**South Carolina General Assembly**

126th Session, 2025-2026

**S. 632**

**STATUS INFORMATION**

General Bill

Sponsors: Senators Bennett, Alexander, Peeler, Rankin, Williams, Grooms and Jackson

Document Path: LC-0151HA25.docx

Introduced in the Senate on May 1, 2025

Currently residing in the Senate Committee on **Judiciary**

Summary: Ethics - Local Government Lobbying

**HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS**

 Date Body Action Description with journal page number

 5/1/2025 Senate Introduced and read first time

 5/1/2025 Senate Referred to Committee on **Judiciary**

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**VERSIONS OF THIS BILL**

[05/01/2025](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess126_2025-2026/prever/632_20250501.docx)

A bill

TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 2‑17‑10, RELATING TO DEFINITIONS, SO AS TO AMEND THE DEFINITIONS OF “LOBBYING,” “LOBBYIST,” “PUBLIC BODY,” “PUBLIC EMPLOYEE,” AND “PUBLIC OFFICIAL,” AND TO ADD THE DEFINITIONS OF “COVERED LOCAL GOVERNING BODY ACTIONS” AND “LOCAL GOVERNING BODY”; BY AMENDING SECTION 2‑17‑15, RELATING TO PERSONS PROHIBITED FROM SERVING AS LOBBYISTS, SO AS TO INCLUDE MEMBERS OF LOCAL GOVERNING BODIES; BY AMENDING SECTION 2‑17‑20, RELATING TO REGISTRATION OF LOBBYISTS, SO AS TO INCLUDE COVERED LOCAL GOVERNING BODY ACTIONS AND TO REQUIRE THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION TO PUBLISH AN ONLINE LIST OF REGISTERED LOBBYISTS; BY AMENDING SECTION 2‑17‑25, RELATING TO REGISTRATION OF LOBBYISTS’ PRINCIPALS, SO AS TO INCLUDE COVERED LOCAL GOVERNING BODY ACTIONS AND TO REQUIRE THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION TO PUBLISH AN ONLINE LIST OF REGISTERED LOBBYISTS’ PRINCIPALS; BY AMENDING SECTION 2‑17‑30, RELATING TO REPORTING OF LOBBYISTS’ ACTIVITIES, SO AS TO INCLUDE LOCAL GOVERNING BODIES; BY AMENDING SECTION 2‑17‑35, RELATING TO LOBBYISTS’ PRINCIPALS’ REPORTING OF LOBBYING EXPENDITURES, SO AS TO INCLUDE LOCAL GOVERNING BODIES; BY AMENDING SECTION 2‑17‑40, RELATING TO STATE AGENCY OR DEPARTMENT REPORTING OF LOBBYING ACTIVITIES, SO AS TO INCLUDE LOCAL GOVERNING BODIES; BY AMENDING SECTION 2‑17‑45, RELATING TO REPORTS REQUIRED OF CERTAIN ENTITIES, SO AS TO INCLUDE LOCAL GOVERNING BODIES; BY AMENDING SECTION 2‑17‑80, RELATING TO PROHIBITED ACTS FOR LOBBYISTS, PUBLIC OFFICIALS, AND EMPLOYEES, SO AS TO INCLUDE LOCAL GOVERNING BODIES; BY AMENDING SECTION 2‑17‑90, RELATING TO ACTS PROHIBITED OF LOBBYISTS’ PRINCIPALS, PUBLIC OFFICIALS, AND EMPLOYEES AND DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS, SO AS TO INCLUDE LOCAL GOVERNING BODIES; BY AMENDING SECTION 2‑17‑100, RELATING TO PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS, SO AS TO INCLUDE THE CHAIRMEN OF LOCAL GOVERNING BODIES; BY AMENDING SECTION 2‑17‑110, RELATING TO ADDITIONAL ACTS PROHIBITED OF LOBBYISTS AND LOBBYISTS’ PRINCIPALS, PUBLIC OFFICIALS, AND PUBLIC EMPLOYEES, SO AS TO INCLUDE LOCAL GOVERNING BODIES; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 2‑17‑130, RELATING TO PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS OF PROVISIONS OF THIS CHAPTER, SO AS TO INCLUDE LOCAL GOVERNING BODIES.

