

2026 -- H 7114

LC003216

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS

Introduced By: Representatives Ackerman, Shekarchi, McNamara, Boylan, Finkelman,
Kazarian, Kennedy, Donovan, J. Brien, and Newberry

Date Introduced: January 15, 2026

Referred To: House Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

SECTION 1. Chapter 16-21 of the General Laws entitled "Health and Safety of Pupils" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

16-21-44. Bullying -- Directed community service.

(a) This section shall establish a form of restorative justice designed to address acts of bullying (the "action") in and around schools that are based on religious beliefs, sexual orientation, or ethnicity, in a manner which provides a suitable sanction for the action but also promotes learning, knowledge, and insight to deter a student from engaging in future acts of bullying.

(b) As used in this section, the term "bullying" has the same meaning as "bullying" and "cyberbullying" as defined in § 16-21-33.

(c) A student who commits an act or acts of bullying which is based upon or related to the religious beliefs, sexual orientation, or ethnicity of the person subject to the bullying, may, in addition to any other penalties provided by law, be required to perform up to ten (10) hours of directed community service in a setting and manner to both deter a student from engaging in future acts of bullying, and also to promote learning, knowledge, and insight. This community service may be imposed by a juvenile hearing board, or a school administration, or any combination thereof. Directed community service imposed by a school administration or juvenile hearing board shall not be deemed a criminal penalty.

(d) Directed community service shall be tailored to the bullying action. By way of illustration only, and without imposing any limitations, for a student who has bullied a student

1 based upon the student's Jewish faith or heritage, directed community service pursuant to this
2 section could be performed at a Holocaust museum.

3 (e) Any community service imposed pursuant to the provisions of this section shall need
4 to be completed within three (3) months from the date of imposition.

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

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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- 1 This act would provide a form of restorative justice, designed to address incidents of
- 2 bullying in and around schools, that is based on religious beliefs, sexual orientation, or ethnicity,
- 3 by utilizing directed community service tailored to the bullying action.
- 4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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