**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, TO ENACT THE “NATIONAL MOTTO DISPLAY ACT”; BY ADDING SECTION 59‑1‑144 SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT EACH LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD SHALL DISPLAY THE NATIONAL MOTTO OF THE UNITED STATES, “IN GOD WE TRUST”, IN THE LOBBY OF EACH SCHOOL BUILDING, AND TO PROVIDE THAT THIS DISPLAY MAY TAKE THE FORM OF, BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO, A MOUNTED PLAQUE OR MAY INCLUDE ARTWORK AS A RESULT OF A STUDENT CONTEST THAT WILL BE PROMINENTLY DISPLAYED IN EACH SCHOOL BUILDING.

Whereas, the South Carolina General Assembly finds that the motto “In God We Trust” is part of the history and heritage of the United States, that on April 22, 2014, our nation celebrated the 150th anniversary of our national motto “In God We Trust” on our coins, and that while this phrase was not officially established as our national motto until a law was passed by the 84th Congress of the United States and approved by President Dwight Eisenhower, it was first introduced to the nation by Francis Scott Key in 1814 as words that would be included in our national anthem; and

Whereas, the South Carolina General Assembly finds that the practice of featuring the motto “In God We Trust” on all United States currency first occurred in April of 1864 when the United States Congress approved the use of the motto on United States two‑cent pieces, and ever since the motto has been inscribed on most denominations of coins in an uninterrupted period of time extending from the present back to 1916; and

Whereas, the South Carolina General Assembly finds that in 1956, the United States Congress adopted the motto “In God We Trust” as the national motto, that it is currently codified in 36 U.S.C. Section 302, and that since 1957, the United States Bureau of Engraving and Printing has gradually incorporated the motto in the design on the reverse of all paper currency; and

Whereas, the South Carolina General Assembly finds that on July 24, 2000, the United States House of Representatives, along with the concurrence of the United States Senate, unanimously resolved to encourage the display of the national motto of the United States in public buildings throughout the nation; and

Whereas, the South Carolina General Assembly finds that to increase student understanding of and familiarity with American historical documents, historically important excerpts from or copies of the documents should be prominently displayed in public school buildings; and

Whereas, the South Carolina General Assembly finds that the Federal 5th, 9th, and 10th Circuit Courts have ruled that displaying the national motto passes constitutional muster so long as the purpose of the display is to advance or endorse the national motto rather than a particular religious belief or practice. Now, therefore,

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

SECTION 1. This act must be known and may be cited as the “National Motto Display Act”.

SECTION 2. Article 3 Chapter 1, Title 59 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 59‑1‑144. Each local school board shall display the motto ‘In God We Trust’, which is declared in 36 U.S.C. Section 302 to be the national motto of the United States, in the lobby of each school building. This display may take the form of, but is not limited to, a mounted plaque or may include artwork as a result of a student contest that will be prominently displayed in each school building.”

SECTION 3. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

‑‑‑‑XX‑‑‑‑