**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING CHAPTER 39 TO TITLE 4 SO AS TO ESTABLISH A CITIZEN RELATIONS COMMITTEE WITHIN EACH COUNTY, TO PROVIDE FOR EACH COMMITTEE’S COMPOSITION, POWERS, AND DUTIES, AND TO AUTHORIZE THE CONTINUATION OF CURRENT COMMITTEES.

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

SECTION 1. Title 4 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“CHAPTER 39

County Citizen Relations Committees

“Section 4‑39‑10. There is created in each county of the State a County Citizen Relations Committee to be appointed by the governing body of the county. The committee shall consist of no fewer than five members nor more than eleven. The incorporated and unincorporated areas of the county shall have an equal number of representatives on the committee, and the legislative delegation of the county shall recommend one member for appointment who shall serve at large. Recommendations for appointees to the committee from the incorporated areas must be submitted to the governing body of the county from the mayor and council of the municipalities concerned. Terms of office must be for three years and until their successors are appointed and qualify, except that the initial members’ terms must be staggered for one, two, and three years. A majority of the committee shall constitute a quorum. All members are eligible for reappointment, and the member appointed on the recommendation of the legislative delegation shall serve as chairman.

Section 4‑39‑20. The County Citizen Relations Committee has the following powers and duties to:

(1) study, evaluate, and recommend to the governing board of the county plans and programs to eliminate prejudice and discrimination, as well as to promote and safeguard the equal rights of, and respect for all people within the county in the areas of employment, education, and social and economic justice;

(2) promote equality of opportunity for all citizens;

(3) promote understanding, respect, and goodwill among all citizens;

(4) provide channels of communication among the various racial, religious, and ethnic groups in the county;

(5) coordinate efforts with other state and local governmental entities created for the purposes described in this chapter; and

(6) submit at least annually a written report to the governing body of the county recommending legislation or other actions to eliminate and prevent unlawful discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, education, and finance on the bases of age, gender, ethnicity, creed, marital status, national origin, physical or mental disability, and religion.

Section 4‑39‑30. County Citizen Relations Committees established before January 1, 2012, shall continue to exist, operate, and function as they existed on January 1, 2012.”

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

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