**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND SECTION 56‑10‑225 OF THE 1976 CODE, RELATING TO THE OWNER OF A MOTOR VEHICLE MAINTAINING PROOF OF INSURANCE IN HIS VEHICLE AT ALL TIMES, TO PROVIDE THAT AN OWNER WHO FAILS TO MAINTAIN PROOF OF INSURANCE IN HIS VEHICLE IS SUBJECT TO HAVING HIS VEHICLE IMPOUNDED AND DISPOSED OF AS ABANDONED PROPERTY, AND TO PROVIDE A PENALTY.

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

SECTION 1. Section 56‑10‑225 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“Section 56‑10‑225. (A) A person whose application for registration and licensing of a motor vehicle has been approved by the Department of Motor Vehicles must maintain in the motor vehicle at all times proof that the motor vehicle is an insured vehicle in conformity with the laws of this State and Section 56‑10‑510.

(B) The owner of a motor vehicle must maintain proof of financial responsibility in the motor vehicle at all times, and it must be displayed upon demand of a police officer or any other person duly authorized by law.

(C)(1)(a) A person who fails to maintain the proof of insurance in his motor vehicle as required by subsection (A):

(i) is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, is subject to the same punishment as provided by law for failure of the person driving or in control of a motor vehicle to carry the vehicle registration card and to display the registration card upon demand;

(ii) must have his vehicle impounded and held at a facility designated by the law enforcement agency that requested proof of insurance; and

(iii) must be fined three hundred fifty dollars, is responsible for any fees incurred as a result of the towing and storage of the vehicle, and must provide proof of insurance before the vehicle may be retrieved.

(b) A vehicle that is not retrieved within ninety days is an abandoned vehicle and must be disposed of pursuant to the provisions contained in Section 56‑5‑5640.

(2) However, a charge of failing to maintain proof that a motor vehicle is insured must be dismissed if the person provides proof to the court that the motor vehicle was insured on the date of the violation.

(3) Upon notice of conviction, the department shall suspend the owner’s driver’s license until satisfactory proof of insurance is provided.

(4) If at any time the department determines that the vehicle was without insurance coverage, the owner’s registration and driving privileges will be suspended pursuant to Section 56‑10‑520.”

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

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