**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 63‑7‑455 SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT A PARENT OF A CHILD WHO IS THE ALLEGED VICTIM IN A CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT REPORT MADE TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES MAY PETITION THE COURT TO HAVE A GUARDIAN AD LITEM APPOINTED AT ANY TIME AFTER THE REPORT WAS RECEIVED BY THE DEPARTMENT AND TO REQUIRE THE GUARDIAN AD LITEM TO INITIATE AN INVESTIGATION OF THE ALLEGED ABUSE OR NEGLECT WITHIN TWENTY‑FOUR HOURS OF BEING APPOINTED AS THE GUARDIAN AD LITEM.

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

SECTION 1. Subarticle 1, Article 3, Chapter 7, Title 63 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 63‑7‑455. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, if a child is the alleged victim of child abuse or neglect in a report made to the Department of Social Services, either parent of the child may petition the court to appoint a guardian ad litem any time after the report was received by the department. The guardian ad litem shall initiate an investigation of the alleged abuse or neglect within twenty‑four hours of being appointed as the guardian ad litem.”

SECTION 2. This act takes effect July 1, 2011.

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