

**2026 -- S 2186**

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LC003640

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**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 -- PARKING FACILITIES AND  
PRIVILEGES**

Introduced By: Senators DiMario, Gu, Lauria, Britto, Sosnowski, Felag, Bissaillon,  
Murray, Ujifusa, and Vargas

Date Introduced: January 16, 2026

Referred To: Senate Special Legislation and Veterans Affairs

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1        SECTION 1. Section 31-28-7 of the General Laws in Chapter 31-28 entitled "Parking  
2        Facilities and Privileges" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3        **31-28-7. Motor vehicle plates for persons with disabilities — Entitlement —**  
4        **Designated parking spaces — Violations.**

5                (a) Persons, as defined in subsection (h) of this section, upon application and proof of  
6        permanent or long-term disability to the division of motor vehicles, shall be issued ~~one~~ up to two  
7        (2) motor vehicle disability parking privilege ~~placard~~ placards or in the case of a motorcycle, one  
8        motor vehicle sticker, of blue which shall be imprinted with the white international symbol of  
9        access, certificate number, the words "Rhode Island Disability Parking Permit" and shall bear the  
10      expiration date upon its face. A placard or motorcycle sticker issued to a person whose disability is  
11      temporary shall be substantially similar to that issued to a person with a permanent or long term  
12      disability. The temporary placard, however, shall be a red placard with a white international symbol  
13      of access, certificate number, the words "Rhode Island Disability Parking Permit" and shall bear  
14      the expiration dates upon its face. A preliminary placard shall be similar to that issued to a person  
15      with a permanent, long-term, or temporary disability. The preliminary placard shall be effective for  
16      twenty-one (21) days, and may be issued by an applicant's licensed physician, if in the medical  
17      provider's opinion the applicant's medical condition merits the issuance of a preliminary placard  
18      while the division considers the applicant's qualifications for any type of disability parking permit.

1 The preliminary placard shall be an orange placard with a white international symbol of access,  
2 certificate number, the words "Rhode Island Disability Parking Permit" and shall bear the  
3 expiration date upon its face and shall be displayed on the dashboard of the vehicle in a manner  
4 that it is clearly visible from the front. The division of motor vehicles shall promulgate rules  
5 governing the issuance and use of preliminary placards. Applicants shall not be charged any fee  
6 associated with the issuance of a preliminary placard. Physicians submitting false information to  
7 the division of motor vehicles to obtain a preliminary placard on anyone's behalf may be subject  
8 to the penalties set forth in § 11-18-1.3. Persons issued a placard or motorcycle sticker pursuant to  
9 this section shall be entitled to the immunities of §§ 31-28-4 and 31-28-6. The placard shall conform  
10 to the Uniform Parking System for Disabled Drivers standard issued by the United States  
11 Department of Transportation. If an application for a placard or motorcycle sticker is denied, the  
12 division of motor vehicles shall promptly notify the applicant in writing, stating the specific  
13 reason(s) for the denial, and advising the applicant of the procedures for requesting a hearing to  
14 appeal the denial. Prior to the appeal hearing, the applicant shall be provided with any and all  
15 documents relied upon by the division in denying the application. If an application contains a  
16 physician certification that the applicant is sufficiently disabled to require a placard or motorcycle  
17 sticker, and the division has not provided specific reasons in its denial letter to the applicant, the  
18 hearing officer shall summarily order that a placard or motorcycle sticker be provided to the  
19 applicant. At all other hearings of application denials where a physician certification has been  
20 provided, the division shall bear the burden of proof that the individual is not entitled to a placard  
21 or motorcycle sticker pursuant to this chapter.

22 (b) A placard issued pursuant to this section shall be portable and used only when the  
23 person is being transported. The placard is to be hung from the rear view mirror so as to be seen  
24 through the front or rear windshield of the motor vehicle. A placard may be issued to a person with  
25 a disability who does not own a motor vehicle, to be used only when he or she is being transported.  
26 A motorcycle sticker issued pursuant to this section shall not be portable and shall be affixed to the  
27 rear plate of the motorcycle.

28 (c)(1) The certificate of entitlement to the placard or motorcycle sticker shall be renewed  
29 every six (6) years for individuals with a long-term disability, as defined in subsection (d) of this  
30 section, and the renewal application shall require a physician's certification that the condition has  
31 not changed since the previous approval, and six (6) years for individuals with a permanent  
32 disability as defined in subsection (h) of this section, in accordance with a schedule prepared by  
33 the division of motor vehicles that uses the last name of an individual to determine the month of  
34 renewal. If an application or subsequent renewal is accompanied by a physician's certification that

1 the applicant's condition is a chronic, permanent impairment and that application is approved, then  
2 any subsequent renewal shall be authorized upon receipt of a notarized affidavit from the applicant  
3 or applicant's, guardian or legal representative or a certificate from the applicant's physician that  
4 his or her condition has not changed since the previous approval.

5 (2) The certificate of entitlement to the placard or motorcycle sticker shall be covered with  
6 plastic or similar material. The applicant shall, upon timely renewal, receive a sticker bearing the  
7 expiration date of the certificate of entitlement to be affixed across the expiration date of the  
8 disability parking privilege placard or in the case of a motorcycle the applicant shall receive a new  
9 motorcycle sticker. The division of motor vehicles shall establish rules and regulations allowing  
10 for the renewal of the certificates of entitlement by mail.

