

2023 -- H 5213

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2023

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A N A C T

RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES -- MOTOR VEHICLE OFFENSES

Introduced By: Representatives Serpa, Noret, and Ackerman

Date Introduced: January 19, 2023

Referred To: House Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1           SECTION 1. Sections 31-27-1, 31-27-1.1, 31-27-2.2 and 31-27-2.6 of the General Laws  
2 in Chapter 31-27 entitled "Motor Vehicle Offenses" are hereby amended to read as follows:

3           **31-27-1. Driving so as to endanger, resulting in death.**

4           (a) When the death of any person ensues as a proximate result of an injury received by the  
5 operation of any vehicle in reckless disregard of the safety of others, including violations of § 31-  
6 27-22, the person so operating the vehicle shall be guilty of "driving so as to endanger, resulting in  
7 death".

8           (b) Any person charged with the commission of this offense shall upon conviction be  
9 imprisoned for not more than ~~ten (10)~~ twenty (20) years and have his or her license to operate a  
10 motor vehicle suspended for no more than five (5) years.

11           **31-27-1.1. Driving so as to endanger, resulting in serious personal injury.**

12           (a) When the serious bodily injury of any person ensues as a proximate result of the  
13 operation of any vehicle in reckless disregard of the safety of others, including violations of § 31-  
14 27-22, the person so operating the vehicle shall be guilty of "driving so as to endanger, resulting in  
15 serious bodily injury".

16           (b) "Serious bodily injury" means physical injury that creates a substantial risk of death or  
17 causes serious permanent disfigurement or protracted loss or impairment of the function of any  
18 bodily member or organ.

19           (c) Any person charged with a violation of this section shall upon conviction be imprisoned

1 for not more than ~~five (5)~~ ten (10) years and have his or her license to operate a motor vehicle  
2 suspended for no more than three (3) years.

3 **31-27-2.2. Driving under the influence of liquor or drugs, resulting in death.**

4 (a) When the death of any person other than the operator ensues as a proximate result of an  
5 injury received by the operation of any vehicle, the operator of which is under the influence of any  
6 intoxicating liquor, toluene, or any controlled substance as defined in chapter 28 of title 21, or any  
7 combination of these, the person so operating the vehicle shall be guilty of “driving under the  
8 influence of liquor or drugs, resulting in death”.

9 (b) Any person charged with the commission of the offense set forth in subsection (a) of  
10 this section shall, upon conviction, be punished ~~as follows~~:

11 (1)~~(i) Every person convicted of a first violation shall be punished by~~ By imprisonment in  
12 the state prison for not less than five (5) years and for not more than ~~fifteen (15)~~ thirty (30) years,  
13 in any unit of the adult correctional institutions in the discretion of the sentencing judge, by a fine  
14 of not less than five thousand dollars (\$5,000) nor more than ~~ten thousand dollars (\$10,000)~~ twenty  
15 thousand dollars (\$20,000) and his or her license to operate a motor vehicle shall be revoked for a  
16 period of five (5) to ten (10) years. The license privilege shall not be reinstated until evidence  
17 satisfactory to the administrator of the division of motor vehicles establishes that no grounds exist  
18 which would authorize the refusal to issue a license, and until the person gives proof of financial  
19 responsibility pursuant to chapter 32 of this title.

20 ~~(i)~~(2) In addition, the person convicted may be required to successfully complete alcohol  
21 or drug treatment in a program of their choice, at their own expense, as authorized by a judge of  
22 the superior court, and may successfully complete the program before any license to operate a  
23 motor vehicle is renewed.

