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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2019

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A N A C T

RELATING TO PROBATE PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE -- RHODE ISLAND UNIFORM  
REAL PROPERTY TRANSFER ON DEATH ACT

Introduced By: Senator Dawn M. Euer

Date Introduced: February 13, 2019

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

(by request)

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 33 of the General Laws entitled "PROBATE PRACTICE AND  
2 PROCEDURE" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 4.1

4 UNIFORM REAL PROPERTY TRANSFER ON DEATH ACT

5 **33-4.1-1. Short title.**

6 This chapter may be known and cited as the "Uniform Real Property Transfer on Death  
7 Act".

8 **33-4.1-2. Definitions.**

9 As used in this chapter:

10 (1) "Beneficiary" means a person who receives property under a transfer on death deed.

11 (2) "Class gift" means a transfer to a group of persons who are classified by their  
12 relationship to one another or the transferor, and who are not individually named in the  
13 transferring document.

14 (3) "Designated beneficiary" means a person designated to receive property in a transfer  
15 on death deed.

16 (4) "Individual" means a natural person.

17 (5) (i) "Joint owner" means an individual who owns property concurrently with one or  
18 more other individuals with a right of survivorship.

1           (ii) "Joint owner" includes a joint tenant, owner of community property with a right of  
2 survivorship, and tenant by the entirety.

3           (iii) "Joint owner" does not include a tenant in common or owner of community property  
4 without a right of survivorship.

5           (6) "Natural person" means a human being.

6           (7) "Person" means an individual, corporation, business trust, estate, trust, partnership,  
7 limited liability company, association, joint venture, public corporation, government or  
8 governmental subdivision, agency, or instrumentality, or any other legal or commercial entity.

9           (8) "Property" means an interest in real property located in this state that is transferable  
10 on the death of the owner.

11           (9) "Transfer on death deed" means a deed authorized under this chapter.

12           (10) "Transferor" means an individual, in their individual capacity, who makes a transfer  
13 on death deed.

14           **33-4.1-3. Applicability.**

15           This chapter applies to a transfer on death deed made before, on, or after January 1, 2020,  
16 by a transferor dying on or after January 1, 2020.

17           **33-4.1-4. Nonexclusivity.**

18           This chapter does not affect any method of transferring property otherwise permitted  
19 under the law of this state.

20           **33-4.1-5. Transfer on death deed authorized.**

21           (a) An individual may transfer property to one or more named beneficiaries effective at  
22 the transferor's death by a transfer on death deed.

23           (b) A class gift may not be made by a transfer on death deed.

24           **33-4.1-6. Transfer on death deed revocable.**

25           A transfer on death deed is revocable even if the deed or another instrument contains a  
26 contrary provision.

27           **33-4.1-7. Transfer on death deed nontestamentary.**

28           A transfer on death deed is nontestamentary.

29           **33-4.1-8. Capacity of transferor.**

30           The capacity required to make or revoke a transfer on death deed is the same as that  
31 required to make a will.

32           **33-4.1-9. Requirements.**

33           A transfer on death deed shall:

34           (1) Contain the essential elements and formalities of a properly recordable inter vivos

1 deed;

2 (2) State that the transfer to the designated beneficiary is to occur at the transferor's death;

3 and

4 (3) Be recorded before the transferor's death in the public records in the city or town  
5 recorder's office where the property is located.

6 **33-4.1-10. Notice, delivery, acceptance, consideration not required.**

7 A transfer on death deed is effective without:

8 (1) Notice or delivery to or acceptance by the designated beneficiary during the  
9 transferor's life; or

10 (2) Consideration.

11 **33-4.1-11. Revocation by instrument authorized -- Revocation by act not permitted.**

12 (a) Subject to subsection (b) of this section, an instrument is effective to revoke a  
13 recorded transfer on death deed, or any part of it, only if the instrument:

14 (1) Is one of the following:

15 (i) A transfer on death deed that revokes the deed or part of the deed expressly or by  
16 inconsistency;

17 (ii) An instrument of revocation that expressly revokes the deed or part of the deed; or

18 (iii) An inter vivos deed that revokes the transfer on death deed or part of the deed  
19 expressly or by inconsistency; and

20 (2) Is acknowledged by the transferor after the acknowledgment of the deed being  
21 revoked and recorded in the public records in the office of the city or town recorder where the  
22 deed is recorded before the transferor's death.

