COMMITTEE AMENDMENT ADOPTED

April 1, 2014

**H. 3124**

Introduced by Reps. Bingham, Taylor, Long and M.S. McLeod

S. Printed 4/1/14--S.

Read the first time May 1, 2013.

**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 63‑7‑315 SO AS TO PROHIBIT AN EMPLOYER FROM DISMISSING, DEMOTING, SUSPENDING, OR DISCIPLINING AN EMPLOYEE WHO REPORTS CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT, WHETHER REQUIRED OR PERMITTED TO REPORT; AND TO CREATE A CAUSE OF ACTION FOR REINSTATEMENT AND BACK PAY WHICH AN EMPLOYEE MAY BRING AGAINST AN EMPLOYER WHO VIOLATES THIS PROHIBITION.

Amend Title To Conform

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

SECTION 1. Subarticle 1, Article 3, Chapter 7, Title 63 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 63-7-315. (A) An employer must not dismiss, demote, suspend, or otherwise discipline or discriminate against an employee who is required or permitted to report child abuse or neglect pursuant to Section 63-7-310 based on the fact that the employee has made a report of child abuse and neglect.

(B) An employee who is adversely affected by conduct that is in violation of subsection (A) may bring a civil action for reinstatement and back pay. An action brought pursuant to this subsection may be commenced against an employer, including the State, a political subdivision of the State, and an office, department, independent agency, authority, institution, association, or other body in state government. An action brought pursuant to this subsection must be commenced within three years of the date the adverse personnel action occurred.

(C) In an action brought pursuant to subsection (B), the court may award reasonable attorney’s fees to the prevailing party; however, in order for the employer to receive reasonable attorney’s fees pursuant to this subsection, the court must make a finding pursuant to Section 63‑7‑2000 that: (1) the employee made a report of suspected child abuse or neglect maliciously or in bad faith; or (2) the employee is guilty of making a false report of suspected child abuse or neglect pursuant to Section 63‑7‑440.”

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

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