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

SECTION 1. Section 2‑17‑10(12) of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 (12) “Lobbying” means promoting or opposing through direct communication with public officials or public employees:

 (a) the introduction or enactment of legislation before the General Assembly or the committees or members of the General Assembly;

 (b) covered gubernatorial actions;

 (c) covered agency actions; or

 (d) consideration of the election or appointment of an individual to a public office elected or appointed by the General Assembly; or

 (e) covered local governing body actions.

 “Lobbying” does not include the activities of a member of the General Assembly, a member of the staff of a member of the Senate or House of Representatives, the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, or a member of the executive staff of the Governor or Lieutenant Governor, a member of a local governing body, or a member of the staff of a member of a local governing body acting in his capacity as a public official or public employee with regard to his public duties.

SECTION 2. Section 2‑17‑10(13) of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 (13) “Lobbyist” means any person who is employed, appointed, or retained, with or without compensation, by another person to influence by direct communication with public officials or public employees: (i) the action or vote of any member of the General Assembly, the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, or any other statewide constitutional officer concerning any legislation; (ii) the vote of any public official on any state agency, board, or commission concerning any covered agency actions; or (iii) the action of the Governor or any member of his executive staff concerning any covered gubernatorial actions; or (iv) the action or vote of any member of a local governing body concerning any covered local governing body action. “Lobbyist” also means any person who is employed, appointed, or retained, with or without compensation, by a state agency, college, university, or other institution of higher learning to influence by direct communication with public officials or public employees: (i) the action or vote of any member of the General Assembly, the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, or any other statewide constitutional officer concerning any legislation; (ii) the vote of any public official of any state agency, board, or commission concerning any covered agency actions; or (iii) the action of the Governor or any member of his executive staff concerning any covered gubernatorial actions; or (iv) the action or vote of any member of a local governing body concerning any covered local governing body action. “Lobbyist” does not include:

 (a) an individual who receives no compensation to engage in lobbying and who expresses a personal opinion on legislation, covered gubernatorial actions, or covered agency actions, or covered local governing body actions to any public official or public employee;

 (b) a person who appears only before public sessions of committees or subcommittees of the General Assembly, public hearings of state agencies, public sessions of local governing bodies, public hearings before any public body of a quasi‑judicial nature, or proceedings of any court of this State;

 (c) any duly elected or appointed official or employee of the State, the United States, a county, municipality, school district, or a political subdivision thereof, or a member of the judiciary when appearing solely on matters pertaining to his office and public duties unless lobbying constitutes a regular and substantial portion of such official’s or employee’s duties;

 (d) a person performing professional services in drafting legislation, rules, regulations, ordinances, or similar governing documents, or in advising and rendering opinions to clients as to the construction and effect of proposed or pending legislation, or rules, regulations, ordinances, or similar governing documents;

 (e) a person who owns, publishes, or is employed by a radio station, television station, wire service, or other bona fide news medium which in the ordinary course of business disseminates news, editorials, columns, other comments, or other regularly published periodicals if such person represents no other person in lobbying for legislation, covered agency actions, or covered gubernatorial actions, or covered local governing body actions. This exception applies to the publication of any periodical which is published and distributed by a membership organization to its subscribers at least twelve times annually and for which an annual subscription charge of at least one dollar fifty cents a subscriber is made;

 (f) a person who represents any established church solely for the purpose of protecting the rights of the membership of the church or for the purpose of protecting the doctrines of the church or on matters considered to have an adverse effect upon the moral welfare of the membership of the church;

 (g) a person who is running for office elected by the General Assembly or a person soliciting votes on the behalf of a person who is running for office elected by the General Assembly unless such person is otherwise defined as a lobbyist by this section; or

 (h) an individual who receives no compensation to engage in lobbying and who does not make expenditures or incur obligations for lobbying in an aggregate amount in excess of five hundred dollars in a calendar year.

