**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, TO ENACT THE “SOUTH CAROLINA SERVICE CORPS ACT” BY ADDING CHAPTER 46 TO TITLE 41 SO AS TO PROVIDE FOR THE PURPOSE, ADMINISTRATION, POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE SERVICE CORPS, TO PROVIDE PERSONS WHO COMPLETE A TERM IN THE SERVICE CORPS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR CERTAIN HIGHER EDUCATION TUITION ASSISTANCE GRANTS, AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE WRITTEN SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS FOR SERVICE PROJECTS TO BE PERFORMED THROUGH THE SERVICE CORPS.

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

SECTION 1. This act must be known and may be cited as the “South Carolina Service Corps Act”.

SECTION 2. Title 41 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“CHAPTER 46

South Carolina Service Corps

Section 41‑46‑110. The purpose of this chapter is provide student loan relief, job training, and work experience, in exchange for providing community service in underserved areas.

Section 41‑46‑120. There is hereby established the South Carolina Service Corps as a division of the Department of Employment and Workforce. The South Carolina Service Corps shall provide interested applicants with service opportunities considered most likely to further the stated educational and professional interests of the applicant. These service opportunities must include, but may not be limited to:

(1) green jobs in service of activities or industries that contribute substantially to preserving or restoring environmental quality;

(2) health services, by applicants with the necessary qualifications, to provide medical, dental, psychological, or other related services as considered appropriate by the South Carolina Service Corps administration;

(3) services that benefit the developmental and educational needs of early childhood; and

(4) services that provide exposure to, and participation in, the arts or humanities.

Section 41‑46‑130. The division must be administered by a full‑time salaried administrator who is appointed by the executive director of the department. The executive director of the department may authorize the division administrator to employ additional support, use office space, and use other administrative resources that the executive director considers necessary to effectuate the provisions of this chapter.

Section 41‑46‑140. An individual who completes a term of service is eligible for an education grant to be used for either tuition costs at eligible institutions of higher learning or student loan repayment. Funding for the education grant must be comprised of any federal dollars allocated for implementing community service programs, with necessary additional funding allocated through appropriations by the General Assembly.

Section 41‑46‑150. The South Carolina Service Corps has the powers and duties to:

(1) recruit and select South Carolina Service Corps professionals for service in eligible institutions, facilities, or professions;

(2) place South Carolina Service Corps professionals in eligible institutions and facilities pursuant to agreements with the appropriate eligible institutions and facilities;

(3) develop criteria for the selection of applicants for placement under this program including, but not limited to, the individual’s academic achievement, previous work experience in the relevant industry or related services, and a demonstrated interest in working with vulnerable populations or providing community service;

(4) accept and expend any grants, awards, or other funds or appropriations as may be available to effectuate the purposes of this chapter, subject to the limitations as to the approval of expenditures and audits as prescribed for state funds; and

(5) do any and all other things necessary to carry out its functions, powers and duties, and to effectuate the purposes and provisions of this chapter.

Section 41‑46‑160. The nature and extent of a proposed service project must be submitted in writing to the appropriate delegated oversight entity prior to expending any public funds.”

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

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