2026 -- H 8094

S T A T E   O F   R H O D E   I S L A N D

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

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A N   A C T

RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES -- MISCELLANEOUS RULES

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1   SECTION 1. Section 31-22-22.1 of the General Laws in Chapter 31-22 entitled

2 "Miscellaneous Rules" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3   **31-22-22.1. Child passenger protection — Warnings of hazard and risk.**

4   (a) All law enforcement officers in this state ~~are authorized to~~ may provide a verbal warning

5 to any person who ~~shall be~~ is deemed to have left a child under the age of seven (7) unattended in

6 a motor vehicle. The warning shall ~~apprise~~ inform the offending person of the dangers of this

7 practice including, but not limited to, the risk of kidnapping and/or abduction, and the dangers

8 which may result from the accumulation of excessive temperatures within the motor vehicle.

9   (b) ~~No fine or sanction shall be imposed for a violation of this section, other than a verbal~~

10 ~~warning, and no record of any kind shall be maintained of the warning.~~ Nothing in this section shall

11 preclude prosecution under any applicable criminal law for acts arising from leaving a child

12 unattended in a motor vehicle that constitute a criminal offense. A violation of this section may

13 result in criminal penalties consistent with such laws.

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

EXPLANATION

BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

OF

A N   A C T

RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES -- MISCELLANEOUS RULES

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1   This act would restore law enforcement discretion, allowing officers to issue a verbal

2   warning when appropriate or pursue misdemeanor or felony charges in more egregious cases where

3   a child is left unattended in a motor vehicle.

4   This act would take effect upon passage.

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