SECTION 3. Section 2‑17‑10(16) of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 (16) “Public body” means the General Assembly, the Executive Office of the Governor, any department of the State, or any state board, commission, agency, or authority, or a local governing body, including committees of any such body described in this item, by whatever name known.

SECTION 4. Section 2‑17‑10(17) of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 (17) “Public employee” means any person employed by the State, a county, a municipality, or a political subdivision thereof.

SECTION 5. Section 2‑17‑10(18) of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 (18) “Public official” means any elected or appointed official of the State, a county, a municipality, or a political subdivision thereof, including candidates for any such state or local office. However, “public official” does not mean a member of the judiciary.

SECTION 6. Section 2‑17‑10 of the S.C. Code is amended by adding:

 (22) “Covered local governing body actions” means the proposal, drafting, development, introduction, consideration, amendment, withdrawal, adoption, approval, veto, or promulgation of an ordinance, regulation, or rule, the consideration or making of an appointment, the consideration of or decision to award grants or other funds, and any other matter which may be the subject of action by a local governing body.

SECTION 7. Section 2‑17‑10 of the S.C. Code is amended by adding:

 (23) “Local governing body” means a board, council, or other entity charged by law with governing a county, municipality, school district, special purpose district, or other local political subdivision of the State. “Local governing body” includes the entity’s boards, commissions, committees, and subcommittees.

SECTION 8. Section 2‑17‑15(A) of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 (A) The Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, any other statewide constitutional officer, a member of the General Assembly, a director or deputy director of a state department appointed by the Governor, a member of a local governing body, and a member of the immediate family of any of these public officials may not serve as a lobbyist during the time the official holds office and for one year after such public service ends.

SECTION 9. Section 2‑17‑20(B) of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 (B) The registration must be in a form prescribed by the State Ethics Commission and be limited to and contain:

 (1) the lobbyist’s full name and address, telephone number, occupation, name of employer, principal place of business, and position held in that business by the lobbyist;

 (2) an identification of the public office or public body which the lobbyist will engage in lobbying and the subject matter in which the lobbyist will engage in lobbying, including the name of legislation, covered agency actions, or covered gubernatorial actions, or covered local governing body actions, if known; and

 (3) certification by the lobbyist that the information contained on the registration statement is true and correct.

 (4) If a lobbyist fails to identify the public office or public body for which he is authorized to engage in lobbying, as required by item (2) of this subsection, then the lobbyist’s principal for whom the lobbyist is authorized to engage in lobbying is deemed a lobbyist’s principal as to all public offices or public bodies of the State.

SECTION 10. Section 2‑17‑20(E) of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 (E) The State Ethics Commission annually must furnish to each chairman of standing and special committees of the General Assembly, each member of the General Assembly, and each statewide constitutional officer a publish an online list of all lobbyists registered with that office. The State Ethics Commission must furnish monthly updates to the same persons update and publish the online list within two business days after receipt of a change for this list. These lists must be available to state agency heads upon request.

SECTION 11. Section 2‑17‑25(B) of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 (B) The registration must be in a form prescribed by the State Ethics Commission and be limited to and include:

 (1) the full name, address, and telephone number of the lobbyist’s principal. If the lobbyist’s principal is an individual, the lobbyist’s principal also shall include his occupation, name of employer, principal place of business, and position of authority held in that business by the lobbyist’s principal;

 (2) an identification of each person the lobbyist’s principal expects to employ, appoint, or retain as a lobbyist;

 (3) an identification of the public office or public body which the lobbyist’s principal will authorize lobbying and the subject matter in which the lobbyist’s principal will authorize lobbying, including the name of legislation, covered agency actions, or covered gubernatorial actions, or covered local governing body actions, if known; and

 (4) certification by the lobbyist’s principal that the information contained on the registration statement is true and correct.

