**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, TO ENACT THE “STUDENT INTERSCHOLASTIC ACTIVITIES FUND ACT”; BY ADDING SECTION 59‑39‑165 SO AS TO CREATE A FUND TO ASSIST NEEDY STUDENTS IN MEETING COSTS RELATED TO EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES IN HIGH SCHOOL.

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 “Student Interscholastic Activities Fund Act”.

SECTION 2. Article 1, Chapter 39, Title 59 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 59‑39‑165. (A) There is created the ‘Student Interscholastic Activities Fund Act’ to help qualified students pay for expenses related to extracurricular activities in high school. A student must be eligible for free or reduced lunch programs or whose families meet the qualifications for federal Medicaid benefits. Funds only may be used to pay for dues or fees and purchase necessary materials or athletic uniforms and gear associated with participating in an extracurricular activity. An eligible student must submit a written request on forms provided by the State Department of Education. The forms must be made available to students in the administrative offices of each high school. The student must submit a completed form to the administrative offices of his high school, which must forward the completed form to the department for processing. The department must verify eligibility based on proof that the student must submit with the application form, and determine whether the request is appropriate, within thirty days of receipt. If the department approves the request, it must notify the student and the principal of his school and send the approved funds to the school for disbursement to the student. If the department rejects an application in whole or in part, it must notify the student and the principal of his school of the basis for the rejection.

(B) The State Department of Education shall promulgate regulations needed to implement the provisions of this section.

(C) Funds must be allocated on a first‑come, first‑served basis, and are subject to availability of funding by the General Assembly. Unused funds may be carried over to subsequent fiscal years; provided, however, that the fund balance may not exceed seven million dollars or the excess amount must be transferred to the general fund.”

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor, and its provisions are applicable beginning with the 2016‑2017 school year.

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