**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, SO AS TO ENACT THE “DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF AN ELECTRONIC DEVICE OR DUI‑E LAW”, TO AMEND SECTION 56‑5‑3890, RELATING TO THE UNLAWFUL USE OF A WIRELESS COMMUNICATIONS DEVICE WHILE OPERATING A MOTOR VEHICLE, SO AS TO REVISE THE DEFINITION OF CERTAIN TERMS, REVISE THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHEN IT IS UNLAWFUL TO USE A WIRELESS DEVICE, TO CREATE THE OFFENSE OF DRIVING WHILE USING AN ELECTRONIC DEVICE, TO MAKE TECHNICAL REVISIONS, AND TO PROVIDE THAT AT CERTAIN POINTS ALONG THE STATE’S INTERSTATE HIGHWAYS, THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION SHALL NOTIFY MOTORISTS OF THE PROVISIONS OF THIS ACT.

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

SECTION 1. This act may be referred to and cited as the “Driving Under the Influence of an Electronic Device or DUI‑E Law”.

SECTION 2. Section 56‑5‑3890 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“Section 56‑5‑3890. (A) For purposes of this section:

(1) ~~“Hands‑free wireless electronic communication device” means an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, a personal digital assistant, a text‑messaging device, or a computer, which allows a person to wirelessly communicate with another person without holding the device in either hand by utilizing an internal feature or function of the device, an attachment, or an additional device. A hands‑free wireless electronic communication device may require the use of either hand to activate or deactivate an internal feature or function of the device~~ ‘Stand‑alone electronic device’ means a device other than a wireless telecommunications device which stores audio or video data files to be retrieved on demand by a user.

(2) ~~“Text‑based communication” means a communication using text‑based information, including, but not limited to, a text message, an SMS message, an instant message, or an electronic mail message~~ ‘Utility services’ means and includes electric, natural gas, water, wastewater, cable, telephone, or telecommunications services or the repair, location, relocation, improvement, or maintenance of utility poles, transmission structures, pipes, wires, fibers, cables, easements, rights of way, or associated infrastructure.

(3) ~~“Wireless electronic communication device” means an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, a personal digital assistant, a text‑messaging device, or a computer, which allows a person to wirelessly communicate with another person~~ ‘Wireless telecommunications device’ means a cellular telephone, a portable telephone, a text‑messaging device, a personal digital assistant, a stand‑alone computer, a global positioning system receiver, or a substantially similar portable wireless device that is used to initiate or receive communication, information, or data. This term shall not include a radio, citizens band radio, citizens band radio hybrid, commercial two‑way radio communication device or its functional equivalent, subscription‑based emergency communication device, prescribed medical device, amateur or ham radio device, or in‑vehicle security, navigation, or remote diagnostics system.

(B) ~~It is unlawful for a person to use a wireless electronic communication device to compose, send, or read a text‑based communication while operating a motor vehicle on the public streets and highways of this State.~~ While operating a motor vehicle on any highway of this State, a person shall not:

(1) Physically hold a:

(a) wireless telecommunications device, provided that this exclusion shall not prohibit the use of an earpiece, headphone device, or device worn on a wrist to conduct a voice‑based communication; or

(b) stand‑alone electronic device;

(2) write, send, or read any text‑based communication, including, but not limited to, a text message, instant message, e‑mail, or Internet data on a wireless telecommunications device or stand‑alone electronic device. However, this prohibition shall not apply to a voice‑based communication which is automatically converted by the device to be sent as a message in a written form;

(3) watch a video or movie on a wireless telecommunications device or stand‑alone electronic device other than watching data related to the navigation of the vehicle.

(C) While operating a commercial motor vehicle on any highway of this state, a person shall not:

(1) use more than a single button on a wireless telecommunications device to initiate or terminate a voice communication; or

(2) reach for a wireless telecommunications device or stand‑alone electronic device in a manner that requires the driver to no longer be:

(a) in a seated driving position; or

(b) properly restrained by a safety belt.