 (5) If a lobbyist’s principal fails to identify the public office or public body for which he has authorized lobbying as required by item (3) of this subsection, then the lobbyist’s principal is deemed a lobbyist’s principal as to all public offices or public bodies of the State.

 A lobbyist’s principal may comply with the requirements of items (1), (2), and (3) above by attaching a copy of the information submitted by any lobbyist employed, retained, or appointed by the lobbyist’s principal if the information requested from the lobbyist’s principal is the same as the information supplied by the lobbyist pursuant to Section 2‑17‑20.

SECTION 12. Section 2‑17‑25(E) of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 (E) The State Ethics Commission annually must furnish to each chairman of standing and special committees of the General Assembly, each member of the General Assembly, and each statewide constitutional officer a publish an online list of every lobbyist’s principal registered with that office. The State Ethics Commission must furnish monthly updates to the same persons update and publish the online list within two business days after receipt of a change for this list. These lists must be available to state agency heads upon request.

SECTION 13. Section 2‑17‑30(A) of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 (A) Each lobbyist, no later than June thirtieth and January thirty‑first of each year, must file a report with the State Ethics Commission covering that lobbyist’s lobbying during that filing period. The filing periods are from January first to May thirty‑first for the June thirtieth report, and are from June first to December thirty‑first for the January thirty‑first report. Any lobbying activity not reflected on the June thirtieth report and not reported on a statement of termination pursuant to Section 2‑17‑20(C) must be reported no later than January thirty‑first of the succeeding year. Each report must be in a form prescribed by the State Ethics Commission and be limited to and contain:

 (1) the full name, address, and telephone number of the reporting lobbyist;

 (2) an identification of each person on whose behalf the reporting lobbyist engaged in lobbying during the covered period;

 (3) the official name, number, or description, designated by the House or Senate, or by an agency, or a local governing body of legislation, covered agency actions, or covered gubernatorial actions, or covered local governing body actions for which the reporting lobbyist engaged in lobbying during the covered period;

 (4) the identification of each person from whom income attributable to the lobbyist’s lobbying is paid or promised and the amount of the income attributable to the lobbyist’s lobbying paid or promised;

 (5)(a) a complete and itemized account of the totals of all amounts expended by a lobbyist in the performance of his lobbying during the covered period. The totals must be segregated by the amounts expended for office expenses, rent, utilities, supplies, and compensation of support personnel attributable to lobbying covered under the provisions of this chapter;

 (b) any expenditure directly or indirectly related to lobbying if expended while engaged in the general course of lobbying and if reimbursed by the lobbyist’s principal;

 (6) the name of each member of the judiciary on whose behalf a lobbyist initiated or made expenditures and a complete and itemized account of the amount expended by the lobbyist for each member of the judiciary;

 (7) a statement detailing any direct business association of a lobbyist with any current member of the General Assembly, the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, any other statewide constitutional officer, any public official of any state agency who engaged in covered agency actions, any member of a local governing body, or any of their employees. For the purposes of this item, direct business association does not include:

 (a) ownership interests held by a lobbyist or a lobbyist’s principal and a member of the General Assembly, the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, any other statewide constitutional officer, any public official of any state agency who engaged in covered agency actions, any member of a local governing body, or any of their employees in the same corporation or partnership unless the interest of each exceeds five percent of the total shares outstanding or partnership interests in such entity;

 (b) an interest held by a member of the General Assembly, the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, any other statewide constitutional officer, any public official of any state agency who engaged in covered agency actions, any member of a local governing body, or any of their employees in a partnership or corporation represented by a lobbyist or a lobbyist’s principal if the interest is less than five percent of the total shares outstanding or partnership interests in such entity; or

 (c) any commercial transaction between a lobbyist or a lobbyist’s principal and a member of the General Assembly, the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, any other statewide constitutional officer, any public official of any state agency who engaged in covered agency actions, any member of a local governing body, or any of their employees in which the fair market value of the goods transferred or services rendered is paid.

