**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND SECTION 1-23-600 OF THE 1976 CODE, RELATING TO HEARINGS AND PROCEEDINGS IN FRONT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE LAW COURT, TO PROVIDE THAT AGENCY INTERPRETATIONS OF RELEVANT STATUTES AND REGULATIONS ARE NOT ENTITLED TO DEFERENCE FROM THE PRESIDING ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE, TO PROVIDE THAT REVIEW OF THOSE INTERPRETATIONS SHALL BE DE NOVO, AND TO PROVIDE THAT ANY DOUBT SHALL BE EXERCISED IN FAVOR OF THE INDIVIDUAL RATHER THAN THE AGENCY.

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

SECTION 1. Section 1-23-600 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding an appropriately lettered new subsection to read:

“( ) In hearings conducted pursuant to this section, the presiding administrative law judge shall review a state agency’s interpretation of relevant statutes and regulations *de novo*. The presiding administrative law judge shall not give deference to the state agency’s interpretation and shall exercise any doubt in favor of a reasonable interpretation that limits the state agency’s power and maximizes individual liberty.”

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

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