**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND SECTION 59‑104‑20, AS AMENDED, CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, RELATING TO THE PALMETTO FELLOWS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM, SO AS TO PROVIDE STUDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR THE AWARD MAY ELECT TO DEFER ENROLLMENT IN AN ELIGIBLE FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTION FOR ONE YEAR, UNTIL THE FALL TERM OF THE YEAR FOLLOWING THE YEAR OF GRADUATION, WITHOUT DECLINING THE AWARD; AND TO PROVIDE THAT THE PROVISIONS OF THIS ACT, REGARDLESS OF ITS EFFECTIVE DATE, MUST BE CONSTRUED TO APPLY TO STUDENTS WHO GRADUATE IN THE SPRING OF 2016.

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

SECTION 1. Section 59‑104‑20(H) of the 1976 Code, as added by Act 162 of 2005, is amended to read:

“(H) Notwithstanding another provision of law, a student who met the initial eligibility requirements to receive a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Award as a senior in high school and has met the continuing eligibility requirements shall receive the award. A student selected as a Palmetto Fellow may elect to defer enrollment in an eligible four-year institution for one year, until the fall term of the year following the year of graduation, without declining the award. A student who received a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Award as a senior in high school but declined the award is eligible to reapply for the annual scholarship, providing he meets all of the initial and continuing academic eligibility requirements of the Palmetto Fellows program, if he transfers to a qualifying South Carolina institution of higher learning. The number of semesters or academic years a student attended an out‑of‑state institution are to be deducted from the number of semesters or academic years a student is eligible for the scholarship. All funding provided for Palmetto Fellows Scholarships regardless of its source or allocation must be used to implement the provisions of this subsection.”

SECTION 2. The provisions of this act, regardless of its effective date, must be construed to apply to students who graduate in the spring of 2016, as well as prospectively.

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

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