**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND SECTION 7‑25‑210, CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, RELATING TO VANDALIZING OR REMOVING POLITICAL CAMPAIGN SIGNS, SO AS TO INCREASE THE MAXIMUM FINE FOR VANDALIZING OR REMOVING POLITICAL CAMPAIGN SIGNS FROM ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS TO THREE HUNDRED DOLLARS, AND TO ALLOW POLITICAL SIGNS, NOTWITHSTANDING ANOTHER PROVISION OF LAW, TO BE PLACED IN THE RIGHT OF WAY OF THE STATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM FOR A PRESCRIBED PERIOD AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH CERTAIN ENUMERATED REQUIREMENTS.

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

SECTION 1. Section 7‑25‑210 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“Section 7‑25‑210. (A) It is unlawful to deface, vandalize, tamper with, or remove a lawfully placed political campaign sign prior to the election without the permission of the candidate or party.

(B) This section does not apply to a governmental entity when a political campaign sign is removed because of noncompliance with applicable law, or because an employee of the governmental entity removing the sign is working within the course and scope of his employment.

(C) A person who violates the provisions of subsection (A) is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be fined not more than ~~one~~ three hundred dollars or imprisoned not more than thirty days, or both.

(D)(1) Notwithstanding another provision of law, during the period beginning on the first day that a person may file to be a candidate for elective office and ending on the tenth day after the primary or election day, political signs may be placed in the right of way of the state highway system as provided in this subsection. Signs must be placed in accordance with this subsection and must be removed by the end of the period prescribed in this subsection.

(2) For purposes of this subsection, ‘political sign’ means any sign that advocates for political action. The term does not include a commercial sign.

(3) Political signs must be placed pursuant to the following requirements:

(a) no sign may be permitted in the right of way of a fully controlled access highway;

(b) no sign may be closer than three feet from the edge of the pavement of the road;

(c) no sign may obscure motorist visibility at an intersection;

(d) no sign may be higher than forty‑two inches above the edge of the pavement of the road;

(e) no sign may be larger than eight hundred sixty‑four square inches; and

(f) no sign may obscure or replace another sign.”

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

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