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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

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A N A C T

RELATING TO COMMERCIAL LAW -- GENERAL REGULATORY PROVISIONS --  
DECEPTIVE TRADE PRACTICES

Introduced By: Representatives Shallcross Smith, Chippendale, Casimiro, Craven,  
Nardone, Fogarty, Ajello, Fellela, Hull, and Alzate

Date Introduced: January 24, 2025

Referred To: House Judiciary

(General Treasurer)

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 6-13.1-20 of the General Laws in Chapter 6-13.1 entitled "Deceptive  
2 Trade Practices" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **6-13.1-20. Credit reports — Definitions.**

4 As used in this chapter:

5 (1) "Credit bureau" means any entity or person who or that, for monetary fees, dues, or on  
6 a cooperative nonprofit basis, regularly engages in whole or in part in the practice of assembling or  
7 evaluating consumer credit information or other information on consumers for the purpose of  
8 furnishing credit reports to third parties;

9 (2)(i) "Credit report" means any written, oral, or other communication of any information  
10 by a credit bureau bearing on a consumer's credit worthiness, credit standing, or credit capacity,  
11 that is used or expected to be used or collected in whole or in part for the purpose of serving as a  
12 factor in establishing the consumer's eligibility for:

13 (A) Credit or insurance to be used primarily for personal, family, or household purposes;

14 (B) Employment purposes; or

15 (C) Other purposes authorized under the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. §  
16 1681 et seq.

17 (ii) "Credit report" does not include:

18 (A) Any report containing information solely as to transactions or experiences between the

1 consumer and the person making the report;

2 (B) Any authorization or approval of a specific extension of credit directly or indirectly by  
3 the issuer of a credit card or similar device;

4 (C) Any report in which a person who has been requested by a third party to make a specific  
5 extension of credit directly or indirectly to a consumer conveys his or her decision with respect to  
6 that request if the third party advises the consumer of the name and address of the person to whom  
7 the request was made and the person makes the disclosures to the consumer required under the  
8 federal Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1681 et seq.; ~~or~~

9 (D) Any report containing information solely on a consumer's character, general  
10 reputation, personal characteristics, or mode of living that is obtained through personal interviews  
11 with neighbors, friends, or associates of the consumer reported on, or with others with whom he or  
12 she is acquainted or who may have knowledge concerning those items of information, only if the  
13 report is not used in granting, extending, or decreasing credit; and

14 (E) Any report containing information solely as to transactions or experiences between the  
15 consumer and a healthcare provider for medical debt.

16 (3) "Medical debt" means an obligation of a consumer to pay an amount for the receipt of  
17 healthcare services as defined by § 27-81-3, products, or devices, owed to a healthcare facility or a  
18 healthcare professional as defined by § 27-81-3. Medicaid reimbursement and child support orders  
19 are excluded from this definition.

20 SECTION 2. Section 9-25-3 of the General Laws in Chapter 9-25 entitled "Execution" is  
21 hereby amended to read as follows:

22 **9-25-3. ~~Limitation on issuance.~~ Limitation on issuance and filing.**

23 Executions, original or alias, may be issued by any court at any time within six (6) years  
24 from the rendition of the judgment originally or from the return day of the last execution; provided  
25 that, no execution shall be filed against a defendant's principal residence for a judgment in any  
26 action where the plaintiff's claim against the defendant was based on medical debt. "Medical debt"  
27 shall have the same meaning as defined in § 6-13.1-20.

28 SECTION 3. Sections 10-5-2, 10-5-7 and 10-5-8 of the General Laws in Chapter 10-5  
29 entitled "Attachment" are hereby amended to read as follows:

30 **10-5-2. Procedure.**

31 (a) A court having jurisdiction over a defendant or his or her assets, including his or her  
32 personal estate or real estate, may authorize a plaintiff to attach the defendant's assets, or any part  
33 thereof, after hearing on a motion to attach, notice of which has been given to the defendant as  
34 provided in this section. At the time of the commencement of the action, or at any time thereafter,

1 a plaintiff must file a motion in the court having jurisdiction for authority to attach the defendant's  
2 assets, including his or her personal or real estate, and the attachment motion must state the day,  
3 time and place of hearing and a copy must be served by the process server on the defendant or by  
4 leaving it at his or her last and usual place of abode with some person there at least five (5) days  
5 before the fixed date of hearing; provided that, no attachment shall be filed against a defendant's  
6 principal residence, for a judgment in any action where the plaintiff's claim against the defendant  
7 was based on medical debt. "Medical debt" shall have the same meaning as defined in § 6-13.1-20.

