

April 26, 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>



- **House passes Speaker Mattiello’s bill creating teams to prevent school violence**
The House approved legislation sponsored by House Speaker Nicholas A. Mattiello (D-Dist. 15, Cranston) to increase school safety by creating threat assessment teams in schools to serve as the “boots on the ground” in identifying potentially threatening behavior by those in the school community. Under the bill ([2019-H 5538](#)), which will now go to the Senate, school districts would also adopt policies for assessment and intervention, including procedures for referrals to community services or health care providers for evaluation.
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- **House approves Leader Shekarchi’s resolution seeking sepsis protocols**
The House approved a resolution ([2019-H 5539](#)) sponsored by House Majority Leader K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick) calling for the Department of Health to develop protocols to help detect and treat sepsis, a fast-moving and potentially fatal complication that occurs when a person’s body has an extreme response to an infection.
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- **House OKs Rep. Caldwell’s bill to post opioid warning signs at R.I. pharmacies**
The House approved legislation ([2019-H 5184](#)) sponsored by Rep. Justine A. Caldwell (D-Dist. 30, East Greenwich, West Greenwich) to require signs at pharmacies warning customers about dangers associated with opioids, similar to those required where tobacco products are sold. The bill will now go to the Senate, where Sen. Bridget G. Valverde (D-Dist. 35, North Kingstown, South Kingstown, East Greenwich, Narragansett) is sponsoring companion legislation ([2019-S 0291](#)).

More...

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- **House OKs bill to provide info on workers' co-ops when companies are closing**
The House approved legislation ([2019-H 5769aa](#)) sponsored by House Deputy Majority Whip Christopher R. Blazejewski (D-Dist. 2, Providence) to notify workers of their opportunity to organize a cooperative and make a bid to buy out their company in the event of a mass layoff or plant closing. The bill now goes to the Senate, where Sen. Sandra Cano (D-Dist. 8, Pawtucket) is