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2012 -- S 2575

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2012

AN ACT

RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES - MOTOR VEHICLE OFFENSES

Introduced By: Senators E O'Neill, Kettle, Maher, P Fogarty, and Pinga

Date Introduced: February 28, 2012

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

SECTION 1. Sections 31-27-2 and 31-27-2.1 of the General Laws in Chapter 31-27 1 2 entitled "Motor Vehicle Offenses" are 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 combination of these, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor except as provided in subdivision (d)(3) 6 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

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

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

9 (1) The defendant has consented to the taking of the test upon which the analysis is 10 made. Evidence that the defendant had refused to submit to the test shall not be admissible unless 11 the defendant elects to testify.

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

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

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

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

23 (6) The person arrested and charged with operating a motor vehicle while under the 24 influence of intoxicating liquor, toluene, or any controlled substance as defined in chapter 28 of 25 title 21, or, any combination of these in violation of subsection (a) of this section was afforded the opportunity to have an additional chemical test. The officer arresting or so charging the person 26 27 shall have informed the person of this right and afforded him or her a reasonable opportunity to 28 exercise this right, and a notation to this effect is made in the official records of the case in the 29 police department. Refusal to permit an additional chemical test shall render incompetent and 30 inadmissible in evidence the original report.

(d) (1) (i) Every person found to have violated subdivision (b)(1) of this section shall be
sentenced as follows: for a first violation whose blood alcohol concentration is eight onehundredths of one percent (.08%) but less than one-tenth of one percent (.1%) by weight or who
has a blood presence of any scheduled controlled substance as defined in subdivision (b)(2) shall

be subject to a fine of not less than one hundred dollars (\$100) nor more than three hundred dollars (\$300), shall be required to perform ten (10) to sixty (60) hours of public community restitution, and/or shall be imprisoned for up to one year. The sentence may be served in any unit of the adult correctional institutions in the discretion of the sentencing judge and/or shall be required to attend a special course on driving while intoxicated or under the influence of a controlled substance, and his or her driver's license shall be suspended for thirty (30) days up to one hundred eighty (180) days.

8 (ii) Every person convicted of a first violation whose blood alcohol concentration is one-9 tenth of one percent (.1%) by weight or above but less than fifteen hundredths of one percent 10 (.15%) or whose blood alcohol concentration is unknown shall be subject to a fine of not less than 11 one hundred (\$100) dollars nor more than four hundred dollars (\$400) and shall be required to 12 perform ten (10) to sixty (60) hours of public community restitution and/or shall be imprisoned 13 for up to one year. The sentence may be served in any unit of the adult correctional institutions in 14 the discretion of the sentencing judge. The person's driving license shall be suspended for a 15 period of three (3) months to twelve (12) months. The sentencing judge shall require attendance 16 at a special course on driving while intoxicated or under the influence of a controlled substance 17 and/or alcoholic or drug treatment for the individual.

18 (iii) Every person convicted of a first offense whose blood alcohol concentration is 19 fifteen hundredths of one percent (.15%) or above, or who is under the influence of a drug, 20 toluene, or any controlled substance as defined in subdivision (b)(1) shall be subject to a fine of 21 five hundred dollars (\$500) and shall be required to perform twenty (20) to sixty (60) hours of 22 public community restitution and/or shall be imprisoned for up to one year. The sentence may be 23 served in any unit of the adult correctional institutions in the discretion of the sentencing judge. 24 The person's driving license shall be suspended for a period of three (3) months to eighteen (18) 25 months. The sentencing judge shall require attendance at a special course on driving while 26 intoxicated or under the influence of a controlled substance and/or alcohol or drug treatment for 27 the individual.

