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Secretary of State

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Education Act, 1840

This act, passed in 1840, ensured that children under age 12 would go to school a minimum of three months per year.

An Act to provide for the better instruction of children employed in manufacturing establishments.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly as follows –

Sec. 1. No child, under the age of twelve years, shall be employed to work in any manufacturing establishment in this State, unless such child shall have attended during at least three months of the twelve months next preceding such employment, some public or private day school where instruction is given in orthography, reading, writing and arithmetic.

Sec. 2. If the owner or owners, agent or superintendent of any manufacturing establishment shall employ any child in such establishment contrary to the provisions of this act, he, she or they shall forfeit the sum of fifty dollars for each offence to be recovered by indictment, to the use of the public schools in the town or city where said establishment may be situated.

Sec. 3. A certificate, signed and sworn to by the instructor of the school where any child may have attended, that such child has received the instruction herein intended to be secured, shall be deemed and taken, to be sufficient evidence of that fact, in all cases arising under this act.

Sec. 4. This act shall take effect from and after this day of January AD 1841.

House of Reps Jan 25, 1840

In the Senate read the same day

This primary source comes from the Rhode Island State Archives, Acts & Resolves of the General Assembly, January 1840, p. 92.

This transcript is intended to capture the substance of the document.

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