**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, TO ENACT THE “HOMEOWNERS’ ASSOCIATION REGIME FEE FAIRNESS TO DEPLOYED SERVICE MEMBERS ACT” BY ADDING SECTION 27‑1‑75 SO AS TO REQUIRE A SERVICE MEMBER WHO BELONGS TO A HOMEOWNERS’ ASSOCIATION TO NOTIFY THE HOMEOWNERS’ ASSOCIATION OF ORDERS OF DEPLOYMENT, TO PROHIBIT A HOMEOWNERS’ ASSOCIATION FROM ENFORCING A LIEN OR IMPOSING A PENALTY FOR REGIME FEES NOT PAID DURING THE TIME PERIOD THAT THE HOMEOWNER IS DEPLOYED OR MOBILIZED OUTSIDE OF THIS STATE, TO APPLY THESE PROTECTIONS TO DEPENDENTS RESIDING WITH THE SERVICE MEMBER, TO PROVIDE THAT THE PROTECTIONS TO DEPLOYED HOMEOWNERS MAY NOT BE WAIVED BY CONTRACT, TO PROVIDE THAT THESE PROVISIONS ONLY APPLY TO THE SERVICE MEMBER’S PRIMARY RESIDENCE, TO ESTABLISH THAT THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SECTION SHALL NOT BE CONSTRUED TO WAIVE AN OBLIGATION OF THE DEPLOYED SERVICE MEMBER FROM CONTINUING TO MAINTAIN THE PROPERTY; AND TO DEFINE THE TERM ‘HOMEOWNERS’ ASSOCIATION’ FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS SECTION.

Whereas, South Carolina is deeply proud to be home to eight major military bases and approximately 111,500 active, reserve, and retired members of the armed forces; and

Whereas, South Carolina tremendously appreciates the sacrifices these soldiers have made to secure freedom for our nation; and

Whereas, the United States Congress and this State have implemented many protections to ensure our deployed service members are able to serve without having to worry about problems that might arise at home, and that their rights are protected especially during deployment; and

Whereas, to further ensure that no question exists about the protection of the rights of the deployed with respect to the payment of homeowners’ association regime fee dues assessed during their deployment, we find additional measures are appropriate. 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 “Homeowners’ Association Regime Fee Fairness to Deployed Service Members Act”.

SECTION 2. Chapter 1, Title 27 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 27‑1‑75. (A) A service member who belongs to a homeowners’ association must notify the homeowners’ association of orders of deployment upon receipt of deployment notification. The service member may notify the homeowners’ association either by electronic mail or United States Postal Service, and the homeowners’ association may not reject a service member’s deployment notification on the grounds that it does not comply with another form of notice required by the association. For regime fees that become due while the homeowner is deployed, a homeowners’ association may not:

(1) enforce a lien for homeowners’ association regime fees that accrue and are not paid during the time period that the homeowner is deployed or mobilized outside of this State, and until the homeowner returns from deployment; or

(2) assess or impose penalties for homeowners’ association regime fees not paid during the time period that the homeowner is deployed or mobilized outside of this State.

(B) The provisions of this section also apply to dependents residing with the service member.

(C) The provisions of this section may not be waived by contract, and such a purported waiver is void.

(D) The provisions of this section apply only to the service member’s primary residence.

(E) Nothing in this section shall waive an obligation of the deployed service member from continuing to maintain the property as defined in declaration or otherwise by law.

(F) As used in this subsection, ‘homeowners’ association’ means an organization that is organized and operated to provide for the acquisition, construction, management, and maintenance of property.”

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

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