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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2011

A N A C T

RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES -- MOTOR VEHICLE OFFENSES

Introduced By: Representatives Menard, and Baldelli-Hunt

Date Introduced: February 15, 2011

Referred To: House Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 31-27-2 of the General Laws in Chapter 31-27 entitled "Motor  
2 Vehicle Offenses" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **31-27-2. Driving under influence of liquor or drugs.** -- (a) Whoever drives or  
4 otherwise operates any vehicle in the state while under the influence of any intoxicating liquor,  
5 drugs, toluene, or any controlled substance as defined in chapter 28 of title 21, or any  
6 combination of these, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor except as provided in subdivision (d)(3)  
7 and shall be punished as provided in subsection (d) of this section.

8 (b) (1) Any person charged under subsection (a) of this section whose blood alcohol  
9 concentration is eight one-hundredths of one percent (.08%) or more by weight as shown by a  
10 chemical analysis of a blood, breath, or urine sample shall be guilty of violating subsection (a) of  
11 this section. This provision shall not preclude a conviction based on other admissible evidence.  
12 Proof of guilt under this section may also be based on evidence that the person charged was under  
13 the influence of intoxicating liquor, drugs, toluene, or any controlled substance defined in chapter  
14 28 of title 21, or any combination of these, to a degree which rendered the person incapable of  
15 safely operating a vehicle. The fact that any person charged with violating this section is or has  
16 been legally entitled to use alcohol or a drug shall not constitute a defense against any charge of  
17 violating this section.

18 (2) Whoever drives or otherwise operates any vehicle in the state with a blood presence  
19 of any scheduled controlled substance as defined within chapter 28 of title 21, as shown by

1 analysis of a blood or urine sample, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be punished as  
2 provided in subsection (d) of this section.

3 (3) The license of any person charged under subsection (a) of this section shall be  
4 immediately suspended by a bail commissioner, a judge of the traffic tribunal or district court  
5 judge. Upon the receipt of a report from a law enforcement officer that the person was charged  
6 with a violation of this section that person's license shall be surrendered within five (5) days of  
7 notice of suspension.

8 (c) In any criminal prosecution for a violation of subsection (a) of this section, evidence  
9 as to the amount of intoxicating liquor, toluene, or any controlled substance as defined in chapter  
10 28 of title 21, or any combination of these, in the defendant's blood at the time alleged as shown  
11 by a chemical analysis of the defendant's breath, blood, or urine or other bodily substance shall be  
12 admissible and competent, provided that evidence is presented that the following conditions have  
13 been complied with:

14 (1) The defendant has consented to the taking of the test upon which the analysis is  
15 made. Evidence that the defendant had refused to submit to the test shall not be admissible unless  
16 the defendant elects to testify.

17 (2) A true copy of the report of the test result was mailed within seventy-two (72) hours  
18 of the taking of the test to the person submitting to a breath test.

19 (3) Any person submitting to a chemical test of blood, urine, or other body fluids shall  
20 have a true copy of the report of the test result mailed to him or her within thirty (30) days  
21 following the taking of the test.

22 (4) The test was performed according to methods and with equipment approved by the  
23 director of the department of health of the state of Rhode Island and by an authorized individual.

24 (5) Equipment used for the conduct of the tests by means of breath analysis had been  
25 tested for accuracy within thirty (30) days preceding the test by personnel qualified as  
26 hereinbefore provided, and breathalyzer operators shall be qualified and certified by the  
27 department of health within three hundred sixty-five (365) days of the test.

28 (6) The person arrested and charged with operating a motor vehicle while under the  
29 influence of intoxicating liquor, toluene, or any controlled substance as defined in chapter 28 of  
30 title 21, or, any combination of these in violation of subsection (a) of this section was afforded the  
31 opportunity to have an additional chemical test. The officer arresting or so charging the person  
32 shall have informed the person of this right and afforded him or her a reasonable opportunity to  
33 exercise this right, and a notation to this effect is made in the official records of the case in the  
34 police department. Refusal to permit an additional chemical test shall render incompetent and

1 inadmissible in evidence the original report.

2 (d) (1) (i) Every person found to have violated subdivision (b)(1) of this section shall be  
3 sentenced as follows: for a first violation whose blood alcohol concentration is eight one-  
4 hundredths of one percent (.08%) but less than one-tenth of one percent (.1%) by weight or who  
5 has a blood presence of any scheduled controlled substance as defined in subdivision (b)(2) shall  
6 be subject to a fine of not less than one hundred dollars (\$100) nor more than three hundred  
7 dollars (\$300), shall be required to perform ten (10) to sixty (60) hours of public community  
8 restitution, and/or shall be imprisoned for up to one year. The sentence may be served in any unit  
9 of the adult correctional institutions in the discretion of the sentencing judge and/or shall be  
10 required to attend a special course on driving while intoxicated or under the influence of a  
11 controlled substance, and his or her driver's license shall be suspended for thirty (30) days up to  
12 one hundred eighty (180) days.

