**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND SECTION 56‑5‑2950, AS AMENDED, CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, RELATING TO A MOTOR VEHICLE DRIVER’S IMPLIED CONSENT TO BE TESTED TO DETERMINE WHETHER ALCOHOL OR DRUGS ARE PRESENT IN HIS BREATH, BLOOD, OR URINE, SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT A PERSON WHO IS ARRESTED FOR DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ALCOHOL OR DRUGS MUST BE OFFERED THE CHOICE OF TAKING A BREATH OR BLOOD TEST TO DETERMINE THE PRESENCE OF ALCOHOL OR DRUGS IN HIS SYSTEM, AND TO PROVIDE THAT A PERSON WHO REGISTERS AN ALCOHOL CONCENTRATION OF FIVE ONE‑HUNDREDTHS OF ONE PERCENT OR LESS MAY NOT BE CHARGED WITH DRIVING A MOTOR VEHICLE WHILE UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ALCOHOL OR DRUGS.

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

SECTION 1. Section 56‑5‑2950 of the 1976 Code, as last amended by Act 201 of 2008, is further amended to read:

“Section 56‑5‑2950. (A) A person who drives a motor vehicle in this State is considered to have given consent to chemical tests of his breath, blood, or urine for the purpose of determining the presence of alcohol or drugs or the combination of alcohol and drugs if arrested for an offense arising out of acts alleged to have been committed while the person was driving a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or a combination of alcohol and drugs. A breath or blood test must be administered at the direction of a law enforcement officer who has arrested a person for driving a motor vehicle in this State while under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or a combination of alcohol and drugs. At the direction of the arresting officer, the person first must be offered the choice of a breath or blood test to determine the person’s alcohol concentration. If the person is physically unable to provide an acceptable breath or blood sample because he has an injured mouth, is unconscious or dead, or for any other reason considered acceptable by the licensed medical personnel, the arresting officer may request a blood sample to be taken. If the officer has reasonable suspicion that the person is under the influence of drugs other than alcohol, or is under the influence of a combination of alcohol and drugs, the officer may order that a urine sample be taken for testing. A breath sample taken for testing must be collected within two hours of the arrest. ~~Any additional tests~~ Tests to collect other samples must be collected within three hours of the arrest. The breath test must be administered by a person trained and certified by the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy, pursuant to SLED policies. Before the breath test is administered, an eight one‑hundredths of one percent simulator test must be performed and the result must reflect a reading between 0.076 percent and 0.084 percent. Blood and urine samples must be obtained by physicians licensed by the State Board of Medical Examiners, registered nurses licensed by the State Board of Nursing, and other medical personnel trained to obtain the samples in a licensed medical facility. Blood and urine samples must be obtained and handled in accordance with procedures approved by SLED.

(B) No tests may be administered or samples obtained unless, upon activation of the video recording equipment and prior to the commencement of the testing procedure, the person has been given a written copy of and verbally informed that:

(1) he does not have to take the test or give the samples, but that his privilege to drive must be suspended or denied for at least six months if he refuses to submit to the test and that his refusal may be used against him in court;

(2) his privilege to drive must be suspended for at least one month if he takes the test or gives the samples and has an alcohol concentration of fifteen one‑hundredths of one percent or more;

(3) he has the right to have a qualified person of his own choosing conduct additional independent tests at his expense;

(4) he has the right to request an administrative hearing within thirty days of the issuance of the notice of suspension; and

(5) if he does not request an administrative hearing or if his suspension is upheld at the administrative hearing, he must enroll in an Alcohol and Drug Safety Action Program.

(C) A hospital, physician, qualified technician, chemist, or registered nurse who obtains the samples or conducts the test or participates in the process of obtaining the samples or conducting the test in accordance with this section is not subject to a cause of action for assault, battery, or another cause alleging that the drawing of blood or taking samples at the request of the arrested person or a law enforcement officer was wrongful. This release from liability does not reduce the standard of medical care required of the person obtaining the samples or conducting the test. This qualified release also applies to the employer of the person who conducts the test or obtains the samples.

