**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 58‑9‑395 SO AS TO REQUIRE TELEPHONE UTILITIES TO PROVIDE INTERNET SERVICE IN EVERY EXCHANGE AREA OR CEDE SERVICE IN THE AFFECTED AREA TO ANOTHER TELEPHONE UTILITY THAT AGREES TO PROVIDE INTERNET SERVICE; AND TO PROVIDE PENALTIES.

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

SECTION 1. Article 3, Chapter 9, Title 58 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 58‑9‑395. Notwithstanding another provision of law, all telephone utilities doing business in this State shall provide Internet service in every exchange area. If a telephone utility refuses or is unable to provide Internet service to an exchange area, it shall cede service in the affected area to a telephone utility that agrees to provide Internet service. A telephone utility failing to comply with the provisions of this section after January 1, 2010, is subject to a fine in the amount of one thousand dollars per day per one thousand telephone accounts in the affected area.”

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

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