**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 53‑3‑55 SO AS TO DESIGNATE THE TWENTY‑SIXTH DAY OF MARCH EACH YEAR AS “SOUTH CAROLINA INDEPENDENCE DAY”, TO PROVIDE EACH PUBLIC SCHOOL SHALL ENSURE THAT THE HISTORY OF SOUTH CAROLINA LIBERTY AND INDEPENDENCE BE TAUGHT TO ALL STUDENTS USING GRADE‑APPROPRIATE MATERIALS AND INSTRUCTION, TO PROVIDE RELATED REQUIREMENTS OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION, AND TO ENCOURAGE THE GOVERNOR TO ANNUALLY PROCLAIM RECOGNITION OF SOUTH CAROLINA INDEPENDENCE DAY IN A CERTAIN MANNER.

Whereas, March 26, 1776, is recognized on the Great Seal of the State of South Carolina along with July 4, 1776, and therefore is recognized on all of our State’s official documents; and

Whereas, March 26, 1776, represents a crucial event in our State history, namely, our independence from Great Britain to become the state of South Carolina; and

Whereas, the significance of March twenty‑sixth appears not to be widely known; and

Whereas, the understanding of, and interest in, the subject of history has generally declined among many students both in this State and across the United States; and

Whereas, the cultivation of knowledge on South Carolina heritage can be greatly encouraged by setting aside a time in which students may positively associate with those great principles of liberty and hope that have built the traditions of our State. Now, therefore,

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 3, Title 53 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 53‑3‑55. (A) The State of South Carolina designates the twenty‑sixth day of March each year as ‘South Carolina Independence Day’.

(B) On the twenty‑sixth day of March each year or the nearest regular school day, every school receiving funds from the State of South Carolina shall ensure that the history of South Carolina liberty and independence is taught in all grades using materials and instruction as appropriate for each grade level, which each local school board shall adopt independently. This history must include the story of South Carolina’s separation from Great Britain on March 26,1776, the reasons for this separation, the legacy of state sovereignty that stems from South Carolina’s independence, and the honorable ideals of liberty, hope, persistence, and self‑sufficiency for which our State has stood during its existence.

(C) The State Superintendent of Education shall inform each local school board of the State’s recognition of South Carolina Independence Day and of the other requirements of this section. The superintendent also shall verify that each local school board is in compliance but has no authority to make changes to local school curriculum related to this section. The State Department of Education shall develop a model curriculum that a local school district may use in whole or in part, or not at all, as the basis for its curriculum. Under no circumstances may a local school district be required directly or indirectly to use this model curriculum. The superintendent may create awards and incentives to encourage students to study the history and heritage of South Carolina.”

SECTION 2. The Governor is respectfully urged to issue a proclamation recognizing South Carolina Independence Day on or before March 12th of each year, and to forward this proclamation to all political subdivisions of the State and newspapers of record.

SECTION 3. This act takes effect upon approval of the Governor and is applicable beginning with the 2017‑2018 School Year.

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