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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2014

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A N A C T

RELATING TO CRIMINAL OFFENSES -- CRIME AGAINST THE PUBLIC TRUST

Introduced By: Representatives Marcello, Nunes, Hearn, Fellela, and Serpa

Date Introduced: February 26, 2014

Referred To: House Judiciary

(Attorney General)

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 11 of the General Laws entitled "CRIMINAL OFFENSES" is hereby
2 amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 69

4 CRIMES AGAINST THE PUBLIC TRUST

5 **11-69-1. Definitions.** – (a) As used in this chapter:

6 (1) "Administrative proceeding" means any proceeding, other than a judicial proceeding,
7 the outcome of which is required to be based on a record or documentation prescribed by law, or
8 in which law or regulation is particularized in applications to individuals.

9 (2) "Approval" includes, but is not limited to, recommendation, failure to disapprove, or
10 another manifestation of favor or acquiescence.

11 (3) "Benefit" means gain or advantage, or anything regarded by the beneficiary as gain or
12 advantage, including benefit to any other person or entity in whose welfare he or she is interested,
13 but not an advantage promised generally to a group or class of voters as a consequence of public
14 measures which a candidate engages to support or oppose.

15 (4) "Disapproval" means and includes, but is not limited to, failure to approve, or any
16 other manifestation of disfavor or nonacquiescence.

17 (5) "Government" means and includes any branch, subdivision or agency of the state of
18 Rhode Island or any locality within.

19 (6) "Harm" means loss, disadvantage or injury, or anything so regarded by the person

1 affected, including loss, disadvantage or injury to any other person or entity in whose welfare he
2 or she is interested.

3 (7) "Official proceeding" means a proceeding heard or which may be heard before any
4 legislative, judicial, administrative or other governmental agency, or official authorized to take
5 evidence under oath, including any referee, hearing officer, commissioner, notary or other person
6 taking testimony or deposition in connection with any such proceeding;

7 (8) "Party official" means a person who holds an elective or appointive post in a political
8 party in the United States by virtue of which he or she directs or conducts, or participates in
9 directing or conducting party affairs at any level of responsibility.

10 (9) "Pecuniary benefit" means a benefit in the form of money, property, commercial
11 interests or anything else the primary significance of which is economic gain.

12 (10) "Public servant" means:

13 (i) Any full-time or part-time employee in the classified, nonclassified and unclassified
14 service of the state, or of any city or town employee within the state, any individual serving in
15 any appointed state or municipal position, any employee of any public or quasi-public state or
16 municipal board, commission or corporation, and any contractual employee of the state or any
17 city or town within the state;

18 (ii) Any officer or member of a state or municipal agency as defined in § 36-14-2(8) who
19 is appointed for a term of office specified by the constitution or a statute of this state, or a charter
20 or ordinance of any city or town, or who is appointed by or through the governing body or highest
21 official of state or municipal government;

22 (iii) Any person holding any elective public office pursuant to a general or special
23 election.

24 (11) "Services" means labor, professional service, transportation, telephone or other
25 public service, accommodation in hotels, restaurants or elsewhere, admission to exhibition, use of
26 vehicles or other movable property. Where compensation for service is ordinarily paid
27 immediately upon the rendering of such service, as in the case of hotels and restaurants, refusal to
28 pay or absconding without payment or offer to pay gives rise to a presumption that the service
29 was obtained by deception as to intention to pay.

30 (12) "Special influence" means power to influence though kinship, friendship or other
31 relationship, apart from merits of the transaction.

32 **11-69-2. Bribery in official and political matters. -- (a) It is unlawful for a public**
33 **servant to offer, confer, agree to confer upon another, solicit, accept or agree to accept from**
34 **another:**

1 (1) Any pecuniary benefit as consideration for the recipient's decision, opinion,
2 recommendation, vote or other exercise of discretion as a public servant or party official;

3 (2) Any benefit as consideration for the recipient's decision, vote, recommendation or
4 other exercise of official discretion in administrative or official proceeding; or

5 (3) Any benefit as consideration for a violation of a known legal duty as a public servant
6 or party official.

7 (b) Any person convicted of a violation of this section shall be guilty of a felony and
8 subject to imprisonment of up to ten (10) years, a fine of not more than ten thousand dollars
9 (\$10,000), or both.

