**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND SECTION 20-3-170 OF THE 1976 CODE, RELATING TO THE MODIFICATION, CONFIRMATION, OR TERMINATION OF ALIMONY, TO PROVIDE FACTORS FOR THE COURT TO CONSIDER WHEN DETERMINING THE EXISTENCE OF CHANGED CIRCUMSTANCES, TO PROVIDE THAT RETIREMENT BY THE SUPPORTING SPOUSE IS SUFFICIENT GROUNDS TO WARRANT A HEARING IF SO MOVED BY A PARTY, TO EVALUATE WHETHER ALIMONY SHOULD BE MODIFIED OR TERMINATED IN AMOUNT OR TERM AND TO PROVIDE FACTORS FOR THE COURT TO CONSIDER, AND TO PROVIDE THAT PAYMENT OF ALIMONY FOR A PERIOD THAT EXCEEDS THE DURATION OF MARRIAGE CONSTITUTES SUFFICIENT GROUNDS FOR THE COURT TO MODIFY, TERMINATE, OR ESTABLISH A FIXED DURATION OF TIME FOR ANY FURTHER PAYMENT OBLIGATION, IF SUPPORTED BY THE EVIDENCE PRESENTED.

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

SECTION 1. Section 20-3-170 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“Section 20-3-170. (A) Whenever any husband or wife, pursuant to a judgment of divorce from the bonds of matrimony, has been required to make his or her spouse any periodic payments of alimony and the circumstances of the parties or the financial ability of the spouse making the periodic payments shall have changed since the rendition of such judgment, either party may apply to the court which rendered the judgment for an order and judgment decreasing or increasing the amount of such alimony payments or terminating such payments and the court, after giving both parties an opportunity to be heard and to introduce evidence relevant to the issue, shall make such order and judgment as justice and equity shall require, with due regard to the changed circumstances and the financial ability of the supporting spouse, decreasing or increasing or confirming the amount of alimony provided for in such original judgment or terminating such payments. Thereafter the supporting spouse shall pay and be liable to pay the amount of alimony payments directed in such order and judgment and no other or further amount and such original judgment, for the purpose of all actions or proceedings of every nature and wherever instituted, whether within or without this State, shall be deemed to be and shall be modified accordingly, subject in every case to a further proceeding or proceedings under the provisions of this section in relation to such modified judgment.

(B) In the determination of the existence of changed circumstances since the commencement of any alimony or spousal support payments, the court shall consider the following factors:

(1) the reason for and amount of any substantial change in passive or active income of either spouse;

(2) modification of any child support obligations since the rendition of a judgment of divorce;

(3) the reason for and amount of any substantial change in the net worth of either spouse;

(4) any substantial change in the earning potential of either spouse;

(5) any substantial change in the expenses of either spouse;

(6) the impact of the supporting spouse’s health on the ability to pay;

(7) retirement; and

(8) any other factors the court considers appropriate.

(C) Retirement by the supporting spouse is sufficient grounds to warrant a hearing, if so moved by a party, to evaluate whether ~~there has been a change of circumstances for alimony~~ alimony should be modified or terminated in amount or term. The court shall consider the following factors:

(1) ~~whether retirement was contemplated when alimony was awarded;~~

~~(2)~~ whether the ~~age of the~~ supporting spouse has reached full retirement age, which is the age at which a person becomes eligible for full Social Security benefits;

~~(3)~~(2) the health of the supporting spouse;

~~(4)~~(3) the reason for retirement, including whether the retirement is mandatory or voluntary;

~~(5)~~(4) whether retirement would result in a decrease in the supporting spouse’s income; and

(5) the income and assets of either spouse; and

(6) any other factors the court ~~sees fit~~ considers appropriate, including the factors set forth in Section 20-3-130.

(D) Payment of alimony for a period that exceeds the duration of the marriage constitutes sufficient grounds for the court to modify, terminate, or establish a fixed duration of time for any further payment obligation, if supported by the evidence presented.

(E) If the court determines the existence of changed circumstances, then the court shall apply the factors set forth in Section 20-3-130.”

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

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