**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 56‑5‑4975 SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT IT IS UNLAWFUL FOR CERTAIN PERSONS TO OPERATE A VEHICLE THAT IS UPFITTED AS AN AMBULANCE OR NO LONGER PERMITTED AND LICENSED AS AN AMBULANCE UNLESS CERTAIN EXTERIOR ITEMS THAT DISTINGUISH IT AS AN AMBULANCE ARE REMOVED, TO PROVIDE A PENALTY FOR A VIOLATION OF THIS PROVISION, AND TO PROVIDE THAT THE USE OF THE VEHICLE DURING THE COMMISSION OF A CRIME OR A TERRORIST ACT IS A FELONY.

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

SECTION 1. Article 35, Chapter 5, Title 56 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 56‑5‑4975. (A) It is unlawful for a person to operate a vehicle that is upfitted as an ambulance or no longer permitted and licensed as an ambulance pursuant to Title 44, unless the vehicle’s exterior equipment and markings including, but not limited to, emergency lights, sirens, and decals that distinguish it as an ambulance are removed within ten days from the date that it is acquired. A person who violates this provision is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be imprisoned not more than one year, or fined not less than five thousand dollars, or both.

(B) Subsection (A) does not apply to an eleemosynary or not‑for‑profit organization that uses an ambulance that is no longer permitted and licensed and whose exterior markings have been removed in parades, fund‑raising activities, and other official functions.

(C) A person who uses a vehicle contained in subsection (A) during the commission of a crime is guilty of a felony and, upon conviction, must be imprisoned not more than five years.

(D) A person who uses a vehicle that has been upfitted as an ambulance, permitted and licensed as an ambulance, or a vehicle that is no longer permitted and licensed as an ambulance during the commission of a terrorist act is guilty of a felony and, upon conviction, must be imprisoned not less than ten years.”

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

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