10 (c) It is no defense to prosecution under this section that a person whom the actor sought
11 to influence was not qualified to act in the desired way whether because he or she had not yet
12 assumed the office, lacked jurisdiction, or for any other reason.

13 **11-69-3. Selling political endorsements – Special influence. --** (a) It shall be unlawful
14 for a public servant to:

15 (1) Solicit, receive, agree to receive, or agree that any political party or other person shall
16 receive, any pecuniary benefit as consideration for approval or disapproval of an appointment or
17 advancement in public service, or for approval or disapproval of any person or transaction for any
18 benefit conferred by a public servant or agency of government;

19 (2) Solicit, receive or agree to receive any pecuniary benefit as consideration for exerting
20 special influence upon a public servant or procuring another to do so; or

21 (3) Offer, confer or agree to confer any pecuniary benefit, receipt of which is in violation
22 of this section.

23 (b) Any person convicted of a violation of this section shall be guilty of a felony and
24 subject to imprisonment of up to ten (10) years, a fine of not more than ten thousand dollars
25 (\$10,000), or both.

26 **11-69-4. Speculating or wagering on official action or information. --** (a) It is
27 unlawful for a public servant, in contemplation of official action by himself or herself or by a
28 governmental unit with which he or she is associated, or in reliance on information to which he or
29 she has access in his or her official capacity and which has not been made public, he or she:

30 (1) Acquires a pecuniary interest in any property, transaction or enterprise which may be
31 affected by such information of official action;

32 (2) Speculates or wagers on the basis of such information or official action; or

33 (3) Aids another to do any of the foregoing.

34 (b) Any person convicted of a violation of this section shall be guilty of a felony and

1 subject to imprisonment of up to ten (10) years, a fine of not more than ten thousand dollars
2 (\$10,000), or both.

3 **11-69-5. Theft of honest services.** -- (a) A public servant commits theft of honest
4 services if, having control over the disposition of services of others, to which he or she is not
5 entitled, he or she knowingly diverts such services to his or her own benefit or to the benefit of
6 another not entitled thereto.

7 (b) Any person convicted of a violation of this section shall be guilty of a felony and
8 subject to imprisonment of up to ten (10) years, a fine of not more than one hundred fifty
9 thousand dollars (\$150,000), or both.

10 **11-69-6. Civil damages for engaging in illegal acts.** -- In addition to any criminal
11 penalties, a public servant convicted of a misdemeanor or felony under the laws of the United
12 States, the state of Rhode Island, or any other jurisdiction knowingly committed in his or her
13 official capacity shall be liable for the restitution of anything of value received by him or her in
14 the course of such violation. Action for recovery of amounts under this section shall be brought in
15 the superior court of any county in which any element of the crime occurred. The action shall be
16 brought in the name of the state by the attorney general for the benefit and use of the state.

17 SECTION 2. Section 12-12-17 of the General Laws in Chapter 12-12 entitled
18 "Indictments, Informations and Complaints" is hereby amended to read as follows:

19 **12-12-17. Statute of limitations.** -- (a) There shall be no statute of limitations for the
20 following offenses: treason against the state, any homicide, arson, first degree arson, second
21 degree arson, third degree arson, burglary, counterfeiting, forgery, robbery, rape, first degree
22 sexual assault, first degree child molestation sexual assault, second degree child molestation
23 sexual assault, bigamy, manufacturing, selling, distribution or possession with intent to
24 manufacture, sell or distribute a controlled substance under the Uniform Controlled Substance
25 Act, chapter 28 of title 21, or any other offense for which the maximum penalty provided is life
26 imprisonment.

27 (b) The statute of limitations for the following offenses shall be ten (10) years: larceny
28 under section 11-41-2 (receiving stolen goods), section 11-41-3 (embezzlement and fraudulent
29 conversion), section 11-41-4 (obtaining property by false pretenses or personation), section 11-
30 41-11 (embezzlement by bank officer or employee), section 11-41-12 (fraudulent conversion by
31 agent or factor), and section 11-41-13 (obtaining signature by false pretenses), or any larceny
32 which is punishable as a felony; any violation of chapter 7 of title 11 (bribery); any violation of
33 section 11-18-1 (giving false document to agent, employee, or public official); perjury; any
34 violation of chapter 42 of title 11 (threats and extortion); any violation of chapter 15 of title 7

1 (racketeer influenced and corrupt organizations); any violation of chapter 57 of title 11 (racketeer
2 violence); or any violation of chapter 36 of title 6 (antitrust law); [any violation of § 11-41-27](#)
3 [\(wrongful conversion by officer of state or municipal employee\)](#); or any violation of chapter 69 of
4 [title 11 \(Crimes Against the Public Trust\)](#).

