**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND CHAPTER 13, TITLE 8 OF THE 1976 CODE, BY ADDING ARTICLE 8, TO PROVIDE THAT THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION SHALL ADMINISTER TRAINING PROGRAMS ON STATE ETHICS LAWS, TO PROVIDE WHO SHALL ATTEND THE TRAINING SESSIONS, TO PROVIDE WHEN SESSIONS SHALL BE HELD, TO PROVIDE PERSONS QUALIFIED TO TEACH THE SESSIONS, TO PROVIDE ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS, AND TO PROVIDE PERSONS REQUIRED TO ATTEND THE SESSIONS ARE NOT PRECLUDED FROM PENALIZATION OR PROSECUTION FOR VIOLATIONS OF ETHICS LAWS PRIOR TO ATTENDING THE SESSIONS.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 13, Title 8 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Article 8

Ethics Training

Section 8‑13‑810. (A) The State Ethics Commission shall provide for and administer training programs on state ethics laws, for all public officials, public members, and members of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

(1) The training program shall be held at least once every two years. Additional training programs shall be held if any changes are made to this chapter and shall be held within three months of the effective date of the changes. The time and place of the training programs shall be determined by the executive director of the State Ethics Commission. All public officials, public members, and members of the Senate and the House of Representatives must attend the training programs. The commission shall also provide a mandatory program for any public official or member of the Senate or House of Representatives elected in a special election or public member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring during a normal term of office within three months of the date the public official or member assumes office.

(2) All municipal mayors, council members, commissioners, and county commissioners in office as of the effective date of this act shall obtain training within one hundred twenty days of this act becoming law. Thereafter, all municipal mayors, council members, commissioners, and county commissioners shall obtain training within one hundred twenty days of being sworn into office. The scheduling of training program opportunities for municipal mayors, council members, commissioners, and county commissioners shall be established by the Executive Director of the State Ethics Commission.

(B) The curriculum of each session and faculty for the training program shall be determined by the commission. The curriculum shall include, but not be limited to, a review of the current law, a discussion of actual cases and advisory opinions on which the commission has ruled, and a question and answer period for attendees. The faculty for the training program may include the staff of the commission, members of the faculties of the law schools in the State, and other persons deemed appropriate by the commission and shall include experts in the field of ethics law, persons affected by the ethics law, and members of the press and media.

(C) Attendance at any session of the training program shall be mandatory, except in the event the person is suffering a catastrophic illness.

(D) This act shall not preclude the penalizing, prosecution, or conviction of any public official or public member prior to such person attending a mandatory training program.”

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

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