**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 8-21-18 SO AS TO REQUIRE STATE AGENCIES, BOARDS, COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS, OR POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS TO ENTER INTO MEDIATION BEFORE INSTITUTING A CRIMINAL ACTION FOR FAILURE TO PAY LATE FEES IMPOSED BY THE ENTITY.

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

SECTION 1. Article 1, Chapter 21, Title 8 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 8-21-18. A state agency, board, committee, commission, or political subdivision shall enter into mediation before criminal proceedings against a person for failure to pay a late fee or penalty are brought by the entity. It is an affirmative defense to prosecution in a criminal case for failure to pay a late fee or penalty that a state agency, board, committee, commission, or political subdivision violated the requirements of this section.”

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

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