5 (c) The statute of limitations for any other criminal offense shall be three (3) years unless
6 a longer statute of limitations is otherwise provided for in the general laws.

7 (d) Any person who participates in any offense, either as a principal accessory, or
8 conspirator shall be subject to the same statute of limitations as if the person had committed the
9 substantive offense.

10 (e) The statute of limitations for any violation of chapter 18.9 of title 23 (refuse
11 disposal), chapter 19 of title 23 (solid waste management corporation), chapter 19.1 of title 23
12 (hazardous waste management), chapter 12 of title 46 (water pollution), and chapter 13 of title 46
13 (public drinking water supply) shall be seven (7) years from the time that the facts constituting
14 the offense or violation shall have become known to law enforcement authorities, unless a longer
15 statute of limitations is otherwise provided for in the general laws.

16 SECTION 3. Section 36-10.1-2 of the General Laws in Chapter 36-10.1 entitled "Rhode
17 Island Public Employee Pension Revocation and Reduction Act" is hereby amended to read as
18 follows:

19 **36-10.1-2. Definitions.** -- (a) "Crime related to public office or public employment" shall
20 mean any of the following criminal offenses:

21 (1) The committing, aiding, or abetting of an embezzlement of public funds;

22 (2) The committing, aiding, or abetting of any felonious theft by a public officer or
23 employee from his or her employer;

24 (3) Bribery in connection with employment of a public officer or employee; and

25 (4) The committing of any felony by a public officer or employee ~~who, willfully and~~
26 ~~with the intent to defraud, realizes or obtains, or attempts to realize or obtain, a profit, gain, or~~
27 ~~advantage for himself or herself or for some other person~~ through the use or attempted use of the
28 power, rights, privileges, duties, or position of his or her public office or employment position.

29 (b) "Public official" or "public employee" shall mean any current or former state or
30 municipal elected official as defined in section 36-14-2(10), state or municipal appointed official
31 as defined in section 36-14-2(4), and any employee of state or local government, of boards,
32 commissions or agencies as defined in section 36-14-2(8)(i), (ii), who is otherwise entitled to
33 receive or who is receiving retirement benefits under this title, under title 16, under title 45, under
34 title 8, under chapter 30 of title 28, under chapter 43 of title 31, or under chapter 28 of title 42,

1 whether that person is acting on a permanent or temporary basis and whether or not compensated
2 on a full-time or part-time basis. For the purposes of this chapter, all these persons are deemed to
3 be engaged in public employment.

4 (c) As used in this chapter, the phrase "pleads guilty or nolo contendere" shall not
5 include any plea of nolo contendere which does not constitute a conviction by virtue of section
6 12-10-12 or 12-18-3.

7 (d) For purposes of this chapter, "domestic partner" shall be defined as a person who,
8 prior to the decedent's death, was in an exclusive, intimate and committed relationship with the
9 decedent, and who certifies by affidavit that their relationship met the following qualifications:

10 (1) Both partners were at least eighteen (18) years of age and were mentally competent
11 to contract;

12 (2) Neither partner was married to anyone else;

13 (3) Partners were not related by blood to a degree which would prohibit marriage in the
14 state of Rhode Island;

15 (4) Partners resided together and had resided together for at least one year at the time of
16 death; and

17 (5) Partners were financially interdependent as evidenced by at least two (2) of the
18 following:

19 (i) Domestic partnership agreement or relationship contract;

20 (ii) Joint mortgage or joint ownership of primary residence;

21 (iii) Two (2) of: (A) joint ownership of motor vehicle; (B) joint checking account; (C)
22 joint credit account; (D) joint lease; and/or

23 (iv) The domestic partner had been designated as a beneficiary for the decedent's will,
24 retirement contract or life insurance.

25 SECTION 4. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO CRIMINAL OFFENSES -- CRIME AGAINST THE PUBLIC TRUST

1 This act would create a new criminal chapter concerning crimes against the public trust.
2 It would also establish criminal penalties as well as civil damages for illegal trust offenses. It
3 would set a ten (10) year criminal statute of limitations and would provide for possible pension
4 revocation or reduction for any job-related felony.

5 This act would take effect upon passage.

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