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2001 Survey of Rhode Island Law: Legislation: State Employee Benefits: Act Relating to Public Officers and Employees - Insurance Benefits

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State Employee Benefits. *An Act Relating to Public Officers and Employees – Insurance Benefits.* Modifies the definition of “dependent” to include domestic partners who are at least 18 years of age and meet other qualifications set forth in this definition. Domestic partners are now eligible for certain state employment benefits including insurance. Effective, July 9, 2001. 2001 R.I. Pub. Laws ch. 110, § 1.

SUMMARY

This legislation (the Act) amends section 36-12-1 of the Rhode Island General Laws to include domestic partners within the definition of “dependent”.¹ The amendment requires that a domestic partner be at least eighteen (18) years of age, mentally competent to contract, and not married.² The amendment also requires that the partners reside together, are financially interdependent, and are not related by blood.³ Financial interdependence is defined by demonstrating evidence of at least two of the following: (1) a domestic partnership agreement or relationship contract; (2) joint mortgage or joint ownership of primary residence; (3) two of: (a) joint ownership of motor vehicle; (b) joint checking account; (c) joint credit account; (d) joint lease; and/or (4) the domestic partner is designated as a beneficiary in the employee’s will, retirement contract or life insurance.⁴

Susan Knorr Rodriguez

1. R.I. Gen. Laws § 36-12-1(3) (2001).

2. *Id.*

3. *Id.*

4. *Id.*