23 (b) If a transfer on death deed is made by more than one transferor:

24 (1) Revocation by a transferor does not affect the deed as to the interest of another  
25 transferor; and

26 (2) A deed of joint owners is revoked only if it is revoked by all of the living joint  
27 owners.

28 (c) After a transfer on death deed is recorded, it may not be revoked by a revocatory act  
29 on the deed.

30 (d) This section does not limit the effect of an inter vivos transfer of the property.

31 (e) Property subject to a revocation of a transfer on death deed shall adeem, and  
32 nonademption statutes shall be inapplicable to the deed.

33 **33-4.1-12. Effect of transfer on death deed during transferor's life.**

34 During a transferor's life, a transfer on death deed does not:

1           (1) Affect an interest or right of the transferor or any other owner, including the right to  
2 transfer or encumber the property;

3           (2) Affect an interest or right of a transferee, even if the transferee has actual or  
4 constructive notice of the deed;

5           (3) Affect an interest or right of the transferor's secured or unsecured creditors or future  
6 creditors, even if they have actual or constructive notice of the deed;

7           (4) Affect the transferor's or designated beneficiary's eligibility for any form of public  
8 assistance;

9           (5) Create a legal or equitable interest in favor of the designated beneficiary; or

10          (6) Subject the property to claims or process of the designated beneficiary's creditors.

11          **33-4.1-13. Effect of transfer on death deed at transferor's death.**

12          (a) Except as otherwise provided in the transfer on death deed and chapter 1.1 of this title,  
13 on the death of the transferor, the following rules apply to property that is the subject of a transfer  
14 on death deed and owned by the transferor at death.

15           (1) Subject to subsection (2) of this section, the interests in the property are transferred to  
16 the designated beneficiaries in accordance with the deed.

17           (2) The interest of a designated beneficiary is contingent on the designated beneficiary  
18 surviving the transferor and the interest of a designated beneficiary that fails to survive the  
19 transferor lapses.

20           (3) Subject to subsection (4) of this section, concurrent interests are transferred to the  
21 beneficiaries in equal and undivided shares with no right of survivorship, unless otherwise  
22 specified in the transfer on death deed.

23           (4) If the transferor has identified two (2) or more designated beneficiaries to receive  
24 concurrent interests in the property, the share of one that lapses or fails for any reason is  
25 transferred to the other, or to the others in proportion to the interest of each in the remaining part  
26 of the property held concurrently.

27          (b) A beneficiary takes the property subject to all conveyances, encumbrances,  
28 assignments, contracts, mortgages, liens, and other interests to which the property is subject at the  
29 transferor's death. For purposes of this subsection, the recording of the transfer on death deed is  
30 considered to have occurred at the transferor's death.

31          (c) If a transferor is a joint owner and is:

32           (1) Survived by one or more other joint owners, the property that is the subject of a  
33 transfer on death deed belongs to the surviving joint owners with right of survivorship; or

34           (2) The last surviving joint owner, the transfer on death deed is effective.

1 (d) A transfer on death deed transfers property without covenant or warranty of title even  
2 if the deed contains a contrary provision.

3 (e) Following the death of the transferor, an affidavit shall be recorded in the office of the  
4 recorder of the city or town in which the affected property is located. Each affidavit shall:

5 (1) Contain a legal description of the real property that is affected;

6 (2) Reference the entry number and the book and page of the previously recorded transfer  
7 on death deed; and

8 (3) Have attached as an exhibit, a copy of the death certificate or other document issued  
9 by a governmental agency certifying the transferor's death.

10 **33-4.1-14. Disclaimer.**

11 A beneficiary may disclaim all or part of the beneficiary's interest.

12 **33-4.1-15. Liability for creditor claims and statutory allowances.**

13 (a) To the extent the transferor's probate estate is insufficient to satisfy an allowed claim  
14 against the estate or a statutory allowance to a surviving spouse or child, only the estate may  
15 enforce the liability against property transferred at the transferor's death by a transfer on death  
16 deed.

17 (b) If more than one property is transferred by one or more transfer on death deeds, the  
18 liability under subsection (a) of this section is apportioned among the properties in proportion to  
19 their net values at the transferor's death.

