**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 58‑1‑70 SO AS TO MAKE IT UNLAWFUL FOR A PUBLIC UTILITY OR A THIRD PARTY AUTHORIZED BY A PUBLIC UTILITY TO ACCEPT PAYMENTS FOR UTILITY BILLS ON BEHALF OF THE PUBLIC UTILITY, TO COLLECT AN ADDITIONAL FEE FOR A CONSUMER’S PAYMENT AND TO PROVIDE A PENALTY.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 1, Title 58 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 58‑1‑70. (A) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, it is unlawful for a public utility, as defined in Section 58‑3‑5, or a third party authorized by a public utility to accept payments for utility bills on behalf of the public utility, to collect an additional service fee from a consumer’s payment.

(B) A public utility or third party who violates the provisions of this section must be fined one thousand dollars for each offense.”

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

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