SECTION 14. Section 2‑17‑35(A) of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 (A) Except as otherwise provided by Section 2‑17‑90(E), each lobbyist’s principal, no later than June thirtieth and January thirty‑first of each year, must file a report with the State Ethics Commission covering that lobbyist’s principal’s expenditures attributable to lobbying during that filing period. The filing periods are from January first to May thirty‑first for the June thirtieth report, and are from June first to December thirty‑first for the January thirty‑first report. Any lobbying activity not reflected on the June thirtieth report and not reported on a statement of termination pursuant to Section 2‑17‑25(C) must be reported no later than January thirty‑first of the succeeding year. Each report must be in a form prescribed by the State Ethics Commission and be limited to and contain:

 (1) the full name, address, and telephone number of the reporting lobbyist’s principal;

 (2) an identification of each person who acted as a lobbyist on behalf of the reporting lobbyist’s principal during the covered period;

 (3) the official name, number, or description, designated by the House or Senate, or by an agency, a local governing body of legislation, covered agency actions, or covered gubernatorial actions, or covered local governing body action for which its lobbyist engaged in lobbying during the covered period;

 (4) the identification of each person to whom income attributable to the lobbyist’s lobbying is paid or promised and the amount of the income attributable to the lobbyist’s lobbying paid or promised;

 (5)(a) a complete and itemized account of all amounts expended by a lobbyist’s principal for lobbying during the covered period. The totals must be segregated by the amounts expended for office expenses, rent, utilities, supplies, and compensation of support personnel attributable to lobbying covered under the provisions of this chapter;

 (b) any expenditure directly or indirectly related to lobbying if expended while a lobbyist’s principal or his lobbyist is engaged in the general course of lobbying;

 (c) the name of each public official on whose behalf a lobbyist’s principal initiated or made expenditures pursuant to Section 2‑17‑90 and a complete and itemized account of the amount expended by the lobbyist’s principal for each public official;

 (d) any reimbursements of or expenditures for actual expenses as allowed in Section 2‑17‑100;

 (6) the name of each member of the judiciary on whose behalf a lobbyist’s principal initiated or made expenditures and a complete and itemized account of the amount expended by the lobbyist’s principal for each member of the judiciary;

 (7) a statement detailing any direct business association of a lobbyist’s principal with any current member of the General Assembly, the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, any other statewide constitutional officer, any public official of any state agency who engaged in covered agency actions, any member of a local governing body, or any of their employees. For the purposes of this item, direct business association does not include:

 (a) ownership interests held by a lobbyist or a lobbyist’s principal and a member of the General Assembly, the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, any other statewide constitutional officer, any public official of any state agency who engaged in covered agency actions, any member of a local governing body, or any of their employees in the same corporation or partnership unless the interest of each exceeds five percent of the total shares outstanding or partnership interests in the entity;

 (b) an interest held by a member of the General Assembly, the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, any other statewide constitutional officer, any public official of any state agency who engaged in covered agency actions, any member of a local governing body, or any of their employees in a partnership or corporation represented by a lobbyist or a lobbyist’s principal if the interest is less than five percent of the total shares outstanding or partnership interests in such entity; or

 (c) any commercial transaction between a lobbyist or lobbyist’s principal and a member of the General Assembly, the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, any other statewide constitutional officer, any public official of any state agency who engaged in covered agency actions, any member of a local governing body, or any of their employees in which the fair market value of the goods transferred or services rendered is paid;

 (8) any contribution, as defined by Section 8‑13‑1300(7), made by the lobbyist’s principal to any candidate or public official, including an itemization of:

 (a) the name and address of the public official or candidate to whom the contribution was made;

 (b) the amount of the contribution;

 (c) the date of the contribution;

 (9) in the case of a voluntary membership organization, dues, fees, or other amounts payable to the organization during any calendar year from a member need be recorded only if the contribution to the organization is more than five hundred dollars and more than twenty percent of the total contributions of the organization during that calendar year.

