

General Assembly

Substitute Bill No. 7060

January Session, 2025



AN ACT CONCERNING TRANSPORTATION WORKER SAFETY.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

- 1 Section 1. (Effective from passage) Connecticut Special Service Road 495
- 2 from Miller Avenue southerly to the southbound Connecticut Route 15
- 3 access ramp in the city of Meriden shall be designated the "Andrew
- 4 DiDomenico Memorial Highway".
- 5 Sec. 2. (Effective from passage) Bridge No. 01241 carrying Jude Lane
- 6 over Interstate Route 84 eastbound and westbound in the town of
- 7 Southington shall be designated the "State Trooper First Class Aaron M.
- 8 Pelletier Memorial Bridge".
- 9 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2025*) (a) For the purposes of this section:
- 11 (1) "Highway work zone" and "highway worker" have the same
- meanings as provided in section 14-212d of the general statutes, as
- 13 amended by this act;
- 14 (2) "Emergency vehicle" has the same meaning as provided in section
- 15 14-283 of the general statutes;
- 16 (3) "Drivers' school" has the same meaning as provided in section 14-

17 68 of the general statutes; and

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(4) "Moving violation" and "suspension violation" have the same 19 meanings as provided in section 14-111g of the general statutes.

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- (b) The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles shall require the attendance and successful completion of a highway work zone and roadside vehicle safety awareness program by (1) any applicant for a motor vehicle operator's license or instruction permit issued under section 14-36 of the general statutes, as amended by this act, and (2) any motor vehicle operator who has been convicted of a violation of section 14-283b of the general statutes, as amended by this act, or 14-212d of the general statutes, as amended by this act.
- (c) The highway work zone and roadside vehicle safety awareness program shall, at a minimum, (1) review principles of safe motor vehicle operation, (2) highlight the dangers of highway work zones, (3) emphasize risks associated with unsafe driving in a highway work zone, (4) include testimonials from highway workers and the families of highway workers, (5) emphasize the dangers posed by vehicles that are located on the shoulder of a highway, (6) review proper interactions with emergency vehicles, and (7) conclude with a test in a written or electronic format.
- (d) Such program shall be offered by the Department of Motor Vehicles, or by any other organization certified by the commissioner to conduct such program in person in a congregate setting, through distance learning or through a combination of both in-person and distance learning, provided such distance learning has interactive components such as mandatory interactions, participation or testing. Any drivers' school that meets the licensure requirement of part IV of chapter 246 of the general statutes shall be eligible to seek certification to offer the highway work zone and roadside vehicle safety awareness program. The commissioner shall determine the number of program providers necessary to serve the needs of the public.
- (e) (1) Each organization or drivers' school seeking certification or recertification to conduct such program shall submit an application to

LCO 2 of 15 the department in such form as the commissioner shall require and an application fee of three hundred fifty dollars. Each such applicant shall:

- (A) Be registered to do business in this state and continuously maintain good standing with the office of the Secretary of the State;
- (B) File and continuously maintain a surety bond in the amount of fifty thousand dollars. Such bond shall be conditioned upon compliance with the provisions of any state or federal law or regulation concerning the conduct of a highway work zone and roadside vehicle safety awareness program and provided as indemnity for any loss or expense sustained by either the state or any person by reason of any acts or omissions of the program provider. Such bond shall be executed in the name of the State of Connecticut for the benefit of any aggrieved party, but the penalty of the bond shall not be invoked except upon order of the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles after a hearing held before the commissioner in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54 of the general statutes;
- (C) Have a permanent place of business in this state where all records pertaining to such program shall be maintained and accessible to the commissioner during normal business hours;
- (D) Submit for approval by the commissioner a detailed curriculum and lesson plan, including any changes to such curriculum and lesson plan, which shall be used in each program; and
- (E) Electronically transmit information concerning enrollment and program completion to the commissioner at such times and in such form as the commissioner shall prescribe.
- (2) Prior to the certification of an applicant, the commissioner shall investigate the applicant's character, driving history and criminal history. If the applicant is a business entity, such investigation shall include the principals and officers of such entity. The applicant shall submit to the commissioner any information pertaining to current or past criminal or civil actions. The certification of a program provider by

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the commissioner shall not be transferable and shall be valid for a twoyear period. Recertification of a provider shall be at the discretion of the commissioner and in such form and manner determined by the commissioner.

