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# STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

## IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

## **JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026**

## AN ACT

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

Introduced By: Representatives Read, Potter, Corvese, Carson, Casimiro, Noret, Cotter, McEntee, Donovan, and Craven

Date Introduced: January 23, 2026

Referred To: House 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:

## CHAPTER 4.1

## UNIFORM REAL PROPERTY TRANSFER ON DEATH ACT

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

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

### **33-4.1-2. Definitions.**

## 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 transferring  
13        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 more  
18                   other individuals with a right of survivorship.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **33-4.1-3. Applicability.**

This chapter applies to a transfer on death deed made before, on, or after January 1, 2027, by a transferor dying on or after January 1, 2027.

#### 33-4.1-4. Nonexclusivity.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A transfer on death deed is nontestamentary.

### 33-4.1-8. Capacity of transferor.

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

### **33-4.1-9. Requirements.**

**A transfer on death deed shall:**

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

1                   (2) State that the transfer to the designated beneficiary is to occur at the transferor's death;  
2                   and  
3                   (3) Be recorded before the transferor's death in the public records in the city or town  
4                   recorder's office where the property is located.

5                   **33-4.1-10. Notice, delivery, acceptance, consideration not required.**

6                   A transfer on death deed is effective without:

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

9                   (2) Consideration.

10                   **33-4.1-11. Revocation by instrument authorized -- Revocation by act not permitted.**

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

13                   (1) Is one of the following:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

31                   **33-4.1-12. Effect of transfer on death deed during transferor's life.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

9        **33-4.1-13. Effect of transfer on death deed at transferor's death.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1                   (e) Following the death of the transferor, an affidavit shall be recorded in the office of the  
2 recorder of the city or town in which the affected property is located. Each affidavit shall:  
3                   (1) Contain a legal description of the real property that is affected;  
4                   (2) Reference the entry number and the book and page of the previously recorded transfer  
5 on death deed; and  
6                   (3) Have attached as an exhibit, a copy of the death certificate or other document issued by  
7 a governmental agency certifying the transferor's death.

### **33-4.1-14. Disclaimer.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 23 (FRONT OF FORM)

## REVOCABLE TRANSFER ON DEATH DEED FORM

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

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

IDENTIFYING INFORMATION -- Owner or Owners Making This Deed:

30

#### Mailing address

---

33 Printed name

1

2 PRIMARY BENEFICIARY -- I designate the following beneficiary if the beneficiary  
3 survives me:

4 \_\_\_\_\_

5 Printed name Mailing address, if available

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

8 \_\_\_\_\_

9 Printed name Mailing address, if available

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

12 SIGNATURE OF OWNER OR OWNERS MAKING THIS DEED

13 \_\_\_\_\_ [(SEAL)]

14 Signature Date

15 \_\_\_\_\_ [(SEAL)]

16 Signature Date

17 ACKNOWLEDGMENT (insert acknowledgment for deed here)

18 (BACK OF FORM)

19 COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT THE USE OF THIS FORM Q. What does the Transfer

20 on Death (TOD) deed do? A. When you die, this deed transfers the described property, subject to

21 any liens or mortgages (or other encumbrances) on the property at your death. Probate is not

22 required. The TOD deed has no effect until you die. You can revoke it at any time. You are also

23 free to transfer the property to someone else during your lifetime. If you do not own any interest in

24 the property when you die, this deed will have no effect. Q. How do I make a TOD deed? A.

25 Complete this form. Have it acknowledged before a notary public or other individual authorized by

26 law to take acknowledgments. Record the form in each city or town where any part of the property

27 is located. The form has no effect unless it is acknowledged and recorded before your death. Q. Is

28 the "legal description" of the property necessary? A. Yes. Q. How do I find the "legal description"

29 of the property? A. This information may be on the deed you received when you became an owner

30 of the property. This information may also be available in the office of the city or town recorder

31 where the property is located. If you are not absolutely sure, consult a lawyer. Q. Can I change my

32 mind before I record the TOD deed? A. Yes. If you have not yet recorded the deed and want to

33 change your mind, simply tear up or otherwise destroy the deed. Q. How do I "record" the TOD

34 deed? A. Take the completed and acknowledged form to the office of the city or town recorder

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

21   **33-4.1-17. Optional form of revocation.**

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

25   (FRONT OF FORM)

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

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

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

31   \_\_\_\_\_

31   \_\_\_\_\_

32   Printed name

32   Mailing address

33   \_\_\_\_\_

33   \_\_\_\_\_

34   Printed name

34   Mailing address

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

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

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

33 This chapter modifies, limits, and supersedes the federal Electronic Signatures in Global  
34 and National Commerce Act, 15 U.S.C. § 7001, et seq., but does not modify, limit, or supersede §

1     101(c) of that act, 15 U.S.C. § 7001(c), or authorize electronic delivery of any of the notices  
2     described in § 103(b) of that act, 15 U.S.C. § 7003(b).

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

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO PROBATE PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE -- 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 one
- 2        or more beneficiaries who will obtain title to the property at the owner's death without the necessity
- 3        of probate. The act would apply to a transfer on death deed made before, on, or after January 1,
- 4        2027, by a transferor dying on or after that date.
- 5        This act would take effect upon passage.

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