**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 53‑3‑220 SO AS TO DESIGNATE THE SECOND SATURDAY OF NOVEMBER OF EACH YEAR AS “PENN CENTER HERITAGE DAY” IN SOUTH CAROLINA.

Whereas, founded in 1862, Penn School was one of the first academic schools in the South established by Northern missionaries, to provide a formal education for formerly enslaved West Africans. After the school closed in 1948, Penn became the first African American site in South Carolina whose primary purpose was to safeguard the heritage of a Gullah Geechee community; and

Whereas, later, in the 1960s, Penn Center took up the mantle of social justice by ushering in the Civil Rights Movement and serving as the only location in South Carolina where interracial groups, such as Dr. Martin L. King, Jr., the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and the Peace Corps could have safe sanctuary in an era of mandated segregation; and

Whereas, Penn Center continues to thrive as a national monument promoting historic preservation, as well as a catalyst for economic sustainability throughout the Sea Islands. Its far‑reaching impact on local, national, and international communities has been the greatest legacy of the Penn Center’s history; and

Whereas, the mission of Penn Center is to promote and preserve Penn’s true history and culture through its commitment to education, community development, and social justice; and

Whereas, Penn Center’s vision is that it will be a world‑class organization that serves as a local, national and international resource center and catalyst for the development of programs for community self‑sufficiency, civil and human rights, and positive change. Penn Center will encourage the development of critical thinking, creative skills, and social consciousness through preserving and documenting history, collecting and exhibiting, presenting, and exploring ideas. 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 53‑3‑220. The second Saturday of November of each year is designated as “Penn Center Heritage Day” in South Carolina to promote and preserve Penn Center’s true history and culture through its commitment to education, community development, and social justice.”

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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