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- (f) Any person who is required to attend a highway work zone and roadside vehicle safety program because such person has been convicted of a violation of section 14-283b of the general statutes, as amended by this act, or 14-212d of the general statutes, as amended by this act, shall (1) attend and successfully complete such program in person in a congregate setting, and (2) have such requirement and the completion date of such requirement posted on such person's driving history record maintained by the commissioner. The date of program completion shall remain on such person's driving history record until such person has attained thirty-six consecutive months without any additional moving violations, suspension violations or violation of section 14-283b of the general statutes, as amended by this act, being posted to such person's driving history record. Until the completion of such thirty-six consecutive months, the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles shall suspend such person's operator's license or operating privilege for: (A) Thirty days upon a first conviction for any specified moving violation, suspension violation or violation of section 14-283b of the general statutes, as amended by this act; (B) sixty days upon a second conviction for any specified moving violation, suspension violation or violation of section 14-283b of the general statutes, as amended by this act; and (C) ninety days for a third or subsequent conviction of a specified moving violation, suspension violation or violation of section 14-283b of the general statutes, as amended by this act.
- 108 (g) The commissioner shall adopt regulations, in accordance with 109 chapter 54 of the general statutes, to implement the provisions of this 110 section.
- 111 Sec. 4. Subsection (d) of section 14-36 of the general statutes is 112 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October* 113 1, 2025):

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(d) (1) No motor vehicle operator's license shall be issued to any applicant who is sixteen or seventeen years of age unless the applicant has held a youth instruction permit and has satisfied the requirements specified in this subsection. The applicant shall (A) submit to the commissioner, in such manner as the commissioner shall direct, a certificate of the successful completion (i) in a public secondary school, a technical education and career school or a private secondary school of a full course of study in motor vehicle operation prepared as provided in section 14-36e, (ii) of training of similar nature provided by a licensed drivers' school approved by the commissioner, or (iii) of home training in accordance with subdivision (2) of this subsection, including, in each case, or by a combination of such types of training, successful completion of: Not less than forty clock hours of behind-the-wheel, onthe-road instruction for applicants to whom a youth instruction permit is issued on or after August 1, 2008; (B) submit to the commissioner, in such manner as the commissioner shall direct, a certificate of the successful completion of (i) a course of not less than eight hours relative to safe driving practices, including a minimum of four hours on the nature and the medical, biological and physiological effects of alcohol and drugs, including cannabis, as defined in section 21a-420, and their impact on the operator of a motor vehicle, the dangers associated with the operation of a motor vehicle after the consumption of alcohol or drugs by the operator, the problems of alcohol and drug abuse, the penalties for alcohol and drug-related motor vehicle violations and a video presentation specific to the impact of cannabis on the operator of a motor vehicle and how the ingestion of cannabis can cause impairment of motor function, reaction time, perception and peripheral vision, and (ii) for applicants to whom a youth instruction permit is issued on or after October 1, 2025, the highway work zone and roadside vehicle safety awareness program described in section 3 of this act; and (C) pass an examination which may include a comprehensive test as to knowledge of the laws concerning motor vehicles and the rules of the road in addition to the test required under subsection (c) of this section and shall include an on-the-road skills test as prescribed by the commissioner. At the time of application and examination for a motor

