**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 47‑1‑45 SO AS TO PROHIBIT THE TATTOOING OR PIERCING OF A COMPANION ANIMAL EXCEPT FOR SPECIFIED REASONS AND TO PROVIDE PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 1, Title 47 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 47‑1‑45. (A) A person shall not pierce or tattoo a companion animal unless the piercing or tattooing provides for the identification of the companion animal or the piercing or tattooing provides a medical benefit to the companion animal. Piercing or tattooing authorized pursuant to this subsection must be completed by a licensed veterinarian or under the supervision of a licensed veterinarian.

(B) A person violating the provisions of subsection (A) is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be fined not more than one thousand dollars or imprisoned for not more than one year, or both.

(C) Each violation of subsection (A) is deemed a separate offense.

(D) The provisions of this section do not apply to a person who is the owner or possessor of a companion animal that has any piercing or tattooing before the effective date of this section.”

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

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