

2021 -- H 6179

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

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A N A C T

RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES – DIVISION OF MOTOR VEHICLES

Introduced By: Representative Thomas E. Noret

Date Introduced: March 26, 2021

Referred To: House State Government & Elections

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. Student transportation by out-of-state providers - Temporary authorization.**

4 (a) Notwithstanding any provisions of the general or public laws to the contrary, the Rhode
5 Island department of education (RIDE) may utilize student transportation drivers and/or student
6 transportation vehicles as provided in subsections (b) and (c) of this section for a period of up to
7 thirty (30) days when there is a shortage of available providers with drivers and for student
8 transportation vehicles to provide adequate service for the statewide school transportation system,
9 pursuant to chapters 21, 21.1, and 24 of title 16, and the provision of adequate service is prevented,
10 hindered, impaired, or otherwise delayed by:

11 (1) The termination, cancellation, rescission, nullification, or expiration of a contract or
12 agreement with a person or entity providing services in support of the statewide school
13 transportation system;

14 (2) A disaster, as defined in § 30-15-3, that has occurred, or the occurrence of which, or
15 the threat thereof, is imminent; or

16 (3) The occurrence of any other similar event that warrants the temporary relief provided
17 herein.

18 (b)(1) Pursuant to the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, RIDE may utilize student
19 transportation drivers currently licensed in Massachusetts or Connecticut to operate school buses,

1 as defined in § 31-1-3 (aa), provided:

2 (i) The student transportation driver possesses a current, valid Massachusetts or
3 Connecticut commercial driver's license with "P" and "S" endorsements and a current, valid
4 Massachusetts school bus certificate if licensed in Massachusetts;

5 (ii) RIDE shall verify with the assistance of the contracted bus vendor the licenses and
6 certificate required by subsection (b)(1)(i) of this section with the appropriate licensing authority;
7 and

8 (iii) The student transportation driver obtains a Rhode Island school bus certificate within
9 thirty (30) days after the date he or she begins operating school buses in Rhode Island.

10 (2) Pursuant to the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, RIDE may utilize student
11 transportation drivers currently licensed in Massachusetts or Connecticut to operate pupil
12 transportation vehicles, as defined in § 31-22.1-1, provided:

13 (i) The student transportation driver possesses:

14 (A) A current, valid Massachusetts driver's license and a current, valid Massachusetts
15 school pupil transport (7D) certificate; or

16 (B) A current, valid Connecticut driver's license with a "V" endorsement;

17 (ii) RIDE shall verify with the assistance of the contracted bus vendor the license and
18 certificate required by subsection (b)(2)(i) of this section with the appropriate licensing authority;
19 and

20 (iii) The student transportation driver obtains a Rhode Island pupil transportation certificate
21 within thirty (30) days after the date he or she begins operating pupil transportation vehicles in
22 Rhode Island.

23 (c) Pursuant to the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, RIDE may utilize school
24 buses, as defined in § 31-1-3 (aa), and pupil transportation vehicles, as defined in § 31-22.1-1,
25 currently registered in Massachusetts or Connecticut provided:

26 (1) Each school bus and pupil transportation vehicle has a current, valid Massachusetts or
27 Connecticut registration and inspection sticker;

28 (2) Each school bus is covered by an insurance policy meeting the requirements of § 31-
29 22-10.1;

30 (3) Each pupil transportation vehicle is covered by an insurance policy meeting the
31 requirements of § 39-14-18;

32 (4) RIDE has verified with the assistance of the contracted bus vendor the registration,
33 inspection sticker, and insurance required by subsections (c)(1), (c)(2), and (c)(3) of this section
34 with the appropriate registration authority; and

1 (5) Each school bus and pupil transportation vehicle is registered in Rhode Island within
2 thirty (30) days after the date it first transports school children in Rhode Island.

3 (d) Student transportation drivers authorized to operate vehicles by RIDE in compliance
4 with the provisions of this section shall only operate vehicles appropriate for their licensure.

5 SECTION 2. 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 allow RIDE to utilize Massachusetts and Connecticut licensed school bus
2 drivers to fulfill a shortage of Rhode Island bus drivers to meet all obligations of transportation of
3 students for a temporary period of time, up to thirty (30) days, following a disaster or other similar
4 event that warrants temporary relief.

5 This act would take effect upon passage.

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