

Session 118 - (2009-2010)

S 1188 General Bill, By Malloy, McConnell, Ford, Pinckney, Rose and Campsen

Summary: Family Court Hearing Officer Act

A BILL TO AMEND TITLE 20, CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, RELATING TO THE CHILDREN'S CODE, BY ADDING CHAPTER 6 ENTITLED THE "SOUTH CAROLINA FAMILY COURT HEARING OFFICER ACT", SO AS TO PROVIDE FOR VOLUNTEER FAMILY COURT HEARING OFFICERS APPOINTED BY THE CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA SUPREME COURT AND WHO ARE PROTECTED PURSUANT TO THE SOUTH CAROLINA TORT CLAIMS ACT; TO PROVIDE THAT HEARING OFFICERS MUST BE MEMBERS OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA BAR IN GOOD STANDING WITH A MINIMUM OF TEN YEARS OF FAMILY COURT EXPERIENCE; TO PROVIDE THAT RETIRED JUDGES, EXCEPT SUMMARY COURT JUDGES, MAY BE APPOINTED AS HEARING OFFICERS ABSENT TEN YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN FAMILY COURT MATTERS, TO REQUIRE HEARING OFFICERS TO RECEIVE AT LEAST SIX HOURS OF FAMILY LAW CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION EVERY YEAR; TO PROVIDE THAT HEARING OFFICERS MAY BE ASSIGNED TO ALL UNCONTESTED DOMESTIC RELATIONS MATTERS, THAT THEY MAY MAKE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FAMILY COURT JUDGE ON UNIFORM INTERSTATE FAMILY SUPPORT ACT ACTIONS, THAT THEY MAY BE ASSIGNED MOTION HEARINGS FOR TEMPORARY RELIEF IN DOMESTIC RELATIONS MATTERS, WITH THE CONSENT OF THE PARTIES, AND MAY MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS OF FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW TO THE FAMILY COURT JUDGES, THAT THE CHIEF JUSTICE MUST ISSUE DIRECTIVES CONCERNING OTHER TYPES OF CASES THAT MAY BE ASSIGNED ONLY TO RETIRED JUDGE HEARING OFFICERS, TO PROVIDE A LIST OF TYPES OF CASES THAT MAY BE ASSIGNED, THAT THE CLERK OF COURT SHALL MAINTAIN A FAMILY COURT HEARING OFFICER DOCKET, THAT HEARING OFFICERS SHALL HAVE THE SAME AUTHORITY AS A FAMILY COURT JUDGE TO ADMINISTER OATHS, PRESERVE AND ENFORCE ORDER IN THE COURT, HOLD PERSONS IN CONTEMPT AND SANCTION THEM, EXAMINE WITNESSES, ISSUE BENCH WARRANTS, ISSUE ORDERS AND RULINGS ON MOTIONS, ACT AS A FINDER OF FACT AND LAW, TAKE MINORS AND VULNERABLE ADULTS INTO EMERGENCY PROTECTIVE CUSTODY, TO ISSUE TEMPORARY ORDERS RELATING TO EQUITABLE DIVISION OF MARITAL PROPERTY, CHILD SUPPORT, CUSTODY, VISITATION, ATTORNEY'S FEES, DISCOVERY, AND RESTRAINING ORDERS, AND TO APPOINT GUARDIANS AD LITEM AS APPROPRIATE; TO PROVIDE THAT MATTERS DIRECTLY APPEALABLE TO THE SUPREME COURT ARE NOT SUBJECT TO REFERRAL TO A HEARING OFFICER, TO PROVIDE THAT PROCEEDINGS SHALL BE HELD IN THE COUNTY OF APPROPRIATE VENUE UNLESS THE PARTIES CONSENT TO ANOTHER COUNTY; TO PROVIDE THAT ORDERS ISSUED BY RETIRED JUDGE HEARING OFFICERS SHALL BE CONSIDERED FINAL AND SHALL BE APPEALED DIRECTLY TO THE COURT OF APPEALS; TO PROVIDE THAT ORDERS ISSUED BY OTHER HEARING OFFICERS ARE SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY A FAMILY COURT JUDGE; TO PROVIDE THAT HEARING OFFICERS ARE NOT BARRED FROM THE PRACTICE OF LAW IN FAMILY COURT; TO PROVIDE THAT THE FAMILY COURT RULES APPLY IN PROCEEDINGS BEFORE HEARING OFFICERS; AND TO PROVIDE THAT HEARING OFFICERS SHALL RECEIVE CREDIT FOR COURT APPOINTMENTS.

02/17/10	Senate	Introduced and read first time SJ-6
02/17/10	Senate	Referred to Committee on Judiciary SJ-6
02/19/10	Senate	Referred to Subcommittee: Campbell (ch), Knotts, Campsen, Lourie, Massey
03/31/10	Senate	Committee report: Favorable with amendment Judiciary SJ-10
04/01/10		Scrivener's error corrected
04/14/10	Senate	Committee Amendment Adopted SJ-80
04/22/10	Senate	Amended SJ-47
04/22/10	Senate	Read second time SJ-47
04/23/10		Scrivener's error corrected
04/28/10	Senate	Read third time and sent to House
04/29/10	House	Introduced and read first time HJ-17
04/29/10	House	Referred to Committee on Judiciary HJ-17