20 (c) A probate proceeding to enforce the liability under this section shall be commenced  
21 not later than twelve (12) months after the transferor's death.

22 (d) The estate may expressly waive the estate's claim against the property.

23 **33-4.1-16. Form of transfer on death deed.**

24 The following form may be used to create a transfer on death deed. The other sections of  
25 this chapter govern the effect of this or any other instrument used to create a transfer on death  
26 deed:

27 (front of form)

28 REVOCABLE TRANSFER ON DEATH DEED FORM

29 NOTICE TO OWNER -- You should carefully read all information on the other side of  
30 this form. You May Want to Consult a Lawyer Before Using This Form.

31 This form must be recorded before your death, or it will not be effective. The beneficiary  
32 must be a named person.

33 IDENTIFYING INFORMATION -- Owner or Owners Making This Deed:

34 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Printed name Mailing address  
2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 Printed name Mailing address  
4 Legal description of the property:  
5 \_\_\_\_\_

6 PRIMARY BENEFICIARY -- I designate the following beneficiary if the beneficiary  
7 survives me:

8 \_\_\_\_\_  
9 Printed name Mailing address, if available

10 ALTERNATE BENEFICIARY (Optional) -- If my primary beneficiary does not survive  
11 me, I designate the following alternate beneficiary if that beneficiary survives me:

12 \_\_\_\_\_  
13 Printed name Mailing address, if available

14 TRANSFER ON DEATH -- At my death, I transfer my interest in the described property  
15 to the beneficiaries as designated above. Before my death, I have the right to revoke this deed.

16 SIGNATURE OF OWNER OR OWNERS MAKING THIS DEED

17 \_\_\_\_\_ [(SEAL)]  
18 Signature Date

19 \_\_\_\_\_ [(SEAL)]  
20 Signature Date

21 ACKNOWLEDGMENT (insert acknowledgment for deed here)  
22 (back of form)

23 COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT THE USE OF THIS FORM Q. What does the  
24 Transfer on Death (TOD) deed do? A. When you die, this deed transfers the described property,  
25 subject to any liens or mortgages (or other encumbrances) on the property at your death. Probate  
26 is not required. The TOD deed has no effect until you die. You can revoke it at any time. You are  
27 also free to transfer the property to someone else during your lifetime. If you do not own any  
28 interest in the property when you die, this deed will have no effect. Q. How do I make a TOD  
29 deed? A. Complete this form. Have it acknowledged before a notary public or other individual  
30 authorized by law to take acknowledgments. Record the form in each city or town where any part  
31 of the property is located. The form has no effect unless it is acknowledged and recorded before  
32 your death. Q. Is the "legal description" of the property necessary? A. Yes. Q. How do I find the  
33 "legal description" of the property? A. This information may be on the deed you received when  
34 you became an owner of the property. This information may also be available in the office of the

1 city or town recorder where the property is located. If you are not absolutely sure, consult a  
2 lawyer. Q. Can I change my mind before I record the TOD deed? A. Yes. If you have not yet  
3 recorded the deed and want to change your mind, simply tear up or otherwise destroy the deed. Q.  
4 How do I "record" the TOD deed? A. Take the completed and acknowledged form to the office of  
5 the city or town recorder where the property is located. Follow the instructions given by the city  
6 or town recorder to make the form part of the official property records. If the property is in more  
7 than one city or town, you should record the deed in each city or town. Q. Can I later revoke the  
8 TOD deed if I change my mind? A. Yes. The TOD deed is revocable. No one, including the  
9 beneficiaries, can prevent you from revoking the deed. Q. How do I revoke the TOD deed after it  
10 is recorded? A. There are three (3) ways to revoke a recorded TOD deed: (1) Complete and  
11 acknowledge a revocation form, and record it in each city or town where the property is located.  
12 (2) Complete and acknowledge a new TOD deed that disposes of the same property, and record it  
13 in each city or town where the property is located. (3) Transfer the property to someone else  
14 during your lifetime by a recorded deed that expressly revokes the TOD deed. You may not  
15 revoke the TOD deed by will. Q. I am being pressured to complete this form. What should I do?  
16 A. Do not complete this form under pressure. Seek help from a trusted family member, a friend,  
17 or a lawyer. Q. Do I need to tell the beneficiaries about the TOD deed? A. No, but it is  
18 recommended. Secrecy can cause later complications and might make it easier for others to  
19 commit fraud. Q. If I sign a TOD deed and designate my two (2) children as beneficiaries, and  
20 one of them dies before me, does the interest of my child that dies before me pass to his or her  
21 children? A. No. Everything will go to your surviving child unless you record a new transfer on  
22 death deed to state otherwise. If you have questions regarding how to word a new transfer on  
23 death deed, you are encouraged to consult a lawyer. Q. I have other questions about this form.  
24 What should I do? A. This form is designed to fit some but not all situations. If you have other  
25 questions, you are encouraged to consult a lawyer.

