**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 25‑11‑100 SO AS TO DESIGNATE THE SUBSTANTIVE PROVISIONS OF ACT 127 OF 2015 RELATING TO THE STATE AND LOCAL LEVEL VETERANS ISSUES STUDY COMMITTEE, TO EXTEND THE DATE ON WHICH THE STUDY COMMITTEE MUST BE DISSOLVED, AND TO REQUIRE BIENNIAL REPORTS.

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

SECTION 1. Sections 1, 2, 3, and 4 of Act 127 of 2015 are hereby designated as Section 25‑11‑100 of the 1976 Code.

SECTION 2. Article 1, Chapter 11 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 25‑11‑100. (A)(1) There is established a State and Local Level Veterans Issues Study Committee. The committee is comprised of:

(a) the members of the Joint Legislative Veterans Issues Study Committee created by Act 342 of 2010 or their successors;

(b) three members appointed by the Governor; and

(c) three members appointed by the Adjutant General.

(2) The members of the committee shall elect a chairman and a vice chairman and shall meet as often and at any location in the State which the committee considers necessary or expedient for the duration of the committee’s existence as provided by this act. A vacancy on the committee must be filled in the manner of original appointment.

(B)(1) The committee shall study and evaluate the following:

(a) relationships between the county veterans affairs offices and the executive and legislative branches of state government;

(b) relationships between the county veterans affairs offices and the South Carolina Division of Veterans Affairs;

(c) relationships between the South Carolina Division of Veterans Affairs and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs;

(d) level of responsiveness and accountability of the current state system for the delivery of services to South Carolina veterans;

(e) range of services the State of South Carolina directly offers state veterans and recommendations for enhancing South Carolina’s veteran‑friendly reputation; and

(f) current mission of the Joint Legislative Veterans Issues Study Committee and whether its functions should be expanded or codified.

(2) When formulating its findings and recommendations, the committee shall consider information and recommendations from representatives of the veteran community.

(C) The committee shall render a written report of its findings and recommendations based upon its study conducted pursuant to subsection (B). The initial report must be presented to both houses of the General Assembly and to the Governor by March 1, 2016. Thereafter, the committee shall render a written report of its findings and recommendations to both houses of the General Assembly and to the Governor by March first of each succeeding even‑numbered year through 2026. Upon submitting the written report due by March 1, 2026, the committee must be dissolved unless extended by an act of the General Assembly.

(D) The committee shall receive clerical and related assistance from the staff of the Military Department of South Carolina, as approved and designated by the Adjutant General. The members of the committee may not receive compensation and are not entitled to receive mileage, subsistence, and per diem authorized by law for members of state boards and committees.”

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

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