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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2020

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A N A C T

RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES -- REGISTRATION PLATES, LICENSE  
AND CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Introduced By: Representatives Shanley, Vella-Wilkinson, Marszalkowski, Kennedy,  
and Barros

Date Introduced: January 24, 2020

Referred To: House Corporations

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 31-2 of the General Laws entitled "Division of Motor Vehicles" is  
2 hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

3 **31-2-29. Undeliverable mail.**

4 The administrator of the division of motor vehicles shall, as soon as possible, deliver to  
5 the secretary of state's office, all division mail it had sent to its regulated motorists, pursuant to  
6 title 31 of the general laws, that is returned to it as undeliverable, by the United States Postal  
7 Service.

8 SECTION 2. Chapter 31-3 of the General Laws entitled "Registration of Vehicles" is  
9 hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

10 **31-3-10.1. Online issuance of motor vehicle's registration.**

11 All motor vehicle dealers, who sell new, as well as used vehicles are authorized to file  
12 online registration requests for the motor vehicles they have sold, so that no visit to the division  
13 shall be necessary. Upon the online submission of the division-required registration paperwork by  
14 the dealers, proof of the registration and the actual new license plates, if necessary, shall be  
15 mailed directly to the motor vehicle purchaser. No later than January 1, 2021, the division of  
16 motor vehicles shall promulgate rules and regulations it deems necessary to implement the motor  
17 vehicle dealership online process authorized herein. The division shall have the authority to  
18 determine which, if any, of the exclusively used motor vehicle dealers should be authorized to

1 [participate in the online registration program. The rules and regulations shall expressly replace](#)  
2 [the need for temporary dealer plates and expressly authorize the dealer to affix on the rear](#)  
3 [window of its sold vehicle, a division-approved notice, which may temporarily operate as a](#)  
4 [registration for the motor vehicles.](#)

5 SECTION 3. Section 31-3-28 of the General Laws in Chapter 31-3 entitled "Registration  
6 of Vehicles" is hereby amended to read as follows:

7 **31-3-28. Rules and regulations as to plates.**

8 (a) The administrator of the division of motor vehicles is authorized and empowered to  
9 make, alter, or amend, such rules and regulations that he or she may deem necessary, pertaining  
10 to the use, size, design, color scheme, and the material to be used in the manufacture of the  
11 number plates to be displayed on automobiles, motor trucks, trailers, semi-trailers, or other motor  
12 vehicles, except that at the next general issuance and each subsequent issuance. To promote  
13 safety and to facilitate the identification of registration plate letters and numerals at night, the  
14 department of revenue shall require that all registration plates shall be treated with special  
15 materials so as to make the background fully reflective and the letters and numerals on them  
16 readable at night for a minimum distance of one hundred feet (100') with other illumination. An  
17 additional fee of one dollar (\$1.00) shall be payable upon the initial issuance of the above  
18 described illuminated plates.

19 [\(b\) Notwithstanding any other provision of the general laws to the contrary, the division](#)  
20 [of motor vehicles shall adopt rules and regulations which create a new process, which authorizes](#)  
21 [persons to return, whenever necessary, their license plates through the mail, without the need to](#)  
22 [personally visit the registry, or any branch thereof. Persons shall have at least forty-five \(45\) days](#)  
23 [to return their license plates. The new license plate return process shall be fully operational no](#)  
24 [later than July 1, 2021.](#)

25 ~~(b)~~(c) All rules and regulations made under the provisions of this section shall, after  
26 being approved by the governor and published at least once in each county of the state, have the  
27 effect of law.

28 SECTION 4. Sections 31-10-30 and 31-10-32 of the General Laws in Chapter 31-10  
29 entitled "Operators' and Chauffeurs' Licenses" are hereby amended to read as follows:

30 **31-10-30. Expiration and renewal of licenses.**

31 Every operator's and chauffeur's first license to operate a motor vehicle shall be by the  
32 issuance of a temporary license for the period beginning at the date of issuance and expiring on  
33 the birthday of the licensee in the second year following the issuance of the temporary license.  
34 Every operator's and chauffeur's license issued after expiration of the temporary license shall

1 expire on the birthday of the licensee in the ~~fffh~~ tenth year following the issuance of the license,  
2 with the exception of any person seventy-five (75) years of age or older whose license shall  
3 expire on the birthday of the licensee in the ~~second~~ third year following the issuance of the  
4 license, and shall be renewable on or before expiration upon application and payment of the fee  
5 required by this chapter. The administrator of the division of motor vehicles, having good cause  
6 to believe the applicant for renewal is incompetent or otherwise not qualified, may require an  
7 examination of the applicant as upon an original application; provided, however, if the renewal  
8 applicant is applying for a commercial driver's license and is in possession of a valid medical  
9 examination certificate issued pursuant to federal motor carrier safety regulations 49 CFR 391.41-  
10 391.49 that applicant shall be deemed to be competent and qualified under this chapter. The  
11 administrator of the division of motor vehicles is authorized to adopt any regulations necessary to  
12 carry out the purposes of this section. Violations of this section are subject to fines enumerated in  
13 § 31-41.1-4.

14 **31-10-32. Notice of change of address or name.**

15 Whenever any person after applying for or receiving an operator's or chauffeur's license  
16 shall move from the address named in his or her application or in the license issued to him or her,  
17 or when the name of a licensee is changed by marriage or otherwise, that person shall within ten  
18 (10) days thereafter notify the division of motor vehicles in writing of his or her old and new  
19 addresses or of his or her former and new names and of the number of any license then held by  
20 him or her. Violations of this section are subject to fines enumerated in § 31-41.1-4. Upon receipt  
21 by the holder of an operator's chauffeur's license, written notice of their change of name and/or  
22 address and the required five dollar (\$5.00) fee, the division of motor vehicles shall mail to the  
23 operator, a new license containing the updated information.

24 SECTION 5. Chapter 31-15 of the General Laws entitled "Passing, Use of Lanes, and  
25 Rules of the Road" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

26 **31-15-4.1. Left lane travel restrictions.**

27 Only passenger motor vehicles and authorized emergency vehicles, as defined in § 31-1-  
28 3(c), are allowed to travel in the left lane of all non-local roads, except when making a left hand  
29 turn.

30 SECTION 6. 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 authorize online registration of vehicles sold by a dealership and would  
2 extend the term of an operator's license from five (5) to ten (10) years. It would also require the  
3 division of motor vehicles when mail it sends out to motorists is returned as undeliverable to  
4 forward such mail to the secretary of state's office. It would also allow licenses plates to be  
5 returned through the mail.

6           This act would take effect upon passage.

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