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2022 RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC LAWS

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2022 RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC LAWS

I. BUSINESS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

2022 R.I. Pub. Laws ch. 338, 339. An Act Relating to Business and Economic Development—Financial Institutions. This Act clarifies what is considered a loan. Included in the definition is a “retail installment contract,” which is an instrument employed by a remote retail seller to negotiate or execute a contract that provides the retail seller a security interest “for the payment of the purchase price.”

2022 R.I. Pub. Laws ch. 282, 283. An Act Relating to Business and Economic Development—Tourism. A major source of employment, income, and tax revenues comes from tourism; thus, this Act allocated \$70 million for Blue Economy investments, including ports and shipping defense, marine trade, ocean-based renewables, aquaculture, and tourism. \$60 million to support infrastructure at the Port of Davisville; and \$46 million from capital plan funds for the Port of Galilee rehabilitation. The new budget and funding were authorized to encourage businesses and municipalities to consider attracting tourists in addition to locals who procure less employment, income, and tax revenues.

2022 R.I. Pub. Laws ch. 003, 004. An Act Relating to Business and Economic Development—Alcohol Sales. Restaurants and brewpubs that sell wine, beer, and mixed drinks must provide their customers with food; this Act allows food orders for takeout.

II. CONSUMER PROTECTION

2022 R.I. Pub. Laws. ch. 255, 256. An Act Relating to Consumer Protection—Residential Solar. This Act requires solar energy system retailers to publicly disclose material information concerning power, cancellations, and lines before entering into power system agreements with consumers.

2022 R.I. Pub. Laws. ch. 318, 319. An Act Relating to Consumer Protection—Eye Care Services. This Act allows for virtual eye assessments and care by artificial intelligence. Nonautomated eye procedures result in varying error rates; however, computerized methods are mathematically precise and have lower error rates, resulting in more suitable consumer-provider outcomes.

III. MENTAL HEALTH

2022 R.I. Pub. Laws ch. 104, 137. An Act Relating to Mental Health—Problem Gambling. This Act prevents problem gamblers on the state’s self-exclusion list from collecting their winnings at Rhode Island’s two casinos.

2022 R.I. Pub. Laws ch. 109, 110. An Act Relating to Mental Health—Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact. This Act regulates telehealth communications permitting psychologists to provide care to patients across state boundaries for thirty (30) days within a calendar year. Therefore, patients may continue mental health treatments when temporarily out of state.

2022 R.I. Pub. Laws ch. 167, 168. An Act Relating to Mental Health—Mental health Counselors. This Act allows mental health counselor applicants to practice as mental health associates under supervision while awaiting licensure, allowing the public greater access to mental health workers.

IV. EDUCATION

2022 R.I. Pub. Laws ch. 389, 390. An Act Relating to Education—Alternative Learning Plans. This Act removes the compulsory in-person attendance requirement placed on schools to ensure children’s attendance. Although the legislature considered the unique difficulties and interruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Act does not require schools to provide alternative accommodations or extended withdrawals for impacted students.

2022 R.I. Pub. Laws ch. 100, 101. An Act Relating to Education—Speech Therapy. This Act mandates schools to continue providing speech-language pathology services to children based on need, not age.

2022 R.I. Pub. Laws ch. 100, 101. An Act Relating to Education—Student Aid. This Act requires the school’s guidance department to notify students, parents, or guardians of federal and state aid for postsecondary education regardless of immigration status.

V. JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

2022 R.I. Pub. Laws ch. 031, 032. An Act Relating to Justice and Public Safety—The Rhode Island Cannabis Act. This Act legalizes, regulates, and taxes the recreational use of cannabis and automatically expunges previous criminal records relating to marijuana possession.

2022 R.I. Pub. Laws ch. 099, 133, 134, 135, 136. An Act Relating to Justice and Public Safety—Firearms. These Acts reduce the harm caused by firearm ownership by banning all large-capacity gun magazines, limiting sales of guns and ammunition to adults over 21 years old, and penalizing individuals who possess loaded rifles and shotguns in public.

2022 R.I. Pub. Laws ch. 241, 242. An Act Relating to Justice and Public Safety—Operators’ Licenses. This Act allows the Division of Motor Vehicles to issue driving privileges to undocumented residents in the state, increasing revenues and promoting public safety.

VI. ENVIRONMENT AND ZONING

2022 R.I. Pub. Laws ch. 176, 177. An Act Relating to the Environment—Plastic Waste Reduction Act. This Act penalizes retail establishments that do not offer recyclable bags to promote environmental harm reduction.

2022 R.I. Pub. Laws ch. 372, 373. An Act Relating to Environment—Affordable Clean Energy Security Act. This Act allows the development of an instrument that catches the continuous current of offshore winds and converts the wind into energy and power, decreasing reliance on nonrenewable energy sources.

2022 R.I. Pub. Laws ch. 437, 440. An Act Relating to Zoning and Housing—Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU). This Act removed

the requirement that someone related by family to the principal residence occupies the ADU. Instead, the ADU must exist completely and independently and share the same parcel as a single- or multi-unit principal dwelling.

2022 R.I. Pub. Laws ch. 097, 098. An Act Relating to Zoning Ordinances—Catchall Land Use Proposals. This Act allows local agencies charged with administering and enforcing zoning ordinances to evaluate all nonconforming land use proposals that seek special use permits for similarities with permitted uses to encourage public engagement with zoning officials resulting in greater compliance.

VII. CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

2022 R.I. Pub. Laws ch. 396, 397. An Act Relating to Children and Families—Trauma-Informed Policies. This Act requires the commissioner of elementary and secondary education to develop policies and practices that foster well-being and resilience and mitigate the effects of childhood trauma on students, parents, and staff.

VIII. HOUSING

2022 R.I. Pub. Laws ch. 388, 442. An Act Relating to Housing—The Department of Housing. This Act established the housing department, an executive branch of the state government, to facilitate housing and developing initiatives, including affordable housing opportunities, community building, and neighborhood revitalization.

2022 R.I. Pub. Laws ch. 407, 408. An Act Relating to Housing—Low- and Moderate-Income Housing Act. This Act reduced the procedural requirements that limited the construction of low or moderate-income housing, allowing for construction approval based on whether “the project appears financially feasible [based on] estimated development costs.” Moreover, each municipality must annually account for every applicant, approval letter, denial due to ineligibility, and if the area’s medium income prohibited consideration of an application. The application and review process itself remains unaffected.

IX. ELECTIONS AND GOOD GOVERNMENT

2022 R.I. Pub. Laws ch. 045, 046. An Act Relating to Voting—Let RI Vote Act. This Act improves access and opportunities to vote in Rhode Island, including making available ballots for “braille or tactile format,” mail-in ballots for indefinitely confined voters with physical illnesses, infirmities, indefinite disabilities, and long-term nursing home residents; moreover, it ensures the integrity of Rhode Island elections.

2022 R.I. Pub. Laws ch. 059, 060. An Act Relating to Voting and Security—Election Systems Cybersecurity Review Board. This Act authorizes the secretary of state and the Board of Elections to conduct a cybersecurity assessment of Rhode Island’s elections system and create systems to protect future elections from cyberattacks, including protecting election data by enacting rules to reduce risks to “the electronic use, storage, and transmission of election data and the security of election systems.”

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Rhode Island Editor