(2) (i) Every person convicted of a second violation within a five (5) year period with a blood alcohol concentration of eight one-hundredths of one percent (.08%) or above but less than fifteen hundredths of one percent (.15%) or whose blood alcohol concentration is unknown or who has a blood presence of any controlled substance as defined in subdivision (b)(2), and every person convicted of a second violation within a five (5) year period regardless of whether the prior violation and subsequent conviction was a violation and subsequent conviction under this statute or under the driving under the influence of liquor or drugs statute of any other state, shall

be subject to a mandatory fine of four hundred dollars (\$400). The person's driving license shall 1 2 be suspended for a period of one year to two (2) years, and the individual shall be sentenced to 3 not less than ten (10) days nor more than one year in jail. The sentence may be served in any unit 4 of the adult correctional institutions in the discretion of the sentencing judge; however, not less 5 than forty-eight (48) hours of imprisonment shall be served consecutively. The sentencing judge shall require alcohol or drug treatment for the individual, and may prohibit that person from 6 7 operating a motor vehicle that is not equipped with an ignition interlock system for a period of 8 one year to two (2) years following the completion of the sentence as provided in section 31-27-9 2.8.

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

17 (3) (i) Every person convicted of a third or subsequent violation within a five (5) twenty-18 five (25) year period with a blood alcohol concentration of eight one-hundredths of one percent 19 (.08%) or above but less than fifteen hundredths of one percent (.15%) or whose blood alcohol 20 concentration is unknown or who has a blood presence of any scheduled controlled substance as 21 defined in subdivision (b)(2) regardless of whether any prior violation and subsequent conviction 22 was a violation and subsequent conviction under this statute or under the driving under the 23 influence of liquor or drugs statute of any other state, shall be guilty of a felony and be subject to 24 a mandatory fine of four hundred (\$400) dollars. The person's driving license shall be suspended 25 for a period of two (2) years to three (3) years, and the individual shall be sentenced to not less 26 than one two (2) years year and not more than three (3) ten (10) years in jail. The sentence may 27 be served in any unit of the adult correctional institutions in the discretion of the sentencing 28 judge; however, not less than forty-eight (48) hours of imprisonment shall be served 29 consecutively. The sentencing judge shall require alcohol or drug treatment for the individual, 30 and may prohibit that person from operating a motor vehicle that is not equipped with an ignition 31 interlock system for a period of two (2) years following the completion of the sentence as 32 provided in section 31-27-2.8.

(ii) Every person convicted of a third or subsequent violation within a five (5) twenty five (25) year period whose blood alcohol concentration is fifteen hundredths of one percent

(.15%) above by weight as shown by a chemical analysis of a blood, breath, or urine sample or
who is under the influence of a drug, toluene or any controlled substance as defined in
subdivision (b)(1) shall be subject to mandatory imprisonment of not less than three (3) five (5)
years nor more than five (5) fifteen (15) years, a mandatory fine of not less than one thousand
dollars (\$1,000) nor more than five thousand dollars (\$5,000) and a mandatory license suspension
for a period of three (3) years from the date of completion of the sentence imposed under this
subsection.

8 (iii) In addition to the foregoing penalties, every person convicted of a third or 9 subsequent violation within a five (5) year period regardless of whether any prior violation and 10 subsequent conviction was a violation and subsequent conviction under this statute or under the 11 driving under the influence of liquor or drugs statute of any other state shall be subject, in the 12 discretion of the sentencing judge, to having the vehicle owned and operated by the violator 13 seized and sold by the state of Rhode Island, with all funds obtained by the sale to be transferred 14 to the general fund.

15 (4) Whoever drives or otherwise operates any vehicle in the state while under the 16 influence of any intoxicating liquor, drugs, toluene, or any controlled substance as defined in 17 chapter 28 of title 21, or any combination of these, when his or her license to operate is 18 suspended, revoked or cancelled for operating under the influence of a narcotic drug or 19 intoxicating liquor shall be guilty of a felony punishable by imprisonment for not more than three 20 (3) years and by a fine or not more than three thousand dollars (\$3,000). The court shall require 21 alcohol and/or drug treatment for the individual; provided, the penalties provided for in 22 subdivision 31-27-2(d)(4) shall not apply to an individual who has surrendered his or her license, 23 and served the court ordered period of suspension, but who, for any reason, has not had their 24 license reinstated after the period of suspension, revocation, or suspension has expired; provided, 25 further the individual shall be subject to the provisions of paragraphs 31-27-2(d)(2)(i) or (ii) or 31-27-22(d)(3)(i), (ii), or (iii) regarding subsequent offenses, and any other applicable provision 26 27 of section 31-27-2.

