AMENDED

January 23, 2020

**S. 996**

Introduced by Senators Alexander, Rankin and Hutto

S. Printed 1/23/20--H.

Read the first time January 21, 2020.

**A** **JOINT RESOLUTION**

TO PROVIDE THAT THE PUBLIC UTILITIES REVIEW COMMITTEE SHALL EXTEND THE SCREENING FOR CANDIDATES FOR THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION, SEATS 1, 3, 5, AND 7; TO PROVIDE FOR ADVERTISEMENT FOR THESE POSITIONS FOR AN ADDITIONAL TIME PERIOD AND FOR CERTAIN PROCESS REQUIREMENTS; TO ACCEPT APPLICATIONS FROM FEBRUARY 3, 2020, THROUGH NOON ON FEBRUARY 28, 2020; TO PROVIDE WHO THE PUBLIC UTILITIES REVIEW COMMITTEE MAY CONSIDER; AND TO PROVIDE WHEN TRANSCRIPTS FROM PUBLIC HEARINGS MAY BE RELEASED.

Amend Title To Conform

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

SECTION 1. (A) The General Assembly finds that:

(1) it is important that public sector positions reflect the population as much as possible;

(2) racial discrimination and related intolerance have been shown to negatively impact people of color and communities of color;

(3) there are obstacles which racial discrimination pose to candidates for the public service commission;

(4) there are negative impacts to communities of color as to the fair and equitable administration of rates and service before the commission;

(5) diversity is a critical component of the fair administration of rates and service.

(B) In screening candidates for the Commission and making its findings, the Review Committee must give due consideration to race, gender, and other demographic factors to assure nondiscrimination, inclusion, and representation to the greatest extent possible of all segments of the population of this State.

SECTION 2. The Public Utilities Review Committee conducted a screening of candidates for the Public Service Commission, Seats 1, 3, 5, and 7. After the committee’s public hearings, held on January 7 and 8, 2020, a total of six candidates were found qualified.

The Public Utilities Review Committee shall extend the screening for candidates for the Public Service Commission, Seats 1, 3, 5, and 7. The committee previously fulfilled the notice requirements pursuant to Section 2‑20‑15 of the Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976; however, the committee is directed to advertise for these positions for an additional time period, to begin no later than Sunday, January 26, 2020, through Sunday, February 23, 2020. This advertisement shall be forwarded to three newspapers of general circulation in Congressional Districts 1, 3, 5, and 7 with a request that the advertisement be published once a week. The committee must also forward the advertisement to media outlets for a general press release as well as make reasonable efforts to notify professional organizations within South Carolina, if applicable, that represent the areas of background and expertise listed in Section 58‑3‑20(A)(2) regarding the vacancies.

The committee will accept applications from Monday, February 3, 2020, through noon on Friday, February 28, 2020. These applications will be considered by the committee, in addition to the applications of those persons whom the committee found qualified on January 8, 2020. Applicants who either withdrew, or who the committee failed to find “qualified” for Seats 1, 3, 5, or 7 from October 11, 2019, through this joint resolution’s effective date, shall not receive further consideration.

The committee shall simultaneously release the transcripts, including exhibits, from all public hearings during this screening process within a reasonable time upon the completion of all the public hearings for candidates.

SECTION 3. This joint resolution takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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