SECTION 15. Section 2‑17‑40(A) of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 (A) Each state agency or department and each local governing body must, no later than June thirtieth and January thirty‑first of each year, file a report with the State Ethics Commission covering that agency'sentity’s lobbying during that filing period. The filing periods are from January first to May thirty‑first for the June thirtieth report, and are from June first to December thirty‑first for the January thirty‑first report. Any lobbying activity not reflected on the June thirtieth report and not reported on a statement of termination pursuant to Section 2‑17‑25(C) must be reported no later than January thirty‑first of the succeeding year. Each report must be in a form prescribed by the State Ethics Commission and be limited to and contain:

 (1) an identification of each public official, public employee, or other person who engaged in lobbying for that agency entity during the covered period;

 (2) legislation, covered agency actions, or covered gubernatorial actions, or covered local governing body actions the persons identified in item (1) engaged in lobbying during the covered period;

 (3) the identification of each person to whom income attributable to the lobbyist’s lobbying is paid or promised and the amount of the income attributable to the lobbyist’s lobbying paid or promised;

 (4)(a) a complete and itemized account of all expenditures made or incurred by those persons identified in item (1) in the performance of their lobbying during the covered period. The totals must be segregated by the amounts expended for office expenses, rent, utilities, supplies, and compensation of support personnel attributable to lobbying covered under the provisions of this chapter;

 (b) the name of each public official on whose behalf the state agency or department or local governing body initiated or made expenditures pursuant to Section 2‑17‑90 and a complete and itemized account of the amount expended by the state agency or department or local governing body for each public official;

 (c) any reimbursements of or expenditures for actual expenses as allowed in Section 2‑17‑100.

SECTION 16. Section 2‑17‑45 of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 Section 2‑17‑45. An entity which ranks or rates the actions, vote, or failure to act or vote of the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, or a member or committee of the General Assembly, or a member or committee of a local governing body as to any action, vote, or failure to act or vote by these public officials and which disseminates its rankings or ratings to the general public must no later than April first of each year file a report with the State Ethics Commission. The provisions of this section do not apply to an entity whose primary business is the publication of a newspaper or other periodical or the production of electronic media programming or to a private membership organization which disseminates its rankings or ratings only to its own membership. The entity shall file the report on a form prescribed by the State Ethics Commission which must contain the full name, address, and telephone number of:

 (1) the entity;

 (2) each officer and director of the entity;

 (3) each member of the entity who is a member of the General Assembly or a local governing body; and

 (4) each member of the entity who is a lobbyist or a lobbyist’s principal.

SECTION 17. Section 2‑17‑80 of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 Section 2‑17‑80. (A) A lobbyist or a person acting on behalf of a lobbyist shall not offer, solicit, facilitate, or provide to or on behalf of any member of the General Assembly, the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, any other statewide constitutional officer, anya public official of any state agency who engaged in covered agency actions, or any of their a public employees any of the following:

 (1) lodging;

 (2) transportation;

 (3) entertainment;

 (4) food, meals, beverages, money, or any other thing of value;

 (5) contributions, as defined in Section 8‑13‑1300(7).

 (B) A member of the General Assembly, the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, any other statewide constitutional officer, any public official of any state agency who engaged in covered agency actions, or any of their employees or a public employee shall not solicit or receive from a lobbyist or a person acting on behalf of a lobbyist any of the following:

 (1) lodging;

 (2) transportation;

 (3) entertainment;

 (4) food, meals, beverages, money, or any other thing of value;

 (5) contributions, as defined in Section 8‑13‑1300(7).

 (C) Subsections (A)(1) through (A)(4) and subsections (B)(1) through (B)(4) of this section do not apply to the furnishing of lodging, transportation, entertainment, food, meals, beverages, or any other thing of value which also is furnished on the same terms or at the same expense to a member of the general public without regard to status as a public official or public employee.

 (D) Subsections (A)(1), (A)(2), (B)(1), and (B)(2) of this section do not apply to the rendering of emergency assistance given gratuitously and in good faith by a lobbyist, a lobbyist’s principal, or any person acting on behalf of a lobbyist or a lobbyist’s principal to any member of the General Assembly, the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, any other statewide constitutional officer, any a public official of any state agency who engaged in covered agency actions, or any of their employeesor a public employee.

