**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND ARTICLE 2, CHAPTER 10, TITLE 59 OF THE 1976 CODE, RELATING TO SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES, BY ADDING SECTION 59‑10-230, TO PROVIDE THAT EACH PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT SHALL ENSURE THE CONTINUOUS PRESENCE OF A MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELOR DURING OPERATING HOURS, AND TO PROVIDE THAT ONE COUNSELOR MUST BE PROVIDED FOR EVERY FIVE HUNDRED STUDENTS ENROLLED AT A SCHOOL.

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

SECTION 1. Article 2, Chapter 10, Title 59 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 59‑10-230. (A) Contingent upon full funding by the General Assembly, each public school district shall ensure the continuous presence of at least one mental health counselor, such as a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist, during regular operating hours, in order to provide mental health services to each district. At least one mental health counselor for every five hundred students enrolled in a district shall be available. For students in kindergarten through the sixth grade, mental health counselors shall concentrate efforts on issues of bullying and social adjustment.

(B) In determining the number of mental health counselors required pursuant to subsection (A), a district may base its determination on the number of students enrolled at the school at the end of the preceding school year. The district may make adjustments to estimate changes expected from rezoning, if applicable, and may make estimates based on the capacity for new schools.”

SECTION 2. This act takes effect July 1, 2020.

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