**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING CHAPTER 8 TO TITLE 23 SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT A PERSON WHO PARTICIPATES AS A MEMBER OF A NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH OR CRIME WATCH MUST SUCCESSFULLY UNDERGO A CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK AND A MENTAL HEALTH EVALUATION, AND TO PROVIDE A PENALTY.

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

SECTION 1. Title 23 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“CHAPTER 8

Neighborhood and Crime Watch Programs

Section 23‑8‑10. Notwithstanding another provision of law, before a person may participate as a member of a neighborhood watch or crime watch, he must, at his expense, successfully undergo a SLED criminal background check, and a mental health evaluation conducted by the Department of Mental Health.

Section 23‑8‑20. A person who violates a provision contained in this chapter is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be fined not more than one hundred dollars.

Section 23‑8‑30. As used in this chapter, ‘neighborhood watch’ and ‘crime watch’ means an organized group of citizens devoted to crime and vandalism prevention within a neighborhood.”

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

‑‑‑‑XX‑‑‑‑