(D) The person tested or giving samples for testing may have a qualified person of his own choosing conduct additional tests at his expense and must be notified in writing of that right. A person’s request or failure to request additional blood or urine tests is not admissible against the person in the criminal trial. The failure or inability of the person tested to obtain additional tests does not preclude the admission of evidence relating to the tests or samples obtained at the direction of the law enforcement officer.

(E) The arresting officer must provide affirmative assistance to the person to contact a qualified person to conduct and obtain additional tests. Affirmative assistance, at a minimum, includes providing transportation for the person to the nearest medical facility which performs blood tests to determine a person’s alcohol concentration. If the medical facility obtains the blood sample but refuses or fails to test the blood sample to determine the person’s alcohol concentration, SLED must test the blood sample and provide the result to the person and to the arresting officer. Failure to provide affirmative assistance upon request to obtain additional tests bars the admissibility of the breath test result in any judicial or administrative proceeding.

SLED must administer the provisions of this subsection and must make regulations necessary to carry out its provisions. The costs of the tests administered at the direction of the law enforcement officer must be paid from the general fund of the state. However, if the person is subsequently convicted of violating Section 56‑5‑2930, 56‑5‑2933, or 56‑5‑2945, then, upon conviction, the person must pay twenty‑five dollars for the costs of the tests. The twenty‑five dollars must be placed by the Comptroller General into a special restricted account to be used by the State Law Enforcement Division to offset the costs of administration of the breath testing devices, breath testing site video program, and toxicology laboratory.

(F) A qualified person who obtains samples or administers the tests or assists in obtaining samples or the administration of tests at the direction of a law enforcement officer is released from civil and criminal liability unless the obtaining of samples or tests is performed in a negligent, reckless, or fraudulent manner. No person may be required by the arresting officer, or by another law enforcement officer, to obtain or take any sample of blood or urine.

(G) In the criminal prosecution for a violation of Section 56‑5‑2930, 56‑5‑2933, or 56‑5‑2945 the alcohol concentration at the time of the test, as shown by chemical analysis of the person’s breath or other body fluids, gives rise to the following:

(1) if the alcohol concentration was at that time five one‑hundredths of one percent or less, it is conclusively presumed that the person was not under the influence of alcohol, and may not be charged with a violation of Section 56‑5‑2930, 56‑5‑2933, or 56‑5‑2945;

(2) if the alcohol concentration was at that time in excess of five one‑hundredths of one percent but less than eight one‑hundredths of one percent, this fact does not give rise to any inference that the person was or was not under the influence of alcohol, but this fact may be considered with other evidence in determining the guilt or innocence of the person; or

(3) if the alcohol concentration was at that time eight one‑hundredths of one percent or more, it may be inferred that the person was under the influence of alcohol.

The provisions of this section must not be construed as limiting the introduction of any other evidence bearing upon the question of whether or not the person was under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or a combination of them.

(H) A person who is unconscious or otherwise in a condition rendering him incapable of refusal is considered to be informed and not to have withdrawn the consent provided by subsection (A) of this section.

(I) A person required to submit to tests by the arresting law enforcement officer must be provided with a written report including the time of arrest, the time of the tests, and the results of the tests before any trial or other proceeding in which the results of the tests are used as evidence. A person who obtains additional tests must furnish a copy of the time, method, and results of any test to the officer before any trial, hearing, or other proceeding in which the person attempts to use the results of the additional tests as evidence.

(J) Policies, procedures, and regulations promulgated by SLED may be reviewed by the trial judge or hearing officer on motion of either party. The failure to follow any of these policies, procedures, and regulations, or the provisions of this section, shall result in the exclusion from evidence of any test results, if the trial judge or hearing officer finds that this failure materially affected the accuracy or reliability of the test results or the fairness of the testing procedure and the court trial judge or hearing officer rules specifically as to the manner in which the failure materially affected the accuracy or reliability of the test results or the fairness of the procedure.

(K) If a state employee charged with the maintenance of breath testing devices in this State and the administration of breath testing policy is required to testify at an administrative hearing or court proceeding, the entity employing the witness may charge a reasonable fee to the defendant for these services.”

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

‑‑‑‑XX‑‑‑‑