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vehicle operator's license, an applicant sixteen or seventeen years of age shall have held a youth instruction permit for not less than one hundred eighty days, except that an applicant who presents a certificate under subparagraph (A)(i) or subparagraph (A)(ii) of this subdivision shall have held a youth instruction permit for not less than one hundred twenty days and an applicant who is undergoing training and instruction by the driver training unit for persons with disabilities in accordance with the provisions of section 14-11b shall have held such permit for the period of time required by said unit. The commissioner shall approve the content of the safe driving [instruction] practices course at drivers' schools, high schools and other secondary schools. Subject to such standards and requirements as the commissioner may impose, the commissioner may authorize any drivers' school, licensed in good standing in accordance with the provisions of section 14-69, or secondary school driver education program authorized pursuant to the provisions of section 14-36e, to administer the comprehensive test as to knowledge of the laws concerning motor vehicles and the rules of the road, required pursuant to subparagraph (C) of this subdivision, as part of the safe driving practices course required pursuant to subparagraph (B) of this subdivision, and to certify to the commissioner, under oath, the results of each such test administered. Such hours of instruction required by this subdivision shall be included as part of or in addition to any existing instruction programs. Any fee charged for the course required under subparagraph [(B)] (B)(i) or subparagraph (B)(ii) of this subdivision shall not exceed one hundred fifty dollars. Any applicant sixteen or seventeen years of age who, while a resident of another state, completed the course required in subparagraph (A) of this subdivision, but did not complete the safe driving practices course required in subparagraph (B) of this subdivision, shall complete the safe driving practices course. The commissioner may waive any requirement in this subdivision, except for [that in] the requirements of subparagraph (C) of this subdivision, in the case of an applicant sixteen or seventeen years of age who holds a valid motor vehicle operator's license issued by any other state, provided the commissioner is satisfied that the applicant has received training and instruction of a similar nature.

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(2) The commissioner may accept as evidence of sufficient training under subparagraph (A) of subdivision (1) of this subsection home training as evidenced by a written statement submitted to the commissioner, in such manner as the commissioner directs. Such statement shall be signed by the spouse of a married minor applicant, or by a parent, grandparent, foster parent or legal guardian of an applicant, and state that the applicant has obtained a youth instruction permit and has successfully completed a driving course taught by the person signing the statement, that the signer has had an operator's license for at least four years preceding the date of the statement, and that the signer has not had such license suspended by the commissioner for at least four years preceding the date of the statement. If the applicant has no spouse, parent, grandparent, foster parent or guardian so qualified and available to give the instruction, such statement may be signed by the applicant's stepparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt, by blood or marriage, provided the person signing the statement is qualified.

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(3) The knowledge test for a class D motor vehicle operator's license required under this section shall be administered (A) in electronic and audio format and any other format the commissioner deems appropriate, and (B) at the option of the applicant, in English, Spanish or any language spoken at home by at least one per cent of the state's population, according to statistics prepared by the United States Census Bureau, based on the most recent decennial census. The knowledge test shall also be administered in a written or electronic format in at least twenty-six other languages that the commissioner, in consultation with representatives of organizations that advocate on behalf of or assist immigrants, refugees or other persons who are English language learners, determines are responsive to the linguistic needs of the emerging immigrant and refugee populations in the state. Each knowledge test offered in such other languages shall be reviewed by a person who is fluent in the language of such knowledge test and may also be administered in an audio format as the commissioner deems appropriate. The commissioner shall require any applicant under this section to have sufficient understanding of English for the interpretation

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- (4) The commissioner may adopt regulations, in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54, to implement the purposes of this subsection concerning the requirements for behind-the-wheel, on-the-road instruction, the content of safe driving [instruction] <u>practices course</u> at drivers' schools, high schools and other secondary schools, and the administration and certification of required testing.
- Sec. 5. Section 14-37b of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

