**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 16‑21‑55 SO AS TO DEFINE CERTAIN TERMS RELATING TO MOTOR VEHICLES, TO PROVIDE THAT IT IS UNLAWFUL FOR A PERSON TO KNOWINGLY OWN OR OPERATE A VEHICLE THAT HAS A FALSE OR SECRET COMPARTMENT THAT CONTAINS AN ILLEGAL CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE, AN ILLEGAL FIREARM, A PERSON CONCEALED FOR UNLAWFUL PURPOSES, OR OTHER CONTRABAND, AND TO PROVIDE A PENALTY.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 21, Title 16 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 16‑21‑55. (A) For purposes of this section:

(1) ‘false or secret compartment’ means a box, container, enclosure, or similar compartment which is integrated into or attached to a vehicle for the purpose of concealing, hiding, or preventing law enforcement from discovering an illegal item or person; and

(2) ‘vehicle’ includes, but is not limited to, a car, truck, bus, motorcycle, bicycle, aircraft, helicopter, boat, ship, yacht, and other vessels.

(B) It is unlawful for a person to own or operate a vehicle that the person knows to contain a false or secret compartment which is found to actually contain:

(1) an illegal controlled substance;

(2) an illegal firearm;

(3) a person concealed for unlawful purposes; or

(4) other contraband.

(C) A person who violates the provisions of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor, and, upon conviction, must be fined not more than ten thousand dollars or imprisoned not more than two years, or both.”

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

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