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

(ii) Any person over the age of eighteen (18) who is convicted under this section for operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, other drugs, or a combination of these, while a child under the age of thirteen (13) years was present as a passenger in the motor vehicle when the offense was committed may be sentenced to a term of imprisonment of not more

1 than one year and further shall not be entitled to the benefit of suspension or deferment of this 2 sentence. The sentence imposed under this section may be served in any unit of the adult 3 correctional institutions in the discretion of the sentencing judge.

4 (6) (i) Any person convicted of a violation under this section shall pay a highway 5 assessment fine of five hundred dollars (\$500) which shall be deposited into the general fund. The assessment provided for by this subsection shall be collected from a violator before any other 6 7 fines authorized by this section.

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(ii) Any person convicted of a violation under this section shall be assessed a fee of 9 eighty-six dollars (\$86).

10 (7) (i) If the person convicted of violating this section is under the age of eighteen (18) 11 years, for the first violation he or she shall be required to perform ten (10) to sixty (60) hours of 12 public community restitution, and the juvenile's driving license shall be suspended for a period of 13 six (6) months, and may be suspended for a period up to eighteen (18) months. The sentencing 14 judge shall also require attendance at a special course on driving while intoxicated or under the 15 influence of a controlled substance and alcohol or drug education and/or treatment for the 16 juvenile. The juvenile may also be required to pay a highway assessment fine of no more than 17 five hundred dollars (\$500), and the assessment imposed shall be deposited into the general fund.

18 (ii) If the person convicted of violating this section is under the age of eighteen (18) 19 years, for a second or subsequent violation regardless of whether any prior violation and 20 subsequent conviction was a violation and subsequent under this statute or under the driving 21 under the influence of liquor or drugs statute of any other state, he or she shall be subject to a 22 mandatory suspension of his or her driving license until such time as he or she is twenty-one (21) 23 years of age and may, in the discretion of the sentencing judge, also be sentenced to the Rhode 24 Island training school for a period of not more than one year and/or a fine of not more than five 25 hundred dollars (\$500).

26 (8) Any person convicted of a violation under this section may undergo a clinical 27 assessment at the community college of Rhode Island 's center for workforce and community 28 education. Should this clinical assessment determine problems of alcohol, drug abuse, or 29 psychological problems associated with alcoholic or drug abuse, this person shall be referred to 30 an appropriate facility, licensed or approved by the department of mental health, retardation and 31 hospitals for treatment placement, case management, and monitoring.

32 (e) Percent by weight of alcohol in the blood shall be based upon milligrams of alcohol 33 per one hundred (100) cubic centimeters of blood.

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(f) (1) There is established an alcohol and drug safety unit within the division of motor

vehicles to administer an alcohol safety action program. The program shall provide for placement
and follow-up for persons who are required to pay the highway safety assessment. The alcohol
and drug safety action program will be administered in conjunction with alcohol and drug
programs licensed by the department of mental health retardation and hospitals.

5 (2) Persons convicted under the provisions of this chapter shall be required to attend a special course on driving while intoxicated or under the influence of a controlled substance, 6 7 and/or participate in an alcohol or drug treatment program. The course shall take into 8 consideration any language barrier which may exist as to any person ordered to attend, and shall 9 provide for instruction reasonably calculated to communicate the purposes of the course in 10 accordance with the requirements of the subsection. Any costs reasonably incurred in connection 11 with the provision of this accommodation shall be borne by the person being retrained. A copy of 12 any violation under this section shall be forwarded by the court to the alcohol and drug safety 13 unit. In the event that persons convicted under the provisions of this chapter fail to attend and 14 complete the above course or treatment program, as ordered by the judge, then the person may be 15 brought before the court, and after a hearing as to why the order of the court was not followed, 16 may be sentenced to jail for a period not exceeding one year.

17 (3) The alcohol and drug safety action program within the division of motor vehicles18 shall be funded by general revenue appropriations.

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

23 (h) Jurisdiction for misdemeanor violations of this section shall be with the district court 24 for persons eighteen (18) years of age or older and to the family court for persons under the age 25 of eighteen (18) years. The courts shall have full authority to impose any sentence authorized and 26 to order the suspension of any license for violations of this section. All trials in the district court 27 and family court of violations of the section shall be scheduled within thirty (30) days of the 28 arraignment date. No continuance or postponement shall be granted except for good cause shown. 29 Any continuances that are necessary shall be granted for the shortest practicable time. Trials in 30 superior court are not required to be scheduled within thirty (30) days of the arraignment date.

