**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND SECTION 55‑3‑130, CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, RELATING TO THE POINTING, AIMING, OR DISCHARGE OF A LASER DEVICE AT AN AIRCRAFT, SO AS TO INCREASE THE PENALTIES FOR A VIOLATION OF THIS PROVISION.

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

SECTION 1. Section 55‑3‑130 of the 1976 Code, as added by Act 270 of 2012, is amended to read:

“Section 55‑3‑130. The pointing, aiming, or discharge of a laser device at an aircraft in flight or on the ground while occupied is unlawful. A person who wilfully and maliciously discharges a laser at an aircraft, whether stopped, in motion or in flight, while occupied, is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for not more than one year or by a fine of two thousand dollars, or both. For a second or subsequent violation of this section a person is guilty of a felony punishable and must be imprisoned for not more than three years, or fined not more than five thousand dollars, or both. This section does not apply to the conduct of laser development activity by or on behalf of the United States Armed Forces.

A person who, with the intent to interfere with the operation of an aircraft, wilfully shines a light or other bright device, of an intensity capable of impairing the operation of an aircraft, at an aircraft, must be punished by a fine not exceeding ~~one~~ two hundred thousand dollars~~, or by imprisonment not exceeding one year, or both~~ and by a mandatory minimum sentence of ten years with no possibility of probation or parole.

As used in this section, ‘laser’ means a device that utilizes the natural oscillations of atoms or molecules between energy levels for generating coherent electromagnetic radiation in the ultraviolet, visible, or infrared region of the spectrum, and when discharged exceeds one milliwatt continuous wave.”

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

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