8 (b) If the defendant does not reside in the state, service of the attachment motion shall be  
9 made upon him or her by mailing a copy of the motion to attach, by certified mail, to his or her last  
10 known address and, if service is made in this manner, the plaintiff or his or her attorney must attach  
11 the sender's receipt to an affidavit of compliance with this section by the plaintiff or his or her  
12 attorney and filing it with the case in the court.

13 (c) If the plaintiff after diligent search and by affidavit avers that he or she does not know  
14 of the defendant's address, service on the defendant of the motion to attach may after order of the  
15 court be made by publication in some public newspaper, once, published in the town, city or county  
16 where the defendant's assets are situated. If there is no public newspaper published in the town,  
17 city or county where the defendant's assets are situated, then in some public newspaper published  
18 in the city of Providence. Provided, however, that in all actions where the plaintiff's claim against  
19 the defendant has been reduced to a judgment, the defendant's assets, including his or her personal  
20 estate and real estate, may be attached and may be subject to trustee process as set out in chapter  
21 17 of this title in the same action in which the judgment has been entered.

22 **10-5-7. ~~Classes of property named in writ.~~ Classes of property named in writ --**

23 **Limitation on filing execution.**

24 (a) Whenever a writ of attachment can be issued by any court, it may command the  
25 attachment of:

26 (1) ~~the~~ The goods and chattels of the defendant; ~~and his or her~~

27 (2) The defendant's real estate; provided that, no attachment shall be filed against a  
28 defendant's principal residence, for a judgment in any action where the plaintiff's claim against the  
29 defendant was based on medical debt. "Medical debt" shall have the same meaning as defined in §  
30 6-13.1-20; and

31 (3) The defendant's ~~his or her~~ personal estate in the hands or possession of any person,  
32 copartnership or corporation, as ~~his or her~~ the trustee, except as provided in § 6A-7-602, and ~~his or~~  
33 ~~her~~ the stock or shares in any banking association or other incorporated company, and may be  
34 varied so as to command the attachment of one or more of the classes of property of the defendant.

1           **(b) A violation of the prohibition provided in subsection (a)(2) of this section shall**  
2 **constitute slander of title.**

3           **10-5-8. Garnishment of wages restricted to amounts not exempt — Child support to**  
4 **have priority.**

5           (a) Any writ of attachment, served as a writ of garnishment for the attachment of the  
6 personal estate of the defendant in the hand and possession of any employer of the defendant, shall  
7 be effective to attach so much only of such personal estate consisting of the salary or wages due  
8 and payable to the defendant, or to become in the future due and payable to the defendant, as is in  
9 excess of the amount of the defendant’s salary or wages exempt by law from attachment except, no  
10 garnishment of salary or wages shall issue against a defendant for a judgment in all actions where  
11 the plaintiff’s claim against the defendant was based on medical debt. “Medical debt” shall have  
12 the same meaning as defined in § 6-13.1-20. ~~And the~~ The garnishee, being the defendant’s  
13 employer, shall be required to make affidavit and shall be held liable for the defendant’s personal  
14 estate consisting of the salary or wages due and payable to the defendant or to become in the future  
15 due and payable to the defendant only in respect of the excess amount exempt from attachment.  
16 Any writ of garnishment served under the provisions of this section shall state the judgment  
17 amount, and the employer shall withhold sums not exempt by law until the amount of withholding  
18 equals the amount of the judgment. The employer shall be entitled to the sum of five dollars (\$5.00),  
19 payable directly from the employee to the employer, for each writ of garnishment served upon the  
20 employer regarding any employee.

21           (b) Subject to any federal or state law to the contrary, any garnishment of wages for child  
22 support issued pursuant to § 15-5-25, and any wage assignment pursuant to § 15-5-24, or chapter  
23 16 of title 15 shall take priority over any garnishment issued in accordance with this section. This  
24 priority shall occur whether or not the garnishment or assignment pursuant to § 15-5-24 or 15-5-25  
25 or chapter 16 of title 15 occurs before or after any garnishment pursuant to this section. In addition,  
26 consistent with federal and state law, the state court system may develop a system for the collection  
27 of court imposed or assessed fines, costs, fees or other assessments, including restitution, through  
28 wage assignment procedures.

29           SECTION 4. This act shall take effect on January 1, 2026.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

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1           This act would prohibit credit bureau reporting of a consumer's medical debt. This act  
2 would further prohibit the filing of an execution and attachment against a consumer's principal  
3 residence for judgments based on medical debt. This act would further define medical debt as an  
4 obligation of a consumer to pay an amount for the receipt of health care services, products, or  
5 devices owed to a healthcare facility or a health care professional.

6           This act would take effect on January 1, 2026.

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