

2020 -- H 7026

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2020

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A N A C T

RELATING TO PUBLIC UTILITIES AND CARRIERS - 911 EMERGENCY TELEPHONE
NUMBER ACT

Introduced By: Representatives Lombardi, Hull, Walsh, and Lyle

Date Introduced: January 09, 2020

Referred To: House Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 39-21.1-16 of the General Laws in Chapter 39-21.1 entitled "911
2 Emergency Telephone Number Act" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **39-21.1-16. Providing false information.**

4 (a) No person shall call or otherwise cause the number nine-one-one (911) to be called
5 for the purpose of knowingly making a false alarm or complaint or reporting false information
6 which could result in the dispatch of emergency services from any public agency as defined in §
7 39-21.1-3(6) of this chapter. Any person violating the provisions of this section, upon conviction,
8 shall be guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars
9 (\$1,000) or imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year or both.

10 (b) Any person who reports, or causes any report to be made, to any city, town, state
11 department, district, agency, division, commission, or board, that an "emergency" exists, who
12 knows that the report is false, and who knows or should know that the response to the report is
13 likely to cause death or serious bodily injury, and serious bodily injury or death is sustained by
14 any person as a result of the false report, is guilty of a felony, and upon conviction shall be
15 punished by imprisonment for not less than sixteen (16) months, nor more than three (3) years, or
16 by a fine of not more than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000), or both.

17 (c) "Emergency" as used in this section means any condition that results in, or could
18 result in, the response of a public official in an authorized emergency vehicle, aircraft, or vessel.

1 any condition that jeopardizes or could jeopardize public safety and results in, or could result in,
2 the evacuation of any area, building, structure, vehicle, or of any other place that any individual
3 may enter, or any situation that results in or could result in activation of the Rhode Island
4 America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response Plan (Amber Alert/Senior Citizen Alert)
5 pursuant to §§ 42-28-3.1 and 42-28-3.3. An activation or possible activation of the Rhode Island
6 America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response Plan (Amber Alert/Senior Citizen Alert)
7 pursuant to §§ 42-28-3.1 and 42-28-3.3 shall not constitute an "emergency" for purposes of this
8 section if it occurs as the result of a report made or caused to be made by a parent, guardian, or
9 lawful custodian of a child or senior citizen that is based on a good faith belief that the child or
10 the senior citizen are missing.

11 (d) Nothing in this section precludes punishment for the conduct described in subsection
12 (a) or (b) of this section under any other provision of the general law providing for greater
13 punishment for that conduct.

14 (e) Any individual convicted of violating this section, based upon a report that resulted in
15 an emergency response, is liable to the city, town, state department, district, agency, division,
16 commission, board or public agency for the reasonable costs of the emergency response by that
17 public agency.

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

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

A N A C T

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1 This act would make knowingly filing a false alarm or reporting false information using
2 the 911 emergency telephone number a felony when the individual knows the report is false and
3 knows or should know that the emergency response is likely to and does cause death or serious
4 bodily injury as a result of the report. This act would also make any individual convicted of filing
5 such a false alarm, resulting in an emergency response, liable to a public agency for the
6 reasonable costs of the emergency response.

7 This act would take effect upon passage.

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