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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

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A N A C T

RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES -- REGISTRATION OF VEHICLES

Introduced By: Representatives J. Brien, Baginski, and Chippendale

Date Introduced: May 01, 2026

Referred To: House State Government & Elections

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 31-3-5 of the General Laws in Chapter 31-3 entitled "Registration of  
2 Vehicles" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **31-3-5. Grounds for refusal of registration.**

4 The division of motor vehicles shall refuse registration or any transfer of registration upon  
5 any of the following grounds:

6 (1) That the application contains any false or fraudulent statement, or that the applicant has  
7 failed to furnish required information, or reasonable additional information requested by the  
8 division of motor vehicles, or that the applicant is not entitled to the issuance of registration of the  
9 vehicle under chapters 3 — 9 of this title;

10 (2) That the vehicle is mechanically unfit or unsafe to be operated upon the highways;

11 (3) That the division of motor vehicles has reasonable ground to believe that the vehicle is  
12 a stolen or embezzled vehicle, or that the granting of registration would constitute a fraud against  
13 the rightful owner;

14 (4) That the registration of the vehicle stands suspended or revoked for any reason as  
15 provided in the motor vehicle laws of this state;

16 (5) That the vehicle has been reported by any city or town to the division of motor vehicles  
17 as having unpaid fines in the aggregate amount of two hundred dollars (\$200) or more, including  
18 any and all interest, penalties, or other monetary amount that may be imposed for failure to pay the  
19 fines by a specified date; provided, the registration shall be issued upon presentation of proof of

1 payment of the outstanding fines, including any and all interest, penalties, or other monetary  
2 amount owed to the cities or towns reporting the unpaid fines. When the division of motor vehicles  
3 denies a registration to any person pursuant to this subsection, the city or town requesting the denial  
4 of registration shall add a five-dollar (\$5.00) fee to the aggregate value of the sum of the fines and,  
5 upon payment, shall transmit the fee to the division of motor vehicles. The provisions of this  
6 subsection shall not apply to any vehicle owned by a rental company, as defined in § 31-34.1-1;

7 (6) That the vehicle does not comply with regulations promulgated pursuant to § 23-23-  
8 5(18);

9 (7) That the vehicle does not comply with the provisions of chapter 47.1 of this title and  
10 any rules and regulations promulgated under that chapter;

11 (8) That a commercial motor vehicle is being operated by a commercial motor carrier that  
12 has been prohibited from operating in interstate commerce by a federal agency with authority to do  
13 so under federal law;

14 (9) That the registered owner of a vehicle failed to pay the required toll amounts,  
15 administrative fees, and fines as prescribed in § 24-12-37; or

16 (10) That the vehicle is a “Kei car” or “Kei truck” and is not in compliance with chapter  
17 19.8 of title 31. ~~Provided, however, that the registrant of any “Kei car” or “Kei truck” which was~~  
18 ~~validly registered prior to June 1, 2024, shall not be denied renewal of that registration based solely~~  
19 ~~on the vehicle type; and further, provided that, any such registrations shall not be permitted to be~~  
20 ~~transferred. Every person lawfully operating a “Kei car” or “Kei truck” shall have the right to use~~  
21 ~~the public highways in the state including any state highway, through highway, limited access~~  
22 ~~highway or public highway or roadway with a posted speed limit of thirty five miles per hour (35~~  
23 ~~m.p.h.) or less. Nothing in this subsection, however, shall be construed to prohibit a “Kei car” or~~  
24 ~~“Kei truck” from crossing a public highway at an intersection where the public highway to be~~  
25 ~~crossed has a posted speed limit between thirty five miles per hour (35 m.p.h.) and forty five miles~~  
26 ~~per hour (45 m.p.h.); provided the public highway the “Kei car” or “Kei truck” is traveling on and~~  
27 ~~the public highway the “Kei car” or “Kei truck” is crossing the intersection toward both have a~~  
28 ~~speed limit no higher than thirty five miles per hour (35 m.p.h.) and the intersection is controlled~~  
29 ~~by traffic signals or stop signs.~~

30 SECTION 2. Title 31 of the General Laws entitled "MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES"  
31 is hereby amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

32 CHAPTER 19.8

33 KEI CAR OR KEI TRUCK

34 **31-19.8-1. Kei car or Kei truck.**

1           (a) A Kei car or Kei truck as defined in § 31-1-3, may be operated upon any public way  
2 provided such vehicle is registered in accordance with the provisions of this chapter, complies with  
3 all operational requirements pursuant to this chapter, and displays the registration number as  
4 provided in § 31-3-10. Kei cars and Kei trucks shall be subject to inspection as required by chapter  
5 38 of this title. Every person lawfully operating a Kei car or Kei truck shall have the right to use  
6 the public highways in the state, including any state highway, through highway, limited access  
7 highway or public highway or roadway with a posted speed limit of thirty-five miles per hour (35  
8 m.p.h.) or less. No Kei car or Kei truck shall operate on any state highway, through highway,  
9 limited access highway or public highway or roadway with a speed limit greater than thirty-five  
10 miles per hour (35 m.p.h.)

11           (b) Kei cars or Kei trucks shall be subject to the traffic laws and regulations of the state  
12 and the provisions of this section.

13           (c) Nothing in subsection (a) of this section shall be construed to prohibit a Kei car or Kei  
14 truck from crossing a public highway at an intersection where the public highway to be crossed has  
15 a posted speed limit between thirty-five miles per hour (35 m.p.h.) and forty-five miles per hour  
16 (45 m.p.h.), provided the public highway the Kei car or Kei truck is traveling on and the public  
17 highway the Kei car or Kei truck is crossing the intersection toward both have a speed limit no  
18 higher than thirty-five miles per hour (35 m.p.h.) and the intersection is controlled by traffic signals  
19 or stop signs.

20           (d) A municipality may, by ordinance, prohibit the operation of Kei cars and Kei trucks on  
21 a laned roadway or local highway or a portion of a highway within its jurisdiction and under its  
22 control, regardless of posted speeds, where it finds that use of the highway or a particular portion  
23 of the highway by the Kei car or Kei truck would represent an unreasonable risk of death or serious  
24 injury to occupants of the Kei car or Kei truck as a result of general traffic conditions which shall  
25 include, but not be limited to, excessive speeds of other vehicles, traffic volumes, use of the  
26 highway by heavy trucks or other large vehicles or if the established speed limit on the highway  
27 increases above thirty-five miles per hour (35 m.p.h.) beyond the point where a Kei car or Kei truck  
28 could safely exit the highway. The municipality shall post signs where necessary to provide notice  
29 to the public of such prohibited access.

30           (e) The director of the division of motor vehicles is authorized to promulgate rules and  
31 regulations necessary to implement the provisions of this chapter.

32           SECTION 3. 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 remove the vehicle registration restriction for Kei cars and Kei trucks. It
- 2 would also spell out the restrictions on the Kei vehicles in order to be operated on public highways
- 3 in the state.
- 4           This act would take effect upon passage.

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