13 (ii) Every person convicted of a first violation whose blood alcohol concentration is one-  
14 tenth of one percent (.1%) by weight or above but less than fifteen hundredths of one percent  
15 (.15%) or whose blood alcohol concentration is unknown shall be subject to a fine of not less than  
16 one hundred (\$100) dollars nor more than four hundred dollars (\$400) and shall be required to  
17 perform ten (10) to sixty (60) hours of public community restitution and/or shall be imprisoned  
18 for up to one year. The sentence may be served in any unit of the adult correctional institutions in  
19 the discretion of the sentencing judge. The person's driving license shall be suspended for a  
20 period of three (3) months to twelve (12) months. The sentencing judge shall require attendance  
21 at a special course on driving while intoxicated or under the influence of a controlled substance  
22 and/or alcoholic or drug treatment for the individual.

23 (iii) Every person convicted of a first offense whose blood alcohol concentration is  
24 fifteen hundredths of one percent (.15%) or above, or who is under the influence of a drug,  
25 toluene, or any controlled substance as defined in subdivision (b)(1) shall be subject to a fine of  
26 five hundred dollars (\$500) and shall be required to perform twenty (20) to sixty (60) hours of  
27 public community restitution and/or shall be imprisoned for up to one year. The sentence may be  
28 served in any unit of the adult correctional institutions in the discretion of the sentencing judge.  
29 The person's driving license shall be suspended for a period of three (3) months to eighteen (18)  
30 months. The sentencing judge shall require attendance at a special course on driving while  
31 intoxicated or under the influence of a controlled substance and/or alcohol or drug treatment for  
32 the individual.

33 (2) (i) Every person convicted of a second violation within a five (5) year period with a  
34 blood alcohol concentration of eight one-hundredths of one percent (.08%) or above but less than

1 fifteen hundredths of one percent (.15%) or whose blood alcohol concentration is unknown or  
2 who has a blood presence of any controlled substance as defined in subdivision (b)(2), and every  
3 person convicted of a second violation within a five (5) year period regardless of whether the  
4 prior violation and subsequent conviction was a violation and subsequent conviction under this  
5 statute or under the driving under the influence of liquor or drugs statute of any other state, shall  
6 be subject to a mandatory fine of four hundred dollars (\$400). The person's driving license shall  
7 be suspended for a period of one year to two (2) years, and the individual shall be sentenced to  
8 not less than ten (10) days nor more than one year in jail. The sentence may be served in any unit  
9 of the adult correctional institutions in the discretion of the sentencing judge; however, not less  
10 than forty-eight (48) hours of imprisonment shall be served consecutively. The sentencing judge  
11 shall require alcohol or drug treatment for the individual, and may prohibit that person from  
12 operating a motor vehicle that is not equipped with an ignition interlock system for a period of  
13 one year to two (2) years following the completion of the sentence as provided in section 31-27-  
14 2.8.

15 (ii) Every person convicted of a second violation within a five (5) year period whose  
16 blood alcohol concentration is fifteen hundredths of one percent (.15%) or above by weight as  
17 shown by a chemical analysis of a blood, breath, or urine sample or who is under the influence of  
18 a drug, toluene, or any controlled substance as defined in subdivision (b)(1) shall be subject to  
19 mandatory imprisonment of not less than six (6) months nor more than one year, a mandatory fine  
20 of not less than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) and a mandatory license suspension for a period of  
21 two (2) years from the date of completion of the sentence imposed under this subsection.

22 (3) (i) Every person convicted of a third or subsequent violation within a five (5) year  
23 period with a blood alcohol concentration of eight one-hundredths of one percent (.08%) or above  
24 but less than fifteen hundredths of one percent (.15%) or whose blood alcohol concentration is  
25 unknown or who has a blood presence of any scheduled controlled substance as defined in  
26 subdivision (b)(2) regardless of whether any prior violation and subsequent conviction was a  
27 violation and subsequent conviction under this statute or under the driving under the influence of  
28 liquor or drugs statute of any other state, shall be guilty of a felony and be subject to a mandatory  
29 fine of four hundred (\$400) dollars. The person's driving license shall be suspended for a period  
30 of two (2) years to three (3) years, and the individual shall be sentenced to not less than one year  
31 and not more than three (3) years in jail. The sentence may be served in any unit of the adult  
32 correctional institutions in the discretion of the sentencing judge; however, not less than forty-  
33 eight (48) hours of imprisonment shall be served consecutively. The sentencing judge shall  
34 require alcohol or drug treatment for the individual, and may prohibit that person from operating

1 a motor vehicle that is not equipped with an ignition interlock system for a period of two (2) years  
2 following the completion of the sentence as provided in section 31-27-2.8.

