

April 5, 2019

Legislative Press Bureau at (401) 528-1743

THIS WEEK AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

STATE HOUSE — Here are the highlights from news and events that took place in the General Assembly this week. For more information on any of these items visit <http://www.rilegislature.gov/pressrelease>



- **Rep. Vella-Wilkinson bill would extend benefits to gay veterans**
Rep. Camille F.J. Vella-Wilkinson (D-Dist. 21, Warwick) has introduced legislation that would extend veterans' benefits to gay or transgender members of the armed forces who failed to receive honorable discharges. The bill ([2019-H 5443](#)) would permit former members of the armed forces who received less than honorable discharges based solely on sexual orientation to receive earned veterans' benefits as if their discharge had been characterized as honorable including housing and employment veterans' preferences.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Sen. Valverde introduces bill to protect woodlands**
Sen. Bridget Valverde (D-Dist. 35, North Kingstown, South Kingstown, East Greenwich, Narragansett) has introduced the Woodland Preservation and Stewardship Act ([2019-S 0663](#)) to create a statewide council to help identify ecologically significant woodlands around the state and provide cities and towns with guidance for protecting them. The effort would help municipalities respond to the influx of plans for large solar arrays in wooded areas. Rep. Arthur Handy (D-Dist. 18, Cranston) is sponsoring the bill ([2019-H 5813](#)) in the House.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Leader Shekarchi bill would streamline blockchain regulations**
House Majority Leader K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick) has introduced legislation ([2019-H 5847](#)) to clarify and streamline Rhode Island's financial regulatory structure for users of financial applications of blockchain database technology. Sen. Louis P. DiPalma (D-Dist. 12, Middletown, Newport, Little

More...

Compton, Tiverton) is sponsoring the bill ([2019-S 0753](#)) in the Senate.
[Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Ruggiero bill would help address gender pay gap**
Rep. Deborah Ruggiero (D-Dist. 74, Jamestown, Middletown) is sponsoring legislation ([2019-H 5917](#)) to help close the gender wage gap by banning employers from asking job candidates about their wage history or prohibiting employees from discussing their wages with one another.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Cortvriend resolution urges climate literacy to be incorporated in curricula**
Rep. Terri Cortvriend (D-Dist. 72, Portsmouth, Middletown) has introduced a resolution ([2019-H 5563](#)) requesting that Rhode Island public schools incorporate environment and climate literacy into school curricula to ensure that young Rhode Islanders understand the environmental challenges they will face in their lifetime.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **House Oversight Committee hears auditor general's report about UHIP**
The House Committee on Oversight met Thursday to hear an audit report on the Unified Health Infrastructure project. Auditor General Dennis Hoyle shared his findings with the committee along with an update on project progress, extension of the contract with Deloitte and long-term care payments and reconciliation.
- **Rep. McEntee bills would update parentage and adoption laws**
The House Committee on Judiciary heard two bills introduced by Rep. Carol Hagan McEntee (D-Dist. 33, South Kingstown, Narragansett) that would update the law concerning parentage and adoption processes. The R.I. Confirmatory Adoption Act ([2019-H 5706](#)) provides for a process for married and unmarried parents to complete adoption to confirm their parentage of children born into their relationships with mutual intent and through assisted reproduction. The R.I. Parentage Act ([2019-H 5707](#)) repeals current state law regarding paternity and replaces it with a more comprehensive parentage act that provides procedures establishing parentage, genetic testing, surrogacy agreements and assisted reproduction.
[Click here to see press release.](#)
- **Rep. Amore bill would extend 'look back' period on DUI offenses**
The House Committee on Judiciary heard legislation ([2019-H 5766](#)) introduced by Rep. Gregg Amore (D-Dist. 65, East Providence) that would extend the "look back" period on repeat alcohol-related vehicular offenses from the current five years to 10 years.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Legislators attend rally calling for 2020 Census participation**
At a rally held in the State House rotunda, House Majority Leader K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick), Senate Majority Leader Michael J. McCaffrey (D-Dist. 29, Warwick), Rep. Anastasia P. Williams (D-Dist. 9, Providence), and Sen. Sandra Cano (D-Dist. 8, Providence) rallied to support the efforts of the Rhode Island Complete Count Committee to ensure that every Rhode Island resident is counted in the upcoming 2020 Census. Senator Cano and Representative Williams also

introduced resolutions ([2019-S 0743](#), [2019-H 5939](#)) calling for support for the committee's campaign.

[Click here to see news release](#)

- **Senate Finance Committee hears resolution to refinance GARVEE bonds**
The Senate Committee on Finance met Thursday to hear testimony on a joint resolution ([2019-S 0633](#)) introduced by Senate Majority Whip Maryellen Goodwin (D-Dist. 1, Providence) that would authorize the governor to refinance previously issued Grant Anticipation Revenue Vehicle bonds for transportation projects.

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