227 Any applicant for a motor vehicle operator's license who has not 228 previously held a Connecticut motor vehicle operator's license and who 229 does not hold a valid motor vehicle operator's license issued by any 230 other state, by any territory or possession of the United States, or by any 231 foreign country with which the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles has an 232 agreement for reciprocal recognition of driver training requirements, 233 shall be subject to the requirements of subdivision (3) of subsection (e) 234 of section 14-36 and shall be required to present to the Commissioner of 235 Motor Vehicles a certificate of the successful completion of (1) a course 236 of not less than eight hours relative to safe driving practices, including 237 a minimum of four hours on the nature and the medical, biological and 238 physiological effects of alcohol and drugs and their impact on the 239 operator of a motor vehicle, the dangers associated with the operation 240 of a motor vehicle after the consumption of alcohol or drugs by the 241 operator, the problems of alcohol and drug abuse and the penalties for 242 alcohol and drug-related motor vehicle violations, and (2) on and after 243 October 1, 2025, the highway work zone and roadside vehicle safety 244 awareness program described in section 3 of this act. The commissioner 245 may adopt regulations, in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54, 246 establishing standards for commercial drivers' schools that are licensed 247 in accordance with the provisions of section 14-69 to offer and conduct 248 the course of instruction required by this section.

Sec. 6. Section 14-222 of the general statutes is repealed and the

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following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

- (a) (1) No person shall operate any motor vehicle upon any public highway of the state, or any road of any specially chartered municipal association or of any district organized under the provisions of chapter 105, a purpose of which is the construction and maintenance of roads and sidewalks, or in any parking area for ten cars or more or upon any private road on which a speed limit has been established in accordance with the provisions of section 14-218a or section 14-307a or upon any school property recklessly, having regard to the width, traffic and use of such highway, road, school property or parking area, the intersection of streets and the weather conditions.
- (2) The operation of a motor vehicle upon any such highway, road or parking area for ten cars or more at such a rate of speed as to endanger the life of any person other than the operator of such motor vehicle, or the operation, downgrade, upon any highway, of any motor vehicle with a commercial registration with the clutch or gears disengaged, or the operation knowingly of a motor vehicle with defective mechanism, shall constitute a violation of the provisions of this section.
- (3) The operation of a motor vehicle upon any such highway, road or parking area for ten cars or more at a rate of speed greater than eighty-five miles per hour shall constitute a violation of the provisions of this section.
- (4) The operation of a motor vehicle upon a limited access highway while engaged in any activity prohibited by section 14-296aa, as amended by this act, shall constitute a violation of the provisions of this section.
- (b) Any person who violates any provision of this section (1) for the first offense, shall be fined not less than one hundred dollars nor more than three hundred dollars or imprisoned not more than thirty days or be both fined and imprisoned, [for the first offense] except any person who violates any provision of this section while operating a motor vehicle within a highway work zone, as defined in section 14-212d, as

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- amended by this act, shall be fined not more than five hundred dollars
- or imprisoned more than three months or be both fined and imprisoned,
- and (2) for each subsequent offense, shall be fined not more than six
- 285 hundred dollars or imprisoned not more than one year or be both fined
- and imprisoned.
- Sec. 7. Section 14-296aa of the general statutes is repealed and the
- following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):
- (a) For purposes of this section, the following terms have the
- 290 following meanings:
- 291 (1) "Mobile telephone" means a cellular, analog, wireless or digital
- 292 telephone capable of sending or receiving telephone communications
- 293 without an access line for service.
- 294 (2) "Using" or "use" means holding a hand-held mobile telephone to,
- or in the immediate proximity of, the user's ear.
- 296 (3) "Hand-held mobile telephone" means a mobile telephone with
- 297 which a user engages in a call using at least one hand.
- 298 (4) "Hands-free accessory" means an attachment, add-on, built-in
- 299 feature, or addition to a mobile telephone, whether or not permanently
- installed in a motor vehicle, that, when used, allows the vehicle operator
- 301 to maintain both hands on the steering wheel.
- 302 (5) "Hands-free mobile telephone" means a hand-held mobile
- telephone that has an internal feature or function, or that is equipped
- 304 with an attachment or addition, whether or not permanently part of
- such hand-held mobile telephone, by which a user engages in a call
- 306 without the use of either hand, whether or not the use of either hand is
- 307 necessary to activate, deactivate or initiate a function of such telephone.
- 308 (6) "Engage in a call" means talking into or listening on a hand-held
- mobile telephone, but does not include holding a hand-held mobile
- 310 telephone to activate, deactivate or initiate a function of such telephone.