3 (ii) Every person convicted of a third or subsequent violation within a five (5) year  
4 period whose blood alcohol concentration is fifteen hundredths of one percent (.15%) above by  
5 weight as shown by a chemical analysis of a blood, breath, or urine sample or who is under the  
6 influence of a drug, toluene or any controlled substance as defined in subdivision (b)(1) shall be  
7 subject to mandatory imprisonment of not less than three (3) years nor more than five (5) years, a  
8 mandatory fine of not less than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) nor more than five thousand dollars  
9 (\$5,000) and a mandatory license suspension for a period of three (3) years from the date of  
10 completion of the sentence imposed under this subsection.

11 (iii) In addition to the foregoing penalties, every person convicted of a third or  
12 subsequent violation within a five (5) year period regardless of whether any prior violation and  
13 subsequent conviction was a violation and subsequent conviction under this statute or under the  
14 driving under the influence of liquor or drugs statute of any other state shall be subject, in the  
15 discretion of the sentencing judge, to having the vehicle owned and operated by the violator  
16 seized and sold by the state of Rhode Island, with all funds obtained by the sale to be transferred  
17 to the general fund.

18 (4) Whoever drives or otherwise operates any vehicle in the state while under the  
19 influence of any intoxicating liquor, drugs, toluene, or any controlled substance as defined in  
20 chapter 28 of title 21, or any combination of these, when his or her license to operate is  
21 suspended, revoked or cancelled for operating under the influence of a narcotic drug or  
22 intoxicating liquor shall be guilty of a felony punishable by imprisonment for not more than three  
23 (3) years and by a fine or not more than three thousand dollars (\$3,000). The court shall require  
24 alcohol and/or drug treatment for the individual; provided, the penalties provided for in  
25 subdivision 31-27-2(d)(4) shall not apply to an individual who has surrendered his or her license,  
26 and served the court ordered period of suspension, but who, for any reason, has not had their  
27 license reinstated after the period of suspension, revocation, or suspension has expired; provided,  
28 further the individual shall be subject to the provisions of paragraphs 31-27-2(d)(2)(i) or (ii) or  
29 31-27-22(d)(3)(i), (ii), or (iii) regarding subsequent offenses, and any other applicable provision  
30 of section 31-27-2.

31 (5) (i) For purposes of determining the period of license suspension, a prior violation  
32 shall constitute any charge brought and sustained under the provisions of this section or section  
33 31-27-2.1.

34 (ii) Any person over the age of eighteen (18) who is convicted under this section for

1 operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, other drugs, or a combination of  
2 these, while a child under the age of thirteen (13) years was present as a passenger in the motor  
3 vehicle when the offense was committed may be sentenced to a term of imprisonment of not more  
4 than one year and further shall not be entitled to the benefit of suspension or deferment of this  
5 sentence. The sentence imposed under this section may be served in any unit of the adult  
6 correctional institutions in the discretion of the sentencing judge.

7 (6) (i) Any person convicted of a violation under this section shall pay a highway  
8 assessment fine of five hundred dollars (\$500) which shall be deposited into the general fund. The  
9 assessment provided for by this subsection shall be collected from a violator before any other  
10 fines authorized by this section.

11 (ii) Any person convicted of a violation under this section shall be assessed a fee of  
12 eighty-six dollars (\$86).

13 (7) (i) If the person convicted of violating this section is under the age of eighteen (18)  
14 years, for the first violation he or she shall be required to perform ten (10) to sixty (60) hours of  
15 public community restitution, and the juvenile's driving license shall be suspended for a period of  
16 six (6) months, and may be suspended for a period up to eighteen (18) months. The sentencing  
17 judge shall also require attendance at a special course on driving while intoxicated or under the  
18 influence of a controlled substance and alcohol or drug education and/or treatment for the  
19 juvenile. The juvenile may also be required to pay a highway assessment fine of no more than  
20 five hundred dollars (\$500), and the assessment imposed shall be deposited into the general fund.

