**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND CHAPTER 23, TITLE 17 OF THE 1976 CODE, RELATING TO PLEADING AND TRIAL, BY ADDING SECTION 17-23-180 TO PROVIDE THAT, IN A CRIMINAL CASE OR PROCEEDING IN WHICH A DEFENDANT IS ACCUSED OF CRIMINAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OR CRIMINAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OF A HIGH AND AGGRAVATED NATURE, A COURT MAY ADMIT EVIDENCE THAT THE DEFENDANT PREVIOUSLY COMMITTED ANOTHER VIOLATION OF SUCH AN OFFENSE.

Whereas, South Carolina has consistently ranked at the top of states for women killed by men, “Young Miss Columbia” SummerBelle Fair, through her platform with the Little Miss South Carolina Competition, has given her input, encouragement, and tireless advocacy with the hope of reducing the perpetual abuse of victims of domestic violence.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 23, Title 17 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 17-23-180. (A) In a criminal case or proceeding in which a defendant is accused of a violation of Section 16-25-20 or 16-25-65, a court may admit evidence that the defendant previously committed another violation of Section 16-25-20 or 16-25-65.

(B) Evidence admitted pursuant to the provisions of this section may be considered on any relevant matter.

(C) The provisions contained in this section do not limit the admission or consideration of evidence pursuant to the South Carolina Rules of Evidence.”

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

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