 (E) Subsections (A) and (B) do not apply to anything of value given to a family member for love and affection.

SECTION 18. Section 2‑17‑90(A) of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 (A) Except as otherwise provided under Section 2‑17‑100, no lobbyist’s principal may offer, solicit, facilitate, or provide to a public official or public employee, and no public official or public employee may accept lodging, transportation, entertainment, food, meals, beverages, or an invitation to a function paid for by a lobbyist’s principal, except for:

 (1) as to members of the General Assembly, a function to which a member of the General Assembly is invited if the entire membership of the House, the Senate, or the General Assembly is invited, or one of the committees, subcommittees, joint committees, legislative caucuses or their committees or subcommittees, or county legislative delegations of the General Assembly of which the legislator is a member is invited. However, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House, and the Speaker Pro Tempore of the House may be included in an invitation to one of the above groups. In addition, invitations may be extended and accepted when the invitation is extended to all members in attendance at (a) national and regional conventions and conferences of organizations for which the General Assembly pays annual dues as a membership requirement and (b) American Legislative Exchange Council conventions and conferences;

 (2) as to a public official of a state agency, board, or commission, a function to which an official of a state agency, board, or commission is invited if the entire board or commission of which the public official is a member is invited;

 (3) as to public employees, except for public employees of any statewide constitutional officer, a function to which a public employee is invited if a state public official of the agency or department by which the public employee is employed also is invited under another provision of this section;

 (4) as to public employees of any statewide constitutional officer, a function to which all statewide constitutional officers are invited;

 (5) as to statewide constitutional officers, a function to which a statewide constitutional officer is invited;

 (6) as to public officials or public employees, activities reasonably and directly related to state or local economic development efforts. However, the public official or public employee first must obtain prior written approval from:

 (a) the Governor, in the case of any of his employees or of any public officials of any state agencies or any of their employees which are not listed in a subitem below;

 (b) any statewide constitutional officer, in the case of himself or any of his employees;

 (c) the President of the Senate, in the case of any member of the Senate or its employees; or

 (d) the Speaker of the House, in the case of a member of the House of Representatives or its employees; or

 (e) the applicable chairman, in the case of a local governing body or its employees.;

 (7) as to cabinet officers, a function to which all cabinet officers are invited.;

 (8) as to members of a local governing body, a function to which a member of the local governing body is invited if the entire membership of the local governing body is invited, or one of the committees or subcommittees of which the member is a member is invited;

 (9) as to public employees of a local governing body, a function to which a member of the local governing body is invited if the entire membership of the local governing body is invited, or one of the committees or subcommittees of which the member is a member is invited.

SECTION 19. Section 2‑17‑100 of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 Section 2‑17‑100. A public official or a public employee acting in an official capacity may not receive anything of value from a lobbyist’s principal for speaking before a public or private group. A public official or public employee is not prohibited by this section from accepting a meal provided in conjunction with a speaking engagement where all participants are entitled to the same meal and the meal is incidental to the speaking engagement. Notwithstanding the limitations of Section 2‑17‑90, a public official or public employee may receive payment or reimbursement for actual expenses incurred for a speaking engagement. The expenses must be reasonable and must be incurred in a reasonable time and manner in which to accomplish the purpose of the engagement. The payment or reimbursement must be disclosed by the lobbyist’s principal as required by Section 2‑17‑35 and by any public official or public employee who is required to file a statement of economic interests under Section 8‑13‑1110. A public official or public employee required to file a statement of economic interests under Section 8‑13‑1110 must report on his statement of economic interests the organization which paid for or reimbursed actual expenses, the amount of such payment or reimbursement, and the purpose, date, and location of the speaking engagement. A public official or public employee who is not required to file a statement of economic interests but who is paid or reimbursed actual expenses for a speaking engagement must report this same information in writing to the chief administrative official or employee of the agency with which the public official or public employee is associated.

