

2023 -- H 5279

LC000504

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2023

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- COUNCIL ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Introduced By: Representatives Perez, J. Lombardi, Lima, Hull, Fellela, and Vella-Wilkinson

Date Introduced: February 01, 2023

Referred To: House Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 16-59 of the General Laws entitled "Council on Postsecondary
2 Education [See Title 16 Chapter 97 - The Rhode Island Board of Education Act]" is hereby
3 amended by adding thereto the following section:

4 **16-59-29. Graduate student, faculty, and staff vaccine exemption.**

5 (a) Students enrolled in graduate or professional degree programs, who are granted medical
6 or religious vaccine exemptions by their sponsoring university or college, as well as faculty and
7 staff who work in such programs, shall not be subject to discrimination within a required place of
8 external learning (RePEL), including, but not limited to, places of internships, residencies,
9 rotations, fellowships, mentorships, clinical laboratories, research laboratories, studios, theaters,
10 culinary or hospitality venues, and practica.

11 (b) If any student, faculty member, or other staff is enrolled or working in a degree program
12 requiring their participation within a contracted place of business identified as a RePEL, whether
13 compensated or unpaid, that person shall remain chiefly subject to the academic institution's policy
14 and protected in the status as a student, faculty member, or other staff, and by providing fair
15 opportunity to attend RePELs in compliance with the dispatching college's or university's
16 immunological requirements and procedures.

17 (c) Dispatching academies having financial investment with, potential conflicts of interest
18 with, and/or business partnerships with a company that furnishes a RePEL, are required to uphold
19 the college or university's immunological procedures and exemptions any time a pupil, faculty

1 [member, or other staff, participates in their duties as a student, faculty member, or other staff, within](#)
2 [the incorporated company.](#)

3 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 EDUCATION -- COUNCIL ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

1 This act would prohibit discrimination in postsecondary education of students who are
2 enrolled in graduate or professional degree programs, along with faculty members and other staff
3 in those programs, who are granted medical or religious vaccine exemptions by a sponsoring
4 university or college.

5 This act would take effect upon passage.

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