**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING CHAPTER 54 TO TITLE 2 SO AS TO ESTABLISH A PERMANENT JOINT COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO MONITOR, STUDY, AND MAKE APPROPRIATE RECOMMENDATIONS ON ALL ISSUES, LEGISLATION, AND OTHER ACTIONS NECESSARY TO SUSTAIN AND DEVELOP SOUTH CAROLINA’S MILITARY INSTALLATIONS, COMMUNITIES, AND DEFENSE‑RELATED BUSINESSES.

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

SECTION 1. Title 2 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“CHAPTER 54

Joint Military Affairs Review Committee

Section 2‑54‑10. The General Assembly finds South Carolina’s military installations, communities, and defense‑related businesses to be vital to the state’s economy. The United States Department of Defense currently employs over fifty thousand people in South Carolina with an annual economic impact of approximately five billion dollars. In order for South Carolina to maintain its strong military presence and rich heritage, the General Assembly must not only convey clearly this State’s intent to create a business climate that is favorable to defense installations and activities, but it must also develop programs to facilitate base‑operating cost reductions and assist communities in increasing the military value of their local installations. Accordingly, the General Assembly finds the creation of the Joint Military Affairs Review Committee will ensure the proper legislative response necessary to achieve these crucial objectives.

Section 2‑54‑20. (A) There is created a permanent ten‑member joint committee of the General Assembly to be known as the Joint Military Affairs Review Committee to study, monitor, and make appropriate recommendations on all issues, legislation, and other actions necessary to sustain and develop South Carolina’s military installations, communities, and defense‑related businesses.

(B) The President Pro Tempore of the Senate shall appoint five members from the membership of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives shall appoint five members from the membership of the House of Representatives. The Joint Military Affairs Review Committee members’ terms shall correspond to the terms for which they are elected to the General Assembly. The committee shall elect officers for terms coterminous with their appointments, and a member so elected may succeed himself.

(C) Committee expenses must be paid from approved accounts of both houses of the General Assembly, and all other legislative staff organizations shall provide assistance as the joint committee may request.

Section 2‑54‑30. The Joint Military Affairs Review Committee is specifically charged with, but not limited to, the following responsibilities:

(1) develop legislative proposals to strengthen the state’s relationship with the military to protect South Carolina’s installations from the results of future defense budget cuts or military downsizing by providing a sound infrastructure, affordable housing, educational opportunities for military members and their families, and by striving to be viewed by national military leaders as the most military‑friendly State in the nation;

(2) study and develop policies, plans, and legislative proposals to support the long‑term viability and prosperity of the military, both active and reserve components, in this State, including promoting strategic regional alliances that may extend across state lines;

(3) work with the South Carolina Department of Commerce to study and develop legislative proposals to assist defense‑dependent communities in the design and execution of programs that enhance a community’s relationship with local military installations and defense‑related businesses; and

(4) serve as the General Assembly’s clearinghouse for:

(a) defense economic adjustment and transition information and activities; and

(b) defense strategies and incentive programs designed to maintain, expand, and attract new defense contractors to South Carolina.”

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

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