**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 8‑15‑80 SO AS TO PROHIBIT THE STATE AND ITS POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS FROM REQUIRING A COVID‑19 VACCINATION FOR FIRST RESPONDERS.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 15, Title 8 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 8‑15‑80. (A) Neither the State, nor any of its political subdivisions, may compel a person employed as a first responder to undergo a vaccination to prevent COVID‑19. If a first responder does not undergo vaccination, the first responder may not be subjected to an adverse employment action including, but not limited to, a termination, suspension, involuntary reassignment, or demotion. Any first responder aggrieved by an employer in violation of this section may bring a private cause of action to restore the first responder’s position and to have the employer pay any court costs and legal fees, as well as any punitive damages determined appropriate.

(B) For purposes of this section, ‘first responder’ means a law enforcement officer, firefighter, emergency medical technician, or paramedic who is paid from public funds.”

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

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