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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 CRIMINAL OFFENSES -- DISORDERLY CONDUCT

Introduced By: Senator Tiara T. Mack

Date Introduced: March 18, 2021

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 11-45-1 of the General Laws in Chapter 11-45 entitled "Disorderly  
2 Conduct" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **11-45-1. Disorderly conduct.**

4 (a) A person commits disorderly conduct if he or she intentionally, knowingly, or  
5 recklessly:

6 (1) Engages in fighting or threatening, or in violent or tumultuous behavior;

7 (2) In a public place or near a private residence that he or she has no right to occupy,  
8 disturbs another person by making loud and unreasonable noise which under the circumstances  
9 would disturb a person of average sensibilities;

10 (3) Directs at another person in a public place offensive words which are likely to provoke  
11 a violent reaction on the part of the average person so addressed;

12 (4) Alone or with others, obstructs a highway, street, sidewalk, railway, waterway, building  
13 entrance, elevator, aisle, stairway, or hallway to which the public or a substantial group of the public  
14 has access or any other place ordinarily used for the passage of persons, vehicles, or conveyances;

15 (5) Engages in conduct which obstructs or interferes physically with a lawful meeting,  
16 procession, or gathering;

17 (6) Enters upon the property of another and for a lascivious purpose looks into an occupied  
18 dwelling or other building on the property through a window or other opening; or

19 (7) Who without the knowledge or consent of the individual, looks for a lascivious purpose

1 through a window, or any other opening into an area in which another would have a reasonable  
2 expectation of privacy, including, but not limited to, a restroom, locker room, shower, changing  
3 room, dressing room, bedroom, or any other such private area, notwithstanding any property rights  
4 the individual may have in the location in which the private area is located.

5 (8) [Deleted by P.L. 2008, ch. 183, § 1].

6 (b) Any person, including a police officer, may be a complainant for the purposes of  
7 instituting action for any violation of this section.

8 (c) Any person found guilty of the crime of disorderly conduct, pursuant to subsections  
9 (a)(6) or (a)(7) of this section or, any other subsection when the provisions of the domestic violence  
10 prevention act, chapter 29 of title 12 are applicable, shall be imprisoned for a term of not more than  
11 six (6) months, or fined not more than five hundred dollars (\$500), or both. Any person found guilty  
12 of the crime of disorderly conduct pursuant to subsections (a)(1) through (a)(5) of this section shall  
13 be fined no more than five hundred dollars (\$500).

14 (d) In no event shall subdivisions (a)(2) -- (5) of this section be construed to prevent lawful  
15 picketing or lawful demonstrations including, but not limited to, those relating to a labor dispute.

16 SECTION 2. Section 11-44-26 of the General Laws in Chapter 11-44 entitled "Trespass  
17 and Vandalism" is hereby amended to read as follows:

18 **11-44-26. Willful trespass -- Remaining on land after warning -- Exemption for**  
19 **tenants holding over.**

20 (a) Every person who willfully trespasses or, having no legitimate purpose for his or her  
21 presence, remains upon the land of another or upon the premises or curtilage of the domicile of any  
22 person legally entitled to the possession of that domicile, after having been forbidden to do so by  
23 the owner of the land or the owner's duly authorized agent or a person legally entitled to the  
24 possession of the premises, shall be punished for a first or second conviction by a fine not exceeding  
25 five hundred dollars (\$500) and for a third or subsequent conviction by a fine not exceeding one  
26 thousand dollars (\$1,000), or imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year, or both.

27 (b) This section shall not apply to tenants or occupants of residential premises who, having  
28 rightfully entered the premises at the commencement of the tenancy or occupancy, remain after  
29 that tenancy or occupancy has been or is alleged to have been terminated. The owner or landlord  
30 of the premises may recover possession only through appropriate civil proceedings.

31 (c) Where the provisions of The Domestic Violence Prevention Act, chapter 29 of title 12,  
32 are applicable, the penalties for violation of this section shall also include the penalties as provided  
33 in § 12-29-5.

34 SECTION 3. Section 11-41-20 of the General Laws in Chapter 11-41 entitled "Theft,

1 Embezzlement, False Pretenses, and Misappropriation" is hereby amended to read as follows:

2 **11-41-20. Shoplifting.**

3 (a) For the purpose of this section:

4 (1) "Conceal" means to place merchandise in such a manner that it is not visible through  
5 ordinary observation.

6 (2) "Full retail value" means the merchant's stated price of the merchandise.

7 (3) "Merchandise" means any items of tangible personal property offered for sale within a  
8 retail mercantile establishment.

9 (4) "Merchant" means an owner or operator of any retail mercantile establishment or any  
10 agent, employee, lessee, officer, or director of the owner or operator.

