**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND SECTION 8‑13‑350, CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, RELATING TO ETHICS BROCHURES TO BE PROVIDED TO CERTAIN PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES BY THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION, SO AS TO REQUIRE ALL STATE OR LOCAL PUBLIC OFFICIALS ELECTED TO OFFICE AFTER JULY 1, 2015, TO RECEIVE SPECIFIC ETHICS INSTRUCTION BY THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION OR IN THE CASE OF MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY BY THE APPROPRIATE ETHICS COMMITTEES OF EACH HOUSE, TO REQUIRE CONTINUING ETHICS INSTRUCTION OF THESE PUBLIC OFFICIALS UPON REELECTION, AND TO PROVIDE CIVIL PENALTIES FOR CERTAIN VIOLATIONS.

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

SECTION 1. Section 8‑13‑350 of the 1976 Code, as added by Act 248 of 1991, is amended to read:

“Section 8‑13‑350. (A) When hired, filing for office, or appointed and upon assuming the duties of employment, office, or position in state government, a public official, public member, and public employee shall receive a brochure prepared by the State Ethics Commission describing the general application of this chapter.

(B) Within ninety days after being first elected to a public office after July 1, 2015, state elected public officials and an elected county, municipal or public official of a political subdivision as defined in Section 8‑13‑100(27) must complete a course of ethics instruction provided by the State Ethics Commission with a duration of not less than four institutional hours covering the requirements and provisions of Chapter 13, Title 8, and related provisions of Chapter 17, Title 2.

(C) These officials who have previously received this instruction, within ninety days after reelection to the same or a similar office, must complete two additional hours of such instruction to be provided by the State Ethics Commission.

(D) The State Ethics Commission may impose a reasonable fee for the cost of providing the ethics instruction required by subsections (B) and (C). The state or local public official’s entity or office is authorized to pay the cost of this required ethics instruction. Any state or local public official who fails to comply the provisions of this section may be assessed a civil penalty by the commission of an amount not exceeding one thousand dollars.

(E) Members of the House of Representatives and the Senate first elected after July 1, 2015, or reelected thereafter, after being first elected after July 1, 2015, must receive the instruction required by subsections (B) and (C) to be provided by the Ethics Committee of their respective house in lieu of the State Ethics Commission. The imposition of any appropriate fine or penalty against a House or Senate member for failure to receive the ethics instruction required by this section shall be at the direction of the appropriate Ethics Committee or the body itself as provided in the body’s respective rules.”

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

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