 If the expenses are incurred out of state, the public official or public employee incurring the expenses must receive prior written approval for the payment or reimbursement from:

 (1) the Governor, in the case of a public official of a state agency who is not listed in an item below;

 (2) any statewide constitutional officer, in the case of himself;

 (3) the President of the Senate, in the case of a member of the Senate;

 (4) the Speaker of the House, in the case of a member of the House of Representatives; or

 (5) the chief executive of a department of the State or any state board, commission, agency, or authority, including committees of any such body, by whatever name known, in all other cases; or

 (6) the applicable chairman, in the case of a member of a local governing body.

SECTION 20. Section 2‑17‑110 of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 Section 2‑17‑110. (A) A lobbyist may not solicit or accept compensation dependent in any manner upon the passage or defeat of any pending or proposed legislation, covered agency actions, or covered gubernatorial actions, or covered local governing body actions. A lobbyist’s principal may not employ, appoint, or retain a lobbyist for compensation dependent in any manner upon the passage or defeat of any pending or proposed legislation, covered agency actions, or covered gubernatorial actions, or covered local governing body actions.

 (B) A lobbyist may not cause the introduction of legislation, covered agency actions, or covered gubernatorial actions, or covered local governing body actions for the purpose of obtaining employment to engage in lobbying in support of or in opposition to the action.

 (C) A lobbyist may not serve as a treasurer for a candidate, as defined in Section 8‑13‑1300(4).

 (D)(1) A lobbyist may not serve as a member of a state board or state commission, except that any lobbyist serving as a member of a state board or a state commission before January 1, 1991, may continue to serve as a member of the same state board or state commission until the end of his current term.

 (2) A lobbyist may not serve as a member of a local board or local commission, except that any lobbyist serving as a member of a local board or a local commission before January 1, 2026, may continue to serve as a member of the same local board or local commission until the end of his current term.

 (E) A lobbyist, including a lobbyist who is a former member of the General Assembly, may not enter the floor of the House of Representatives or the Senate unless invited by the membership of the respective chamber during a session of the General Assembly.

 (F) A lobbyist, a lobbyist’s principal, or a person acting on behalf of a lobbyist or a lobbyist’s principal may not host events to raise funds for public officials. No public official may solicit a lobbyist, a lobbyist’s principal, or a person acting on behalf of a lobbyist or a lobbyist’s principal to host a fundraising event for the public official.

 (G) A lobbyist, a lobbyist’s principal, or a person acting on behalf of a lobbyist or a lobbyist’s principal may not employ on retainer a public official, a public employee, a member of the immediate family of a public official or public employee, or a firm or organization in which the public official or public employee has an economic interest. A retainer, for purposes of this section, is a payment for availability to perform services rather than for actual services rendered.

 (H) A lobbyist, a lobbyist’s principal, or a person acting on behalf of a lobbyist or a lobbyist’s principal shall not pay an honorarium to a public official or a public employee. This subsection does not prohibit the reimbursement of or expenditure for actual expenses by a lobbyist’s principal as allowed in Section 2‑17‑100.

 (I) A lobbyist, a lobbyist’s principal, or a person acting on behalf of a lobbyist or a lobbyist’s principal may not offer, facilitate, or provide a loan to or on behalf of a statewide constitutional officer, or a member of the General Assembly, or a member of a local governing body, unless the lobbyist’s principal is a financial institution authorized to transact business in the State and makes the loan in the ordinary course of business.

 (J) A lobbyist, a lobbyist’s principal, or a person acting on behalf of a lobbyist or a lobbyist’s principal shall not offer or provide contributions or any other type of funds or financial assistance to a legislative special interest caucus as defined in Section 2‑17‑10(21).

SECTION 21. Section 2‑17‑130(B) of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 (B) A member of the General Assembly, the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, any other statewide constitutional officer, any public official of any state agency who engaged in covered agency actions, or any of their employeesor a public employee who wilfully violate violates the provisions of this chapter is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be fined not more than two thousand five hundred dollars or imprisoned for not more than one year, or both.

SECTION 22. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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