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# STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

## IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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

## AN ACT

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- PEACE OFFICER MAXIMUM  
WORKDAY AND OVERTIME COMPENSATION

Introduced By: Senators Thompson, Famiglietti, Burke, Patalano, Dimitri, Quezada, Pearson, Vargas, and Tikoian  
Date: January 11, 2023

Date Introduced: January 30, 2026

Referred To: Senate Labor & Gaming

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 42 of the General Laws entitled "STATE AFFAIRS AND  
2 GOVERNMENT" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

## CHAPTER 56.4

## PEACE OFFICER MAXIMUM WORKDAY AND OVERTIME COMPENSATION

#### **42-56.4-1. Purpose.**

6        It is declared to be the public policy of this state to establish a maximum workday for  
7        certain hourly wage employees as defined herein, beyond which the employees cannot be required  
8        to perform overtime work, in order to safeguard their health, efficiency, and general well-being, as  
9        well as the health and general well-being of the persons to whom these employees provide care,  
10        custody and control.

#### 42-56.4-2. Definitions.

## As used in this chapter:

13 (1) "Employee" means peace officers employed by the state, as defined in § 12-7-21.

14 (2) "Employer" means the State of Rhode Island department of corrections;

15 (3) "Reasonable efforts" means that the employer shall:

16                    (i) Seek persons who volunteer to work extra time from all available qualified staff who  
17                    are working at the time of the unforeseeable emergent circumstance; and

18 (ii) Contact all qualified employees who have made themselves available to work extra

1 time:

2       (4) "Regular hourly wage" means the amount that an employee is regularly paid for each  
3       hour of work, as determined by dividing the total hours of work during the week into the employee's  
4       total earnings for the week, exclusive of pay for overtime work;

5       (5) "Unforeseeable emergent circumstance" means an unpredictable occurrence relating to  
6       Rhode Island department of corrections, that requires immediate action, and which shall include a  
7       riot or disturbance in the existing facilities.

8       **42-56.4-3. Overtime requirement.**

9       (a) The state shall not require an employee to accept work in excess of an agreed to,  
10      predetermined scheduled work shift of eight (8) hours or ten (10) hours for employees holding the  
11      title of correctional officer steward.

12       (b) The state shall not require an employee to work overtime in excess of an agreed to,  
13      predetermined scheduled work shift of eight (8) hours or ten (10) hours for employees holding the  
14      title of correctional officer steward, except in an unforeseeable emergent circumstance. The refusal  
15      of any employee to accept such overtime work shall not be grounds for discrimination, dismissal,  
16      discharge, or any other penalty or employment decision adverse to the employee.

17       (c) Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to limit voluntary overtime in excess of an  
18      agreed to, predetermined scheduled work shift of either eight (8) hours for employees or ten (10)  
19      hours for employees holding the title of correctional officer steward.

20       (d) The provisions of this section shall not apply in the case of an unforeseeable emergent  
21      circumstance when:

22       (1) The overtime is required only as a last resort and is not used to fill vacancies resulting  
23      from chronic short staffing; and

24       (2) The employer has exhausted reasonable efforts to obtain staffing.

25       (e) The requirement that the employer shall exhaust reasonable efforts to obtain staffing  
26      shall not apply in the event of any declared national, state or municipal emergency or a disaster or  
27      other catastrophic event, which substantially affects or increases the need for employees as defined  
28      by this chapter.

29       **42-56.4-4. Penalty for violations.**

30       If the state violates or fails to comply with any of the provisions of this chapter, it shall be  
31      required to pay the employee required to work, at a rate of double time and half of their normal  
32      salary.

33       **42-56.4-5. Collective bargaining agreements.**

34       The provisions of this chapter shall not negate any employee rights or benefits now existing

1      or later accrued under the applicable collective bargaining agreement.

2      **42-56.4-6. Severability.**

3      If any provision of this chapter, or the application of any provision to any person or  
4      circumstance, is held invalid, the remainder of the chapter and the application of the provision to  
5      other persons or circumstances are not affected by the invalidity.

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

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

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RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- PEACE OFFICER MAXIMUM  
WORKDAY AND OVERTIME COMPENSATION

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- 1        This act would establish a maximum hourly workday for all peace officers as defined in §
- 2        12-7-21 and would establish a violation rate of pay of double time and a half.
- 3        This act would take effect upon passage.

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