**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 53‑3‑220 SO AS TO DESIGNATE FEBRUARY OF EVERY YEAR AS “RESTAURANT STAFF APPRECIATION MONTH” AND TO ENCOURAGE THE CITIZENS OF SOUTH CAROLINA TO TIP A MINIMUM OF FIFTEEN DOLLARS.

Whereas, the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimated that there were just over 36,500 people employed as wait staff in South Carolina; and

Whereas, waiters and waitresses, often working long hours on their feet, are a determining factor in the experience of the customer and are a critical asset that keeps a restaurant thriving through various levels of economic instability; and

Whereas, the tourism industry is a staple source of income for many of the Palmetto State’s towns. Exemplary restaurant experiences help to continue to drive this revenue, and the efforts of wait staff to provide these positive experiences are vital to success; and

Whereas, under the Fair Labor Standards Act, the minimum tipped wage rate is $2.13, relying on the wait staff to earn a substantial amount of tips just to make ends meet; and

Whereas, designating every February as “Restaurant Staff Appreciation Month” allows wait staff to receive the recognition they have earned through their incessant efforts to provide stellar service to each and every customer. Furthermore, encouraging citizens of our great State to tip a minimum of fifteen dollars for their meal evidences the gratitude felt for the services rendered; and

Whereas, a month recognizing these over 36,500 individuals can only help to drive revenue in our economy as the combination of job satisfaction and disposable income leads to renewed energy in the workplace and additional consumer activity. 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 53‑3‑220. The month of February of every year is designated ‘Restaurant Staff Appreciation Month’ in order to recognize the contributions of those who tirelessly give to serve others and to encourage the citizens of South Carolina to tip a minimum of fifteen dollars during February.”

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

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