(D) This section does not apply to ~~a person~~ an operator who is:

(1) stopped on the side of a road or lawfully parked ~~or stopped~~;

(2) ~~using a hands‑free wireless electronic communication device~~ reporting a traffic accident, medical emergency, fire, an actual or potential criminal or delinquent act, or a road condition which causes an immediate and serious traffic or safety hazard, or otherwise summoning emergency assistance;

(3) ~~summoning emergency assistance~~ a law enforcement officer, firefighter, emergency medical services personnel, ambulance driver, or other similarly employed public safety first responder during the performance of his or her official duties;

(4) t~~ransmitting or receiving data as part of a digital dispatch system~~ an employee or contractor of a utility services provider acting within the scope of his or her employment while responding to a utility emergency;

(5) ~~a public safety official while in the performance of the person’s official duties~~ transmitting or receiving information as part of a digital dispatch system for relaying information in the course of the operator’s occupational duties; or

(6) ~~using a global positioning system device or an internal global positioning system feature or function of a wireless electronic communication device for the purpose of navigation or obtaining related traffic and road condition information~~ using equipment or services installed or provided by the original manufacturer of the vehicle. However, this item does not authorize the driver’s use of a hand‑held device.

~~(D)(1)~~(E) A person who is adjudicated to be in violation of the provisions of this section is guilty of driving while using an electronic device and must be fined not more than twenty‑five dollars, no part of which may be suspended. No court costs, assessments, or surcharges may be assessed against a person who violates a provision of this section. A person must not be fined more than fifty dollars for any one incident of one or more violations of the provisions of this section. A custodial arrest for a violation of this section must not be made, except upon a warrant issued for failure to appear in court when summoned or for failure to pay an imposed fine. A violation of this section does not constitute a criminal offense. Notwithstanding Section 56‑1‑640, a violation of this section must not be:

(a) included in the offender’s motor vehicle records maintained by the Department of Motor Vehicles or in the criminal records maintained by SLED; or

(b) reported to the offender’s motor vehicle insurer.

~~(2)~~ ~~During the first one hundred eighty days after this section’s effective date, law enforcement officers shall issue only warnings for violations of this section.~~

~~(E)~~(F) A law enforcement officer shall not:

(1) ~~stop a person for a violation of this section except when the officer has probable cause that a violation has occurred based on the officer’s clear and unobstructed view of a person who is using a wireless electronic communication device to compose, send, or read a text‑based communication while operating a motor vehicle on the public streets and highways of this State;~~

~~(2)~~ seize, search, view, or require the forfeiture of a wireless electronic communication device because of a violation of this section;

~~(3)~~(2) search or request to search a motor vehicle, driver, or passenger in a motor vehicle, solely because of a violation of this section; or

~~(4)~~(3) make a custodial arrest for a violation of this section, except upon a warrant issued for failure to appear in court when summoned or for failure to pay an imposed fine.

~~(F)~~(G) The Department of Public Safety shall maintain statistical information regarding citations issued pursuant to this section.

~~(G)~~(H) This section preempts local ordinances, regulations, and resolutions adopted by municipalities, counties, and other local governmental entities regarding persons using wireless ~~electronic communication devices while operating motor vehicles on the public streets and highways of this State~~ telecommunications devices and stand‑alone electronic devices while operating motor vehicles on the public highways of this State.”

SECTION 3. At every interstate highway ingress into the State, the South Carolina Department of Transportation shall erect a visible notification sign advising motorists entering the State of the existence of this act.

SECTION 4. The repeal or amendment by this act of any law, whether temporary or permanent or civil or criminal, does not affect pending actions, rights, duties, or liabilities founded thereon, or alter, discharge, release or extinguish any penalty, forfeiture, or liability incurred under the repealed or amended law, unless the repealed or amended provision shall so expressly provide. After the effective date of this act, all laws repealed or amended by this act must be taken and treated as remaining in full force and effect for the purpose of sustaining any pending or vested right, civil action, special proceeding, criminal prosecution, or appeal existing as of the effective date of this act, and for the enforcement of rights, duties, penalties, forfeitures, and liabilities as they stood under the repealed or amended laws.

SECTION 5. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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