**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 53‑3‑245 SO AS TO DESIGNATE THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER OF EVERY YEAR AS “SNAKEBITE AWARENESS MONTH” IN SOUTH CAROLINA.

Whereas, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, between 7,000 and 8,000 Americans are bitten by venomous snakes each year, and of those bitten, approximately five will die from their bite; and

Whereas, while not nearly as common in the United States as in other parts of the world, snakebites still pose a serious threat, and every state, with the exception of Alaska, is home to at least one species of venomous snake; and

Whereas, South Carolina is home to six species of venomous snakes: the coral snake, eastern diamondback rattlesnake, timber (or canebrake) rattlesnake, pigmy rattlesnake, copperhead and cottonmouth, though only the copperhead and cottonmouth are

considered common or abundant; and

Whereas, venomous snakes are a component of South Carolina’s environment and play a vital role in controlling rodent populations in many habitats; and

Whereas, while snakes are less active in the daytime during summer’s hottest months, snakes increase their daytime activity during September, making it one of the peak months for snakebites in South Carolina; and

Whereas, because venomous snakes typically only use their venom in defense as a last resort, the best protection against snakebites is to be aware and vigilant. 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 53‑3‑245. The month of September of every year is designated ‘Snakebite Awareness Month’ in South Carolina in order to raise awareness of snakebite injuries as well as highlight ways that snakebites can be prevented.”

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

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