheduled meetings. Such notice must be posted as early as is practicable but not later than twenty‑four hours before the meeting or by 4:00 p.m. on the day before the meeting, whichever is earlier. The notice must include the agenda, date, time, and place of the meeting. This requirement does not apply to emergency meetings of public bodies.

(2) In addition to the notice requirements of this subsection, and in the same time frame as provided in this subsection, all public bodies which are political subdivisions of this State must:

(a) if the public body maintains a website, post the notice on its website;

(b) provide notice by sending an email message, text message, or other electronic message, or making a telephone call to every citizen registered to vote in the jurisdiction, except for those persons who opt out of the notification; and

(c) if the public body intends to address any change to taxes, fines, fees, or other revenue source to be paid by the citizens of the jurisdiction, include the intention with specificity in a conspicuous part of the notice.

(3) All public bodies which are political subdivisions of this State shall notify persons or organizations, local news media, or such other news media as may request notification of the times, dates, places, and agenda of all public meetings, whether scheduled, rescheduled, or called, and the efforts made to comply with this requirement must be noted in the minutes of the meetings. This notification must be made at least twenty‑four hours before the start of the public meeting, or by 4:00 p.m. on the day before the meeting, whichever is earlier. In the case of an emergency meeting, this notification must be made as early as is practicable.”

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

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