26 **33-4.1-17. Optional form of revocation.**

27 The following form may be used to create an instrument of revocation under this chapter.  
28 The other sections of this chapter govern the effect of this or any other instrument used to revoke  
29 a transfer on death deed.

30 (front of form)

31 **FULL REVOCATION OF TRANSFER ON DEATH DEED**

32 NOTICE TO OWNER -- This revocation must be recorded before you die or it will not  
33 be effective. This revocation is effective only as to the interests in the property of owners who  
34 sign this revocation.

1 IDENTIFYING INFORMATION -- Owner or Owners of Property Making This Revocation:

2 \_\_\_\_\_  
3 Printed name Mailing address

4 \_\_\_\_\_  
5 Printed name Mailing address

6 Legal description of the property: \_\_\_\_\_  
7 \_\_\_\_\_

8 REVOCAATION -- I revoke all my previous transfers of this property by transfer on death  
9 deed.

10 SIGNATURE OF OWNER OR OWNERS MAKING THIS REVOCATION

11 \_\_\_\_\_ [(SEAL)]  
12 Signature Date

13 \_\_\_\_\_ [(SEAL)]  
14 Signature Date

15 ACKNOWLEDGMENT (insert acknowledgment here)  
16 (back of form)

17 COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT THE USE OF THIS FORM Q. How do I use this  
18 form to revoke a Transfer on Death (TOD) deed? A. Complete this form. Have it acknowledged  
19 before a notary public or other individual authorized to take acknowledgments. Record the form  
20 in the public records in the office of the city or town recorder where the property is located. The  
21 form must be acknowledged and recorded before your death or it has no effect. Q. How do I find  
22 the "legal description" of the property? A. This information may be on the TOD deed. It may also  
23 be available in the office of the city or town recorder where the property is located. If you are not  
24 absolutely sure, consult a lawyer. Q. How do I "record" the form? A. Take the completed and  
25 acknowledged form to the office of the city or town recorder where the property is located.  
26 Follow the instructions given by the city or town recorder to make the form part of the official  
27 property records. If the property is located in more than one city or town, you should record the  
28 form in each of those cities and towns. Q. I am being pressured to complete this form. What  
29 should I do? A. Do not complete this form under pressure. Seek help from a trusted family  
30 member, a friend, or a lawyer. Q. Can this form be used for a partial revocation of a previously  
31 filed TOD deed? A. No. This form is to be used for full revocation of a deed. In the case of a  
32 partial revocation, a new TOD deed must be filed. Q. I have other questions about this form.  
33 What should I do? A. This form is designed to fit some but not all situations. If you have other  
34 questions, consult a lawyer.



1           **33-4.1-18. Uniformity of application and construction.**

2           In applying and construing this uniform act, consideration must be given to the need to  
3 promote uniformity of the law with respect to its subject matter among the states that enact it.

4           **33-4.1-19. Relation to electronic signatures in global and national commerce act.**

5           This chapter modifies, limits, and supersedes the federal Electronic Signatures in Global  
6 and National Commerce Act, 15 U.S.C. § 7001, et seq., but does not modify, limit, or supersede §  
7 101(c) of that act, 15 U.S.C. § 7001(c), or authorize electronic delivery of any of the notices  
8 described in § 103(b) of that act, 15 U.S.C. § 7003(b).

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

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

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RELATING TO PROBATE PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE -- RHODE ISLAND UNIFORM  
REAL PROPERTY TRANSFER ON DEATH ACT

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1           This act would allow an owner or owners of real property to execute a deed that names  
2 one or more beneficiaries who will obtain title to the property at the owner's death without the  
3 necessity of probate

4           This act would take effect upon passage.

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