**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND TITLE 44 OF THE 1976 CODE, RELATING TO HEALTH, BY ADDING CHAPTER 139 TO PROVIDE THAT LOCAL LAWS AND ORDINANCES RELATED TO THE REGULATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF THE RIGHT OF MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS, HEALTH CARE INSTITUTIONS, AND HEALTH CARE PAYERS TO EXERCISE THEIR CONSCIENCE, WHETHER SUCH CONSCIENCE IS INFORMED BY RELIGION, MORAL, ETHICAL, OR PHILOSOPHIC BELIEFS, ARE PREEMPTED AND SUPERSEDED BY LAWS ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND REGULATIONS PROMULGATED BY STATE AGENCIES PURSUANT TO THOSE LAWS.

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

SECTION 1. Title 44 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“CHAPTER 139

Medical Ethics and Diversity

Section 44‑139‑10. It is the intent of the General Assembly to occupy the field of regulating the right of conscience for medical practitioners, health care institutions, and health care payers. All local laws and ordinances enacted by a political subdivision of this State related to the regulation and enforcement of the right of medical practitioners, health care institutions, and health care payers to exercise their conscience, whether such conscience is informed by religion, moral, ethical, or philosophic beliefs, are preempted and superseded by laws enacted by the General Assembly and regulations promulgated by state agencies pursuant to those laws.”

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

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