**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 53‑3‑200 SO AS TO DESIGNATE THE SECOND WEEK OF SEPTEMBER OF EACH YEAR AS “GRADUATION AWARENESS WEEK” IN SOUTH CAROLINA.

Whereas, there exists a problem of students dropping out of high school; and

Whereas, nationwide, 1.2 million students drop out of school on an annual basis (roughly 7,000 students per day); and

Whereas, only seventy-five percent of South Carolina students will graduate from high school; and

Whereas, seventy-five percent of state prison inmates and fifty-nine percent of federal prison inmates are high school dropouts; and

Whereas, South Carolina must address the growing problem of high school dropouts in the State; and

Whereas, GradUate SC, a program created by the Leadership South Carolina Class of 2015 in conjunction with certain key partners, seeks to raise awareness by: informing the business community about its role in both providing jobs and helping decrease the drop-out rate; educating middle and high school students about how to stay in school and why a high school diploma is important; and encouraging legislators to affect change in public policy for drop-out prevention; and

Whereas, the General Assembly applauds GradUate SC and its goal of increasing the awareness of high school dropouts and preventing high school students from dropping out in the future. Now, therefore,

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 3, Title 53 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 53‑3‑200. The second week of September of every year is designated Graduation Awareness Week.”

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

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