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(7) "Immediate proximity" means the distance that permits the operator of a hand-held mobile telephone to hear telecommunications transmitted over such hand-held mobile telephone, but does not require physical contact with such operator's ear.

- (8) "Mobile electronic device" means any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between two or more persons, including a text messaging device, a paging device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, equipment that is capable of playing a video game or a digital video disk, or equipment on which digital photographs are taken or transmitted, or any combination thereof, but does not include any audio equipment or any equipment installed in a motor vehicle for the purpose of providing navigation, emergency assistance to the operator of such motor vehicle or video entertainment to the passengers in the rear seats of such motor vehicle.
- (9) "Operating a motor vehicle" means operating a motor vehicle on any highway, [as defined in section 14-1,] including being temporarily stationary due to traffic, road conditions or a traffic control sign or signal, but not including being parked on the side or shoulder of any highway where such vehicle is safely able to remain stationary.
- 331 (10) "Highway", "commercial motor vehicle" and "authorized 332 emergency vehicle" have the same meanings as provided in section 14-333 1.
 - (b) (1) Except as otherwise provided in this subsection and subsections (c) and (d) of this section, no person shall operate a motor vehicle upon a highway [, as defined in section 14-1,] while using a hand-held mobile telephone to engage in a call or while using a mobile electronic device. An operator of a motor vehicle who types, sends or reads a text message with a hand-held mobile telephone or mobile electronic device while operating a motor vehicle shall be in violation of this section, except that if such operator is driving a commercial motor vehicle, [as defined in section 14-1,] such operator shall be charged with

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a violation of subsection (e) of this section.

- (2) An operator of a motor vehicle who holds a hand-held mobile telephone to, or in the immediate proximity of, his or her ear while operating a motor vehicle is presumed to be engaging in a call within the meaning of this section. The presumption established by this subdivision is rebuttable by evidence tending to show that the operator was not engaged in a call.
 - (3) The provisions of this subsection shall not be construed as authorizing the seizure or forfeiture of a hand-held mobile telephone or a mobile electronic device, unless otherwise provided by law.
 - (4) Subdivision (1) of this subsection shall not apply to: (A) The use of a hand-held mobile telephone for the sole purpose of communicating with any of the following regarding an emergency situation: An emergency response operator; a hospital, physician's office or health clinic; an ambulance company; a fire department; or a police department, or (B) any of the following persons while in the performance of their official duties and within the scope of their employment: A peace officer, as defined in subdivision (9) of section 53a-3, a firefighter or an operator of an ambulance or authorized emergency vehicle [, as defined in section 14-1,] or a member of the armed forces of the United States, as defined in section 27-103, while operating a military vehicle, or (C) the use of a hand-held radio by a person with an amateur radio station license issued by the Federal Communications Commission in emergency situations for emergency purposes only, or (D) the use of a hands-free mobile telephone.
 - (c) No person shall use a hand-held mobile telephone or other electronic device, including those with hands-free accessories, or a mobile electronic device, while operating a school bus that is carrying passengers, except that this subsection shall not apply when such person: (1) Places an emergency call to school officials; (2) uses a hand-held mobile telephone as provided in subparagraph (A) of subdivision (4) of subsection (b) of this section; (3) uses a hand-held mobile

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telephone or mobile electronic device in a manner similar to a two-way radio to allow real-time communication with a school official, an emergency response operator, a hospital, physician's office or health clinic, an ambulance company, a fire department or a police department; or (4) uses a mobile electronic device with a video display, provided such device (A) is used as a global positioning system or to provide navigation, (B) is securely attached inside the school bus near such person, and (C) has been approved for such use by the Department of Motor Vehicles.

