**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 23‑23‑35 SO AS TO CREATE THE “RACE RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE”, TO PROVIDE FOR THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE, AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE SCOPE OF THE COMMITTEE.

Whereas, in consideration of the racial and cultural differences among the residents of this State, the purpose of the Race Relations Advisory Committee is to advise and work proactively and collaboratively with the SC Law Enforcement Training Council in the development, modification and dissemination of Criminal Justice Academy guidelines and training modules for law enforcement certification and continuing education credits; and

Whereas, these training modules and courses of instruction shall emphasize and encourage an intricate understanding of and respect for racial and cultural differences and dynamics, as well as the development of effective, engaging, noncombative methods of fairly and responsibly carrying out law enforcement duties in a racially and culturally diverse environment.

Whereas, the committee shall assess the current course of basic training for law enforcement officers to ensure that it includes extensive instruction on racial and cultural sensitivity and diversity; and

Whereas, in developing or updating the training modules, the Race Relations Advisory Committee shall consult with appropriate groups and individuals having an interest and expertise in the areas of cultural awareness, diversity, sensitivity, profiling and community engagement in order to foster mutual respect, trust and cooperation between law enforcement and members of all racial, ethnic and cultural groups. Now, therefore,

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 23, Title 23 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 23‑23‑35. (A) The Race Relations Advisory Committee to the South Carolina Law Enforcement Training Council is hereby created and shall consist of five members who shall serve a one‑year term that is concurrent with the terms of the eleven member Law Enforcement Training Council. Committee members may be reelected up to four consecutive years.

(B) Membership on the Race Relations Advisory Committee shall consist of the following and where possible, represent each of the state’s four geographical regions:

(1) a South Carolina attorney who is an active member of the South Carolina Bar and has a minimum of seven years’ experience in civil rights law;

(2) a former South Carolina judge or justice of the Circuit Court, Appellate Court or Supreme Court, with extensive experience in civil rights cases;

(3) a racial or ethnic minority community member;

(4) a racial or ethnic minority member of a rural community;

(5) a Chief Diversity Officer of a South Carolina public university

(C) Members shall be appointed by Speaker of the House of Representatives, and may be removed for cause by the Speaker of the House.

(D) The first meeting of the Race Relations Advisory Committee shall commence within ninety days of the enactment of this law; members shall elect a chair and vice chair to begin serving on January 1, 2016. The committee shall meet at the call of the chair or at the call of the majority of the members, and shall meet no fewer than six times per year.

(E) Members shall not receive compensation, but may receive the mileage, subsistence, and per diem allowed by law for members of state boards, committees, and commissions.

(F) The Committee shall conduct an independent study of current attitudes and actions of law enforcement and how these attitudes and actions are perceived by communities of color in each county or region of the State. Disparities and inconsistencies in enforcement, racial profiling practices or propensities, disparate treatment of minorities and de‑escalation techniques of law enforcement also will be studied and assessed annually by the Race Relations Advisory Committee. The committee’s findings, along with joint recommendations of the council and committee, will be reported to the South Carolina House of Representatives no later than January thirty‑first of the following year.”

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

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