11 (3) Whenever the division of motor vehicles proposes to suspend, revoke or fail to renew  
12 the certificate of entitlement for noncompliance with the requirements of this section or for  
13 violation of subsection (h) of this section, the individual shall first be entitled to a hearing before  
14 the division of motor vehicles to contest the proposed action. At the hearing, the division of motor  
15 vehicles shall bear the burden of proof that the individual is not entitled to the placard or motorcycle  
16 sticker pursuant to this chapter. There shall be no renewal fee charged for the placards or  
17 motorcycle sticker. The division of motor vehicles shall be authorized to issue a temporary  
18 disability parking privilege placard or motorcycle sticker immediately upon receipt of an  
19 application for individuals with a temporary impairment, as defined in subsection (h) of this section.  
20 A temporary placard or motorcycle sticker shall be valid for sixty (60) days from the date of  
21 issuance. Temporary placards or motorcycle stickers may be renewed for a period of one year or  
22 less, as determined by the medical advisory board upon application if the disability persists. The  
23 division of motor vehicles shall subsequently review the applications in accordance with the  
24 procedures currently in effect as to applications from persons whose disability is long term. Any  
25 issuance which, after subsequent review, shall be found to be inappropriate shall be revoked and  
26 notice of the revocation shall be sent to the applicant.

27 (d) A person, other than a person with a disability, who for his or her own purposes uses  
28 the parking privilege placard, shall be fined five hundred dollars (\$500) for each violation. A person  
29 issued a special placard who uses the placard after expiration, or who shall allow unauthorized use  
30 of the disability parking placard or sticker, may be subject to immediate revocation of the use of  
31 the placard by the division of motor vehicles, and subject to a fine of five hundred dollars (\$500).

32 (e) Disability parking spaces shall be designated and identified by the posting of signs  
33 above ground level incorporating the international symbol of access of white on blue, and the words  
34 "Handicapped Parking," "Disability Parking," "Disabled Parking," or "Reserved Parking" at each

1 space, at both ends of a row or series of adjacent disability parking spaces, or at the entrance to a  
2 parking lot restricted to only disability parking.

3 (f) A person, other than a person issued a special placard or motorcycle sticker pursuant to  
4 this section, who parks a vehicle in a parking space designated for persons with disabilities, shall  
5 be fined: (1) one hundred dollars (\$100) for a first violation, (2) one hundred seventy-five dollars  
6 (\$175) for a second violation, and (3) three hundred twenty-five dollars (\$325) for a third or  
7 subsequent violation. The vehicle may be subject to towing at the owner's expense. Provided  
8 further, that it shall not be unlawful for a person to park a vehicle in a space designated for person  
9 with disabilities if that person is transporting a person who has been issued a special placard and is  
10 properly displaying the placard on the vehicle.

11 (g) Enforcement of the parking provisions of this section shall be enforced by the local or  
12 state authorities on public or private property when the location of the parking spaces is within the  
13 purview of the State Building Code, chapter 27.3 of title 23.

14 (h) Definitions. For the purpose of this section:

15 (1) "Disabled" or "disability" means a permanent or long-term impairment which prevents  
16 or impedes walking, which shall include but not be limited to: (i) an impairment which prevents  
17 walking and requires use of a wheelchair; (ii) an impairment which involuntarily causes difficulty  
18 or insecurity in walking or climbing stairs with or without the need to use braces, crutches, canes  
19 or artificial support; (iii) an impairment caused by amputation, arthritis, blindness (including legally  
20 blind), or orthopedic condition; (iv) an impairment in respiratory, circulatory, or neurological health  
21 which limits the person's walking capability; or (v) disabled veteran, pursuant to § 31-6-8 after  
22 certification of eligibility from the Veterans' Administration or other satisfactory documentation  
23 of eligibility is presented. Persons with disabilities may be capable of working or may be presently  
24 working.

25 (2) "Long-term disability" means an impairment which is potentially reversible or may  
26 improve with appropriate medical treatment. At the time of application and or renewal, the  
27 impairment should not be expected to improve prior to the expiration of the certification, to a point  
28 where the individual does not meet the provisions of subdivision (1) of this subsection.

29 (3) "Permanent disability" means an impairment which is non-reversible.

30 (4) "Temporary impairment" means an impairment which is expected to improve to a point  
31 where the individual does not meet the provisions of subdivision (1) of this subsection, within two  
32 (2) years of the application.

33 (i) The department of revenue shall inform each licensed driver of the certificate procedures  
34 and parking restrictions of this section and §§ 31-28-4 and 31-28-6, and a facsimile of the portable

1 placards and motorcycle stickers issued under this section shall be sent to the enforcing authority  
2 of each state, and each enforcing authority shall be informed of the parking restrictions of this  
3 section and §§ 31-28-4 and 31-28-6. Recipients of disability parking privilege placards shall also  
4 receive instructions on their use and the penalties for misuse, when the placard is initially issued.

5 (j) Any person who makes, manufactures, offers for sale or knowingly uses a counterfeit  
6 parking privilege placard shall be fined up to five hundred dollars (\$500) and/or forty (40) hours  
7 of community restitution.

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

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
A N A C T  
RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES -- PARKING FACILITIES AND  
PRIVILEGES

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- 1        This act would allow persons with disabilities to receive up to two (2) motor vehicle
- 2        disability parking privilege placards.
- 3        This act would take effect upon passage.

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