24 ~~(2) Every person convicted of a second or subsequent violation within a five (5) year period~~  
25 ~~in this state or any other state, provided the out-of-state conviction was based on the same blood-~~  
26 ~~alcohol concentration as set forth in § 31-27-2 shall be punished by imprisonment in the state prison~~  
27 ~~for not less than ten (10) years and for not more than twenty (20) years, in any unit of the adult~~  
28 ~~correctional institutions in the discretion of the sentencing judge, by a fine of not less than ten~~  
29 ~~thousand dollars (\$10,000) nor more than twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) and his or her license~~  
30 ~~to operate a motor vehicle shall be revoked for a period of five (5) years. In addition, the person~~  
31 ~~convicted may be required to successfully complete alcohol or drug treatment, at their own expense,~~  
32 ~~in a program established by the director of the department of corrections. The license privilege shall~~  
33 ~~not be reinstated whether the convictions occurred in this or any other state until evidence~~  
34 ~~satisfactory to the superior court, following a hearing establishes that no grounds exist which would~~

1 ~~authorize the refusal to issue a license, and until the person gives proof of financial responsibility~~  
2 ~~pursuant to chapter 32 of this title.~~

3 **31-27-2.6. Driving under the influence of liquor or drugs, resulting in serious bodily**  
4 **injury.**

5 (a) When serious bodily injury of any person other than the operator is caused by the  
6 operation of any motor vehicle, the operator of which is under the influence of any intoxicating  
7 liquor, toluene, or any controlled substance as defined in chapter 28 of title 21 or any combination  
8 of these, the person so operating the vehicle shall be guilty of driving under the influence of liquor  
9 or drugs, resulting in serious bodily injury.

10 (b) As used in this section, "serious bodily injury" means physical injury that creates a  
11 substantial risk of death or causes serious physical disfigurement or protracted loss or impairment  
12 of the function of any bodily member or organ.

13 (c) Any person charged with the commission of the offense set forth in subsection (a) of  
14 this section shall, upon conviction, be punished by imprisonment for not less than one year and for  
15 not more than ~~ten (10)~~ twenty (20) years and by a fine of not less than one thousand dollars (\$1,000)  
16 nor more than ~~five thousand dollars (\$5,000)~~ ten thousand dollars (\$10,000). The sentencing judge  
17 shall have the discretion to sentence the person to any unit of the adult correctional institutions.  
18 The license of the person may be revoked for a period of up to ~~two (2)~~ three (3) to five (5) years.  
19 The license privilege shall not be reinstated until evidence satisfactory to the administrator of the  
20 division of motor vehicles establishes that no grounds exist which would authorize refusal to issue  
21 a license and until the person gives proof of financial responsibility pursuant to chapter 32 of this  
22 title. In addition, the person convicted may be required to successfully complete alcohol or drug  
23 treatment, at their own expense, in a program established by the director of the department of  
24 corrections.

25 ~~(d) For a second or subsequent conviction under this section within a five (5) year period,~~  
26 ~~a person shall be punished by imprisonment for not less than two (2) years nor more than fifteen~~  
27 ~~(15) years and by a fine of not less than three thousand dollars (\$3,000) nor more than ten thousand~~  
28 ~~dollars (\$10,000). The sentencing judge shall have the discretion to sentence the person to any unit~~  
29 ~~of the adult correctional institutions. In addition, the person convicted may be required to~~  
30 ~~successfully complete alcohol or drug treatment, at their own expense, in a program established by~~  
31 ~~the director of the department of corrections. The license of the person may be revoked for a period~~  
32 ~~of up to four (4) years. The license privilege shall not thereafter be reinstated until evidence~~  
33 ~~satisfactory to the administrator of the division of motor vehicles establishes that no grounds exist~~  
34 ~~which would authorize refusal to issue a license and until the person gives proof of financial~~

1 ~~responsibility pursuant to chapter 32 of this title.~~

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

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES -- MOTOR VEHICLE OFFENSES

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1           This act would increase the sentences, fines or both for § 31-27-1 ("driving so as to  
2 endanger, resulting in death") and § 31-27-1.1 ("driving so as to endanger, resulting in personal  
3 injury"). This act would also repeal the enhancement of the punishments for subsequent offenses  
4 of § 31-27-2.2 ("driving under the influence, resulting in death") and § 31-27-2.6 ("driving under  
5 the influence, resulting in serious bodily injury") and would replace the enhancement of  
6 punishments with an amended single range of sentences, fines or both.

7           This act would take effect upon passage.

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