**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 43‑5‑35 SO AS TO PERMANENTLY DISQUALIFY A PERSON FROM RECEIPT OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE OR OTHER BENEFITS FROM ANY FEDERAL OR STATE MEANS‑TESTED WELFARE OR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IF THE PERSON HAS BEEN CONVICTED OF OR PLED GUILTY TO COMMITTING FRAUD, WITH EXCEPTIONS.

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

SECTION 1. Article 1, Chapter 5, Title 43 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 43‑5‑35. (A) Except as otherwise prohibited by federal law, a person who is convicted of or pleads guilty to committing fraud related to an application for or use of public assistance is permanently disqualified from receiving any public assistance administered by the State or an entity on behalf of the State including, but not limited to, assistance pursuant to Chapters 1, 3, 5, and 7, Title 43, energy assistance through Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), post‑secondary education need‑based grants pursuant to Section 59‑142‑10, ABC Voucher Program childcare subsidies, and public housing and housing choice vouchers.

(B) The state agency or other entity administering the assistance related to which the person has been convicted of, or pled guilty to, committing fraud shall provide written notice to the person stating that the assistance will terminate two weeks from the date of mailing of the notice and shall notify any other state agency or other entity administering assistance to the person of which the agency or entity has knowledge about the fraud conviction or guilty plea. The sanctions available pursuant to this section are in addition to, and not in lieu of, any sanctions available pursuant to other state or federal law.

(C) For purposes of this section, ‘public assistance’ or ‘assistance’ means any federal or state means‑tested welfare or public assistance program administered by an agency of the State or an entity administering the assistance on behalf of the State.”

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

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