**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 44‑20‑225 SO AS TO REQUIRE MEMBERS OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS TO COMPLETE CERTAIN TRAINING; AND TO AMEND SECTION 44‑20‑210, RELATING TO CREATION OF THE COMMISSION, SO AS TO ESTABLISH CERTAIN QUALIFICATIONS FOR COMMISSION MEMBERS.

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

SECTION 1. Article 3, Chapter 20, Title 44 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 44‑20‑225. (A) Within one year of the effective date of this act, existing members of the commission shall complete successfully a training program on the powers, duties, and responsibilities of a commission member and the department including, but not limited to, topics on statutory responsibilities, regulation and department policy development, department operations and performance management, personnel, system finances, ethics, community relations, and client services, as determined by the commission.

(B) A person appointed as a member of the commission after the effective date of this act shall complete the training prescribed in subsection (A) within one year of being appointed as a commission member.”

SECTION 2. Section 44‑20‑210 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“Section 44‑20‑210. (A) There is created the South Carolina Commission on Disabilities and Special Needs. The commission consists of seven members. One member must be a resident of each congressional district appointed by the Governor upon the advice and consent of the Senate. They shall serve for four years and until their successors are appointed and qualify. In making appointments to the commission, the Governor shall take into consideration race, gender, and other demographic factors, such as residence in rural or urban areas, so as to represent, to the greatest extent possible, all segments of the population of the State; however, consideration of these factors in making an appointment in no way creates a cause of action or basis for an employee grievance for a person appointed or for a person not appointed. Members of the commission are subject to removal by the Governor pursuant to the provisions of Section 1‑3‑240. A vacancy may be filled by the Governor for the unexpired portion of the term.

(B) Each commission member shall possess, at a minimum, the following:

(1) a baccalaureate or more advanced degree in a discipline related to intellectual disability, related disabilities, head injuries, spinal cord injuries, or other health care discipline from:

(a) a recognized institution of higher learning requiring face‑to‑face contact between its students and instructors prior to completion of the academic program;

(b) an institution of higher learning that has been accredited by a regional or national accrediting body; or

(c) an institution of higher learning chartered before 1962; or

(2) an expertise gained from professional or familial caregiving of substantial duration in at least one of the following fields:

(a) intellectual disability;

(b) related disabilities;

(c) head injuries;

(d) spinal cord injuries; or

(e) other health care.”

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

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