



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND JUDICIARY

SUPREME COURT
OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL

Licht Judicial Complex
250 Benefit Street
Providence, RI 02903

April 28, 2026

Via Electronic Mail (HouseJudiciary@rilegislature.gov)

Chair Carol Hagan McEntee
House Committee on Judiciary
Rhode Island General Assembly
Rhode Island State House
House Lounge
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Re: House Bill No. 7558: An Act Relating to Motor and Other Vehicles -- Suspension or Revocation of Licenses -- Violations

Dear Chair Hagan McEntee:

I write on behalf of the Rhode Island Judiciary to express the Judiciary's concerns regarding House Bill No. 7558, scheduled to be heard this evening before the House Committee on Judiciary. The proposed legislation would repeal R.I. Gen. Laws § 31-11-25, Suspension for failure to pay a fine.

Currently, if a motorist fails to pay fines or costs imposed for a violation enumerated in Title 31 of the Rhode Island General Laws or fails to make satisfactory arrangements for the payment of fines or costs, the Division of Motor Vehicle "shall suspend the license of a person to operate a motor vehicle" until all applicable fines or costs are paid or satisfactory arrangements have been made with the court. House Bill No. 7558 seeks to repeal R.I. Gen. Laws § 31-11-25 in its entirety. The removal of the ability to suspend the license of a motorist who fails to pay outstanding fines or costs could have unintended consequences. Further, multiple mechanisms are in place to aid motorist with their ability to pay the applicable costs and fines.

Removing this enforcement mechanism enumerated in R.I. Gen. Laws § 31-11-25 would weaken the penalty of fines and costs. Fines and costs in the context of motor vehicle and traffic violations serve an important role in public safety by serving as a deterrent to engage in dangerous traffic violations. If there is no consequence for a failure to pay the fines that follow these motor vehicle traffic violations, the efficacy of the penalty is significantly weakened. This could negatively impact the safety of Rhode Island's roadways, especially at a time where the 2026 motor vehicle fatality count reported by the Rhode Island Department of Transportation is higher than last year.

Additionally, repeal of R.I. Gen. Laws § 31-11-25 is not necessary to accommodate the financial circumstances of individual motorists because the statute already has procedures in place to do so. Currently, if a motorist is subject to costs and fines and is unable to make payment, the statute entitles the motorist to request a hearing on his or her ability to pay prior to the suspension of the motorist's license. Additionally, the statute allows the motorist and the court to make "satisfactory arrangements" for the payment of the outstanding fines or costs, to enable the motorist to make reasonable progress towards payment.

Thank you for the opportunity to express the Judiciary's concern for this bill.

Sincerely,



Chrisanne Wyrzykowski
General Counsel