21 (ii) If the person convicted of violating this section is under the age of eighteen (18)  
22 years, for a second or subsequent violation regardless of whether any prior violation and  
23 subsequent conviction was a violation and subsequent under this statute or under the driving  
24 under the influence of liquor or drugs statute of any other state, he or she shall be subject to a  
25 mandatory suspension of his or her driving license until such time as he or she is twenty-one (21)  
26 years of age and may, in the discretion of the sentencing judge, also be sentenced to the Rhode  
27 Island training school for a period of not more than one year and/or a fine of not more than five  
28 hundred dollars (\$500).

29 (8) Any person convicted of a violation under this section may undergo a clinical  
30 assessment at the community college of Rhode Island 's center for workforce and community  
31 education. Should this clinical assessment determine problems of alcohol, drug abuse, or  
32 psychological problems associated with alcoholic or drug abuse, this person shall be referred to  
33 an appropriate facility, licensed or approved by the department of mental health, retardation and  
34 hospitals for treatment placement, case management, and monitoring.

1 (e) Percent by weight of alcohol in the blood shall be based upon milligrams of alcohol  
2 per one hundred (100) cubic centimeters of blood.

3 (f) (1) There is established an alcohol and drug safety unit within the division of motor  
4 vehicles to administer an alcohol safety action program. The program shall provide for placement  
5 and follow-up for persons who are required to pay the highway safety assessment. The alcohol  
6 and drug safety action program will be administered in conjunction with alcohol and drug  
7 programs licensed by the department of mental health retardation and hospitals.

8 (2) Persons convicted under the provisions of this chapter shall be required to attend a  
9 special course on driving while intoxicated or under the influence of a controlled substance,  
10 and/or participate in an alcohol or drug treatment program. The course shall take into  
11 consideration any language barrier which may exist as to any person ordered to attend, and shall  
12 provide for instruction reasonably calculated to communicate the purposes of the course in  
13 accordance with the requirements of the subsection. Any costs reasonably incurred in connection  
14 with the provision of this accommodation shall be borne by the person being retrained. A copy of  
15 any violation under this section shall be forwarded by the court to the alcohol and drug safety  
16 unit. In the event that persons convicted under the provisions of this chapter fail to attend and  
17 complete the above course or treatment program, as ordered by the judge, then the person may be  
18 brought before the court, and after a hearing as to why the order of the court was not followed,  
19 may be sentenced to jail for a period not exceeding one year.

20 (3) The alcohol and drug safety action program within the division of motor vehicles  
21 shall be funded by general revenue appropriations.

22 (g) The director of the health department of the state of Rhode Island is empowered to  
23 make and file with the secretary of state regulations which prescribe the techniques and methods  
24 of chemical analysis of the person's body fluids or breath, and the qualifications and certification  
25 of individuals authorized to administer this testing and analysis.

26 (h) Jurisdiction for misdemeanor violations of this section shall be with the district court  
27 for persons eighteen (18) years of age or older and to the family court for persons under the age  
28 of eighteen (18) years. The courts shall have full authority to impose any sentence authorized and  
29 to order the suspension of any license for violations of this section. All trials in the district court  
30 and family court of violations of the section shall be scheduled within thirty (30) days of the  
31 arraignment date. No continuance or postponement shall be granted except for good cause shown.  
32 Any continuances that are necessary shall be granted for the shortest practicable time. Trials in  
33 superior court are not required to be scheduled within thirty (30) days of the arraignment date.

34 (i) No fines, suspensions, assessments, alcohol or drug treatment programs, course on

1 driving while intoxicated or under the influence of a controlled substance, public community  
2 restitution, or jail provided for under this section can be suspended.

3 (j) An order to attend a special course on driving while intoxicated that shall be  
4 administered in cooperation with a college or university accredited by the state, shall include a  
5 provision to pay a reasonable tuition for the course in an amount not less than twenty-five dollars  
6 (\$25.00), and a fee of one hundred seventy-five dollars (\$175), which fee shall be deposited into  
7 the general fund.

8 (k) For the purposes of this section, any test of a sample of blood, breath, or urine for the  
9 presence of alcohol, which relies in whole or in part upon the principle of infrared light  
10 absorption is considered a chemical test.

11 (l) If any provision of this section or the application of any provision shall for any reason  
12 be judged invalid, such a judgment shall not affect, impair, or invalidate the remainder of the  
13 section, but shall be confined in this effect to the provision or application directly involved in the  
14 controversy giving rise to the judgment.

15 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
A N A C T  
RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES -- MOTOR VEHICLE OFFENSES

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1           This act would require a bail commissioner, a traffic tribunal magistrate, or a district  
2 court judge to immediately suspend a person's license upon that person begin charged with DUI.

3           This act would take effect upon passage.

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