- (d) No person under eighteen years of age shall use any hand-held mobile telephone, including one with a hands-free accessory, or a mobile electronic device while operating a motor vehicle on a public highway, except as provided in subparagraph (A) of subdivision (4) of subsection (b) of this section.
- (e) No person shall use a hand-held mobile telephone or other electronic device or type, read or send text or a text message with or from a mobile telephone or mobile electronic device while operating a commercial motor vehicle, [as defined in section 14-1,] except for the purpose of communicating with any of the following regarding an emergency situation: An emergency response operator; a hospital; physician's office or health clinic; an ambulance company; a fire department or a police department.
- (f) Except as provided in subsections (b) to (e), inclusive, of this section, no person shall engage in any activity not related to the actual operation of a motor vehicle in a manner that interferes with the safe operation of such vehicle on any highway. [, as defined in section 14-1.]
- (g) Any law enforcement officer who issues a summons for a violation of this section shall record on such summons the specific nature of any distracted driving behavior observed by such officer.
- (h) Any person who violates this section shall be fined two hundred dollars for a first violation, three hundred seventy-five dollars for a second violation and six hundred twenty-five dollars for a third or

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407 subsequent violation.

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- (i) An operator of a motor vehicle who commits a moving violation, as defined in subsection (a) of section 14-111g, while engaged in any activity prohibited by this section shall be fined in accordance with subsection (h) of this section, in addition to any penalty or fine imposed for the moving violation.
 - (j) The state shall remit to a municipality twenty-five per cent of the fine amount received for a violation of this section with respect to each summons issued by such municipality. Each clerk of the Superior Court or the Chief Court Administrator, or any other official of the Superior Court designated by the Chief Court Administrator, shall, on or before the thirtieth day of January, April, July and October in each year, certify to the Comptroller the amount due for the previous quarter under this subsection to each municipality served by the office of the clerk or official.
 - (k) A record of any violation of this section shall appear on the driving history record or motor vehicle record, as defined in section 14-10, of any person who commits such violation, and the record of such violation shall be available to any motor vehicle insurer in accordance with the provisions of section 14-10.
- (1) No person shall be subject to the prosecution for a violation of the provisions of this section and subsection (a) of section 14-222, as amended by this act, because of the same offense.
- Sec. 8. Subsection (d) of section 14-283b of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October* 432 1, 2025):
 - (d) (1) Any person who violates the provisions of subsection (b) of this section shall have committed an infraction, except that if such violation results in the injury of the operator or any occupant of an emergency vehicle, such person shall be fined not more than [two thousand five hundred] ten thousand dollars and, if such violation

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results in the death of the operator or any occupant of an emergency vehicle, such person shall be fined not more than [ten] twenty thousand dollars.

(2) Any person who violates the provisions of subsection (c) of this section shall have committed an infraction.

Sec. 9. Subsection (f) of section 14-212d of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October* 1, 2025):

(f) Upon conviction or a plea of guilty for committing the offense of aggravated endangerment of a highway worker, a person shall be subject to a fine of (1) not more than [five] ten thousand dollars if such offense results in serious physical injury to a highway worker, or (2) [ten] twenty thousand dollars if such offense results in the death of a highway worker, in addition to any other penalty authorized by law.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following		
sections:		
Section 1	from passage	New section
Sec. 2	from passage	New section
Sec. 3	October 1, 2025	New section
Sec. 4	October 1, 2025	14-36(d)
Sec. 5	October 1, 2025	14-37b
Sec. 6	October 1, 2025	14-222
Sec. 7	October 1, 2025	14-296aa
Sec. 8	October 1, 2025	14-283b(d)
Sec. 9	October 1, 2025	14-212d(f)

TRA Joint Favorable Subst.

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