**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 2‑1‑260 SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT ANY LEGISLATION OR REGULATION IMPOSING A FEE OR AMENDING A FEE AMOUNT MUST BE REFERRED TO THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE.

Whereas, the annual general appropriations bill (state budget) is one of the most important pieces of legislation the General Assembly considers each year; and

Whereas, the Senate Finance Committee is annually tasked with the responsibility of overseeing the development of the state budget for the Senate, on behalf of the citizens and taxpayers of South Carolina; and

Whereas, the state budget is comprised of three primary fund sources, namely, general tax revenue, federal funds, and other funds; and

Whereas, in Fiscal Year 2013‑2014, other funds was the single largest category of the state budget, with agency fee and fine revenue being a component; and

Whereas, the imposition or change in a fee or fine can impact agency and state revenue and budgets, and most importantly, and ultimately, the citizens and taxpayers of South Carolina; and

Whereas, despite these impacts, fees and fines are sometimes imposed or changed with no input from the Senate Finance Committee which is nevertheless forced to contend with these impacts, sometimes after the fee or fine imposition or change has already taken effect, or after the state budget has become law; and

Whereas, it is both appropriate and necessary that the Senate Finance Committee has jurisdiction over such fee and fine changes so that it can make recommendations to approve, reject, or amend fee and fine impositions or changes to the Senate, on behalf of the citizens and taxpayers of South Carolina. Now, therefore,

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 1, Title 2 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 2‑1‑260. Upon the introduction of a bill in the Senate, or upon a bill originating in the House of Representatives being read in the Senate for the first time, the bill must be referred to the Senate Finance Committee if the bill imposes a fee or fine or amends a fee or fine amount. This section also applies to joint resolutions approving a regulation that imposes or amends a fee or fine amount.”

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

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