

2026 -- S 3135

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

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A N A C T

RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES -- MISCELLANEOUS RULES

Introduced By: Senators Raptakis, Dimitri, McKenney, LaMountain, Burke, Quezada,
and Thompson

Date Introduced: March 20, 2026

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

(Attorney General)

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 31-22-22.1 of the General Laws in Chapter 31-22 entitled
2 "Miscellaneous Rules" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **31-22-22.1. Child passenger protection — Warnings of hazard and risk.**

4 (a) All law enforcement officers in this state ~~are authorized to~~ may provide a verbal warning
5 to any person who ~~shall be~~ is deemed to have left a child under the age of seven (7) unattended in
6 a motor vehicle. The warning shall ~~advise~~ inform the offending person of the dangers of this
7 practice including, but not limited to, the risk of kidnapping and/or abduction, and the dangers
8 which may result from the accumulation of excessive temperatures within the motor vehicle.

9 (b) ~~No fine or sanction shall be imposed for a violation of this section, other than a verbal~~
10 ~~warning, and no record of any kind shall be maintained of the warning.~~ Nothing in this section shall
11 preclude prosecution under any applicable criminal law for acts arising from leaving a child
12 unattended in a motor vehicle that constitute a criminal offense. A violation of this section may
13 result in criminal penalties consistent with such laws.

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

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

A N A C T

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1 This act would restore law enforcement discretion, allowing officers to issue a verbal
2 warning when appropriate or pursue misdemeanor or felony charges in more egregious cases where
3 a child is left unattended in a motor vehicle.

4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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