

A RESOLUTION

TO ENCOURAGE THE SOUTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO PASS H.3105 DECLARING THAT RELIGIOUS SERVICES ARE DEEMED AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE DURING A STATE OF EMERGENCY AND MUST BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE OPERATING THROUGHOUT THE STATE OF EMERGENCY.

WHEREAS, Greenville County Council recognizes that the First Amendment to the United States Constitution bars government from making any law prohibiting the free exercise of religion; and

WHEREAS, the South Carolina Religious Freedom Act, enacted by the State Legislature in 1999, confirms that the State may not substantially burden a person’s exercise of religion; and

WHEREAS, on December 9, 2020, House Bill 3105 was introduced in the South Carolina House of Representatives to amend the Religious Freedom Act. This bill asserts that religious services are deemed an essential service and are considered necessary and vital to the health and welfare of the public; and

WHEREAS, this legislation also provides that the State may not limit the ability of a religious organization to engage in religious services during a state of emergency to a greater extent that other organizations or businesses that provide essential services are permitted to operate; and

WHEREAS, the South Carolina House of Representatives, by a vote of 83 to 22, gave final reading to this important legislation on March 17, 2021 and sent the bill to the South Carolina Senate, where it has been referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee; and

WHEREAS, Greenville County Council recognizes the significance of this landmark legislation that would advance the constitutional right to the free exercise of religion.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Greenville County Council hereby approves this resolution endorsing House Bill 3105 and encourages the South Carolina Senate to pass the bill and send it to the Governor.

DONE IN REGULAR MEETING THIS ___ DAY OF _____, 2021.

Willis H. Meadows, Chairman
Greenville County Council

Joseph M. Kernell
County Administrator

ATTEST:

Regina McCaskill
Clerk to Council