(i) No fines, suspensions, assessments, alcohol or drug treatment programs, course on
 driving while intoxicated or under the influence of a controlled substance, public community
 restitution, or jail provided for under this section can be suspended.

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(j) An order to attend a special course on driving while intoxicated that shall be

administered in cooperation with a college or university accredited by the state, shall include a
provision to pay a reasonable tuition for the course in an amount not less than twenty-five dollars
(\$25.00), and a fee of one hundred seventy-five dollars (\$175), which fee shall be deposited into
the general fund.

5 (k) For the purposes of this section, any test of a sample of blood, breath, or urine for the 6 presence of alcohol, which relies in whole or in part upon the principle of infrared light 7 absorption is considered a chemical test.

8 (1) If any provision of this section or the application of any provision shall for any reason 9 be judged invalid, such a judgment shall not affect, impair, or invalidate the remainder of the 10 section, but shall be confined in this effect to the provision or application directly involved in the 11 controversy giving rise to the judgment.

12 <u>31-27-2.1. Refusal to submit to chemical test. --</u> (a) Any person who operates a motor 13 vehicle within this state shall be deemed to have given his or her consent to chemical tests of his 14 or her breath, blood, and/or urine for the purpose of determining the chemical content of his or 15 her body fluids or breath. No more than two (2) complete tests, one for the presence of 16 intoxicating liquor and one for the presence of toluene or any controlled substance, as defined in 17 section 21-28-1.02(7), shall be administered at the direction of a law enforcement officer having 18 reasonable grounds to believe the person to have been driving a motor vehicle within this state 19 while under the influence of intoxicating liquor, toluene, or any controlled substance, as defined 20 in chapter 28 of title 21, or any combination of these. The director of the department of health is 21 empowered to make and file with the secretary of state, regulations which prescribe the 22 techniques and methods of chemical analysis of the person's body fluids or breath and the 23 qualifications and certification of individuals authorized to administer the testing and analysis.

24 (b) If a person for religious or medical reasons cannot be subjected to blood tests, the 25 person may file an affidavit with the division of motor vehicles stating the reasons why he or she 26 cannot be required to take blood tests, and a notation to this effect shall be made on his or her 27 license. If that person is asked to submit to chemical tests as provided under this chapter, the 28 person shall only be required to submit to chemical tests of his or her breath or urine. When a 29 person is requested to submit to blood tests, only a physician or registered nurse or a medical 30 technician certified under regulations promulgated by the director of the department of health 31 may withdraw blood for the purpose of determining the alcoholic content in it. This limitation 32 shall not apply to the taking of breath or urine specimens. The person tested shall be permitted to 33 have a physician of his or her own choosing and at his or her own expense administer chemical 34 tests of his or her breath, blood, and/or urine in addition to the tests administered at the direction

1 of a law enforcement officer. If a person having been placed under arrest refuses upon the request 2 of a law enforcement officer to submit to the tests, as provided in section 31-27-2, none shall be 3 given, but a judge of the traffic tribunal or district court judge, upon receipt of a report of a law 4 enforcement officer: that he or she had reasonable grounds to believe the arrested person had 5 been driving a motor vehicle within this state under the influence of intoxicating liquor, toluene, or any controlled substance, as defined in chapter 28 of title 21, or any combination of these; that 6 7 the person had been informed of his or her rights in accordance with section 31-27-3; that the 8 person had been informed of the penalties incurred as a result of noncompliance with this section; 9 and that the person had refused to submit to the tests upon the request of a law enforcement 10 officer; shall promptly order that the person's operator's license or privilege to operate a motor 11 vehicle in this state be immediately suspended and that the person's license be surrendered within 12 five (5) days of notice of suspension. A traffic tribunal judge or a district court judge pursuant to 13 the terms of subsection (c) of this section shall order as follows:

(1) Impose for the first violation a fine in the amount of two hundred dollars (\$200) to five hundred dollars (\$500) and shall order the person to perform ten (10) to sixty (60) hours of public community restitution. The person's driving license in this state shall be suspended for a period of six (6) months to one year. The traffic tribunal judge shall require attendance at a special course on driving while intoxicated or under the influence of a controlled substance and/or alcohol or drug treatment for the individual.

(2) (2) Every person convicted for a second violation within a five (5) twenty-five (25) year period shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, shall be imprisoned for not more than six (6) months and shall pay a fine in the amount of six hundred dollars (\$600) to one thousand dollars (\$1,000), order the person to perform sixty (60) to one hundred (100) hours of public community restitution, and the person's driving license in this state shall be suspended for a period of one year to two (2) years. The judge shall require alcohol and/or drug treatment for the individual.

(3) Every person convicted for a third or subsequent violation within a five (5) twenty-26 27 five (25) year period shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be imprisoned for not more than 28 one year, fined eight hundred dollars (\$800) to one thousand dollars (\$1,000), order the person to 29 perform not less than one hundred (100) hours of public community restitution, and the person's 30 operator's license in this state shall be suspended for a period of two (2) years to five (5) years. 31 The judge shall require alcohol or drug treatment for the individual. Provided, that prior to the 32 reinstatement of a license to a person charged with a third or subsequent violation within a three 33 (3) year period, a hearing shall be held before a judge. At the hearing the judge shall review the 34 person's driving record, his or her employment history, family background, and any other

pertinent factors that would indicate that the person has demonstrated behavior which warrants
 the reinstatement of his or her license.

3 (4) For purposes of determining the period of license suspension, a prior violation shall
4 constitute any charge brought and sustained under the provisions of this section or section 31-275 2.

6 (5) In addition to any other fines, a highway safety assessment of five hundred dollars 7 (\$500) shall be paid by any person found in violation of this section, the assessment to be 8 deposited into the general fund. The assessment provided for by this subsection shall be collected 9 from a violator before any other fines authorized by this section.

(6) In addition to any other fines and highway safety assessments, a two hundred dollar
(\$200) assessment shall be paid by any person found in violation of this section to support the
department of health's chemical testing programs outlined in section 31-27-2(4), which shall be
deposited as general revenues, not restricted receipts.

(7) No fines, suspensions, assessments, alcohol or drug treatment programs, course on
 driving while intoxicated or under the influence of a controlled substance, or public community
 restitution provided for under this section, can be suspended.

17 (c) Upon suspending or refusing to issue a license or permit as provided in subsection (a) 18 of this section, the traffic tribunal or district court shall immediately notify the person involved in 19 writing, and upon his or her request, within fifteen (15) days shall afford the person an 20 opportunity for a hearing as early as practical upon receipt of a request in writing. Upon a hearing 21 the judge may administer oaths and may issue subpoenas for the attendance of witnesses and the 22 production of relevant books and papers. If the judge finds after the hearing that: (1) the law enforcement officer making the sworn report had reasonable grounds to believe that the arrested 23 24 person had been driving a motor vehicle within this state while under the influence of intoxicating 25 liquor, toluene, or any controlled substance, as defined in chapter 28 of title 21, or any 26 combination of these; (2) the person while under arrest refused to submit to the tests upon the 27 request of a law enforcement officer; (3) the person had been informed of his or her rights in 28 accordance with section 31-27-3; and (4) the person had been informed of the penalties incurred 29 as a result of noncompliance with this section; the judge shall sustain the violation. The judge 30 shall then impose the penalties set forth in subsection (b) of this section. Action by the judge must 31 be taken within seven (7) days after the hearing, or it shall be presumed that the judge has refused 32 to issue his or her order of suspension.

(d) For the purposes of this section, any test of a sample of blood, breath, or urine for the
 presence of alcohol which relies in whole or in part upon the principle of infrared light absorption

- 1 is considered a chemical test.
- 2 (e) If any provision of this section or the application of any provision shall for any 3 reason be judged invalid, the judgment shall not affect, impair, or invalidate the remainder of the 4 section, but shall be confined in this effect to the provisions or application directly involved in the 5 controversy giving rise to the judgment.
- 6 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION

BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

OF

AN ACT

RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES - MOTOR VEHICLE OFFENSES

- 1 This act would increase the penalties for driving under the influence of liquor or drugs
- 2 and refusal to submit to a chemical test.
- 3 This act would take effect upon passage.

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