11 (5) "Premises of a retail mercantile establishment" includes the retail mercantile  
12 establishment, and common use areas in shopping centers, and all parking areas set aside by a  
13 merchant or on behalf of a merchant for the parking of vehicles for the convenience of the patrons  
14 of the retail mercantile establishment.

15 (6) "Retail mercantile establishment" means any place where merchandise is displayed,  
16 held, stored or offered for sale to the public.

17 (7) "Shopping cart" means those push carts of the type or types which are commonly  
18 provided by grocery stores, drug stores, or other retail mercantile establishments for the use of the  
19 public in transporting commodities on or from the premises of the retail mercantile establishment.

20 (b) Whoever shall engage in the following shall be guilty of the crime of shoplifting:

21 (1) Take possession of, carry away, transfer or cause to be carried away or transferred any  
22 merchandise displayed, held, stored, or offered for sale by a retail mercantile establishment with  
23 the intention of depriving the merchant of all or any part of the full retail value of the merchandise;

24 (2) Alter, transfer, or remove a label, price tag, marking, indicia of value or any other  
25 markings which aid in determining value affixed to any merchandise displayed, held, stored or  
26 offered for sale in a retail mercantile establishment and attempt to purchase or purchase the  
27 merchandise personally or in consort with another at less than the full retail value with the intention  
28 of depriving the merchant of all or any part of the full retail value of such merchandise;

29 (3) Transfer any merchandise displayed, held, stored or offered for sale in a retail  
30 mercantile establishment from one container to another in an attempt to purchase or purchase the  
31 merchandise personally or in consort with another at less than the full retail value with the intention  
32 of depriving the merchant of all or any part of the full retail value of the merchandise; or

33 (4) Remove a shopping cart from the premises of a retail mercantile establishment without  
34 the consent of the merchant given at the time of the removal with the intention of depriving the

1 merchant of the possession, use, or benefit of the cart.

2 (c) The fact that a person conceals upon his person, among his or her belongings, or upon  
3 the person or among the belongings of another merchandise displayed, held, stored or offered for  
4 sale in a retail mercantile establishment, for which he or she has not paid the full retail value, and  
5 the merchandise has been taken beyond the area within the retail mercantile establishment where  
6 payment for it is to be made, shall be prima facie evidence that the person has possessed, carried  
7 away, or transferred the merchandise with the intention of depriving the merchant of all or part of  
8 the full retail value of the merchandise without paying the full retail value of the merchandise.

9 (d) Any person convicted of the crime of shoplifting, first offense, shall be guilty of a  
10 ~~misdemeanor violation~~ and shall be punished by a fine of not less than fifty dollars (\$50.00) or two  
11 times the full retail value of the merchandise, whichever is greater, but not more than five hundred  
12 dollars (\$500), ~~or by imprisonment for not more than one year, or both~~; provided, that any person  
13 convicted of the crime of shoplifting, second offense, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall  
14 be punished by a fine of not less than one hundred dollars (\$100) or two (2) times the retail value  
15 of the merchandise, whichever is greater, but not more than one thousand dollars (\$1000); provided,  
16 further, that any person convicted of the crime of shoplifting merchandise with a retail value of  
17 over one hundred dollars (\$100) who has previously been convicted of shoplifting shall be guilty  
18 of a felony and shall be punished by a fine of not more than five thousand dollars (\$5,000), or by  
19 imprisonment of not more than five (5) years, or both.

20 (e) Any person convicted of a crime of shoplifting, first offense, in instances of property  
21 loss by the victim, said person shall be subject to the payment of restitution. Restitution shall be  
22 collected and distributed by an authorized supervisory authority.

23 SECTION 4. Section 12-7-3 of the General Laws in Chapter 12-7 entitled "Arrest" is  
24 hereby amended to read as follows:

25 **12-7-3. Arrest without warrant for misdemeanor or petty misdemeanor.**

26 A peace officer may, without a warrant, arrest a person if the officer has reasonable cause  
27 to believe that the person is committing or has committed a misdemeanor or a petty misdemeanor,  
28 and the officer has reasonable ground to believe that person cannot be arrested later or may cause  
29 injury to himself or herself or others or loss or damage to property unless immediately arrested. A  
30 police officer may arrest an individual charged with any violation of §§ 11-45-1 and 11-44-26.

31 SECTION 5. 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 -- DISORDERLY CONDUCT

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1           This act would amend the penalty provisions for disorderly conduct that provide the  
2 possibility of incarceration, with certain exceptions, and make the offense punishable by a fine of  
3 up to five hundred dollars (\$500). It would also amend the penalty provisions for willful trespass  
4 and would make a first or second offense punishable by a fine not exceeding five hundred dollars  
5 (\$500). This act would also amend the penalty provisions for shoplifting and would make a first  
6 offense a civil violation punishable by fines only.

7           This act would take effect upon passage.

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