**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 59‑63‑67 SO AS TO REQUIRE PUPIL‑TEACHER RATIOS IN GRADES K‑6 OF 27:1 BEGINNING WITH SCHOOL YEAR 2010 AND FULLY PHASED‑IN AT 25:1 BY SCHOOL YEAR 2011, TO PROVIDE THAT LOWER PUPIL‑TEACHER RATIOS NOW REQUIRED BY LAW IN READING AND MATHEMATICS IN GRADES 1‑3 of 21:1 ARE NOT AFFECTED BY THE ABOVE PROVISIONS, TO PROVIDE FOR A WAIVER OF THESE RATIOS UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS, AND TO PROVIDE FOR A REDUCTION OF STATE AID FOR ANY DISTRICT WHICH DOES NOT MEET THESE REQUIRED RATIOS.

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

SECTION 1. Article 1, Chapter 63, Title 59 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 59‑63‑67. (A) By school year 2010, the board of trustees of each school district must attain an average pupil‑teacher ratio in kindergarten through grade six of each school in the district of twenty‑five to one based on average daily membership in the particular grades. The ratio must be attained as follows:

(1) by school year 2010 ‑ 27:1;

(2) by school year 2011 ‑ 25:1.

(B) The provisions of this section do not affect the required pupil‑teacher ratios of 21:1 in basic skills of reading and mathematics in grades one through three as required by Section 59‑20‑40(5). These lower pupil‑teacher ratios shall not be considered in determining whether or not there has been compliance with the provisions of subsection (A).

(C) The State Board of Education is authorized to waive the provisions of subsection (A) upon finding that a good faith effort is being made by the school district to comply with the pupil‑teacher ratio provisions in each school but that the lack of classroom space which was beyond its control makes it physically impossible for the district to comply by the school years required and the cost of temporary classroom space cannot be justified.

(D) Beginning with school year 2012, a school district violating the pupil‑teacher ratio provisions of subsection (A) shall have its state aid for the ensuing school year reduced by the percentage difference between the aggregate pupil‑teacher ratios of all the schools within the district serving K‑6 students and the required pupil‑teacher ratio provided in subsection (A).”

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

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