**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING ARTICLE 12 TO CHAPTER 63, TITLE 59 SO AS TO REQUIRE THAT EACH PUBLIC SCHOOL IN THE STATE EMPLOY A LICENSED PSYCHO‑EDUCATIONAL SPECIALIST CERTIFIED IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ON A FULL‑TIME BASIS to help school personnel identify students in need of mental health counseling, promote awareness of mental health issues and the availability of treatment, screen and identify students for mental health issues, and provide appropriate mental health counseling and make referrals for appropriate social services counseling.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 63, Title 59 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Article 12

Mandatory School Psychologists

Section 59‑63‑1210. Every public school in this State shall employ a school psychologist on a full‑time basis to help school personnel identify students in need of mental health counseling, promote awareness of mental health issues and the availability of treatment, screen and identify students for mental health issues, and provide appropriate mental health counseling and make referrals for appropriate social services counseling.

Section 59‑63‑1220. For the purposes of this article, ‘school psychologist’ means a person licensed as a psycho‑educational specialist under the provisions of Article 3, Chapter 75, Title 40.”

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

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