

2025 -- S 0397 SUBSTITUTE A

LC001825/SUB A

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

A N A C T

RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES -- OPERATORS' AND CHAUFFEURS' LICENSES

Introduced By: Senators Ujifusa, Zurier, and de la Cruz

Date Introduced: February 26, 2025

Referred To: Senate Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 31-10-5 of the General Laws in Chapter 31-10 entitled "Operators'
2 and Chauffeurs' Licenses" is hereby amended to read as follows:
3 **31-10-5. Special restrictions for drivers for compensation.**
4 (a) No person who is under the age of twenty-one (21) years shall drive any school bus
5 transporting school children or any motor vehicle when in use for the transportation of persons or
6 property for compensation nor in either event until he or she has been licensed as a chauffeur for
7 either purpose and the license so indicates. Colleges and universities shall be exempt from the
8 requirement for a public plate for vehicles used to shuttle only students or employees to various
9 points within the college or university campus or if a college or university owned or leased vehicle
10 is used for the occasional transportation of college or university employees or students either on or
11 off campus provided that the vehicle is operated by a college or university employee possessing a
12 valid Rhode Island chauffeur's license or a commercial drivers license with a passenger
13 endorsement. Provided, however, that the college or university shall operate the shuttle service and
14 there shall be no specific charge for the transportation of students or employees. The division of
15 motor vehicles shall not issue a chauffeur's license for either purpose unless the applicant has had
16 at least one year of driving experience prior to the application, and has filed with the division of
17 motor vehicles one or more certificates signed by a total of at least three (3) responsible people to
18 whom he or she is well known certifying to the applicant's good character and habits and the

1 administrator of the division of motor vehicles is fully satisfied as to the applicant's competency
2 and fitness to be so employed.

3 (b) In addition to the requirements provided in subsection (a) of this section, any person
4 [\(hereinafter sometimes referred to as an "applicant"\)](#) attempting to obtain a chauffeur's license to
5 drive a school bus transporting school children shall, prior to being certified:

6 (1) Successfully complete a ten (10) hour school bus driver training course conducted by
7 the department of revenue or the department of revenue's designee and file a certificate of
8 successful completion with the division of motor vehicles. The curriculum of that course and the
9 accreditation of courses offered shall be pursuant to rules and regulations promulgated by the
10 division of motor vehicles. [Provided, for an applicant who holds a valid commercial driver's](#)
11 [license, the course shall be abbreviated and reduced in time and shall focus on the specific Rhode](#)
12 [Island requirements for school bus drivers;](#)

13 (2) Pass a written examination prepared and given by the department of revenue or the
14 department of revenue's designee.

15 (3) Pass a driving test in a school bus of a like type which that person will be employed to
16 drive. The test will be prepared and given by the department of revenue.

17 (c) Prior to issuing a certificate to any person who intends to drive a school bus, the division
18 of motor vehicles shall conduct a search of that person's motor vehicle record. Any violation of
19 any safety regulation or conviction of any motor vehicle law in this or any other state shall be
20 grounds for refusing to issue a certificate.

21 **31-10-5.1. School bus driver annual training.**

22 (a) The department of revenue shall promulgate any rules and regulations that it deems
23 necessary to ensure that a ten-hour (10) training course is provided for all new school bus drivers
24 [\(hereinafter sometimes referred to as an "applicant"\)](#) and a three-hour (3) retraining course is
25 provided to all renewal applicants on at least a yearly basis. [Provided, that for an applicant who](#)
26 [holds a valid commercial driver's license, the ten \(10\) hour training course shall be abbreviated and](#)
27 [reduced in time and shall focus on the specific Rhode Island requirements for school bus drivers.](#)

28 (b) The training shall include, but not be limited to, defensive driving, the National
29 Highway Traffic Safety Administration's School Bus Driver In-Service Series, and instruction in
30 all state laws, rules, and regulations relating to school buses and school bus safety.

31 (c) Prior to any renewal of any certificate of a school bus driver, the division of motor
32 vehicles shall require proof of the renewal applicant's having successfully completed the annual
33 retraining as provided in this section. Every ten (10) years that proof shall include the passing of a
34 written examination prepared by the department of revenue, or the department of revenue's

1 designee, and conducted by employees of the department.

2 SECTION 2. Chapter 31-10 of the General Laws entitled "Operators' and Chauffeurs'
3 Licenses" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

4 **31-10-5.2. Temporary school bus driver license for out-of-state holders of commercial**
5 **driver's license.**

6 (a) A person who is a resident of a state which borders Rhode Island, and which person
7 possesses a valid commercial driver's license and a license to operate a school bus in the person's
8 state of residence, may apply for a temporary school bus certificate or pupil transportation
9 certificate (hereinafter sometimes referred to as a "temporary school bus driver license") in Rhode
10 Island, as follows:

11 (1) The person is a resident of the border state;

12 (2) The person brings to any branch of the division of motor vehicles (the "division") an
13 original or certified copy of the following documents which pertain to the person:

14 (i) A current valid school bus driver physical;

15 (ii) A valid in-force commercial driver's license;

16 (iii) A valid in-force school bus operator license from the state wherein they are a resident;

17 (iv) Proof of residency in the bordering state;

18 (v) Proof of United States' citizenship;

19 (vi) A social security card; and

20 (vii) A letter from a local school bus provider, contractor, or school district, indicating that
21 the person will be employed as a school bus driver by the issuer of the letter if the person obtains
22 their temporary school bus driver license pursuant to this section.

23 (3) In the event the person brings in the documents listed in this subsection, the division of
24 motor vehicles shall review the documents. If the division determines the documents appear to be
25 in order, the division may issue to the person a temporary school bus driver license under this
26 section. In reviewing the documents, for purposes of this section, the division need only verify that
27 the documents on their face appear valid; provided that, the division may refuse to issue the
28 temporary school bus driver license if the division finds irregularities in the documents or has other
29 reason to believe the temporary school bus driver license should not be issued to the applicant.

30 (b)(1) A temporary school bus driver license issued pursuant to this section shall be valid
31 for and expire one hundred twenty (120) days after its date of issuance.

32 (2) Within that one hundred twenty day (120) period, the person may undertake the ten
33 (10) hour training course provided for in §§ 31-10-5 and 31-10-5.1. If the person undertakes and
34 completes the training course, and submits proof of such completion to the division of motor

1 vehicles before expiration of the temporary school bus driver license, and provided the person
2 otherwise meets the requirements of this chapter, the person shall be issued a full school bus
3 certificate or pupil transportation certificate, and shall be subject to the same rules and conditions
4 as any holder of such a license or certificate.

5 (3) If a person operating under a temporary school bus certificate or pupil transportation
6 certificate does not either complete the training required or fails to submit proof of their training as
7 provided under this chapter, within the one hundred twenty (120) day period, the person's
8 temporary school bus driver license shall immediately be cancelled. The division of motor vehicles
9 shall mail that person a written cancellation notice of their Rhode Island temporary school bus
10 driver license.

11 (c) Temporary school bus driver licenses issued under this section shall not be used to
12 influence or interfere with active labor disputes, including, but not limited to, strikes or work
13 stoppages.

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

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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LICENSES

1 This act would provide that the ten (10) hour training course required of applicants to be a
2 school bus driver would be abbreviated and reduced in time for applicants who also hold a valid
3 commercial driver's license. This act would also authorize the division of motor vehicles to issue
4 a temporary school bus driver license to certain persons who reside in states bordering Rhode Island
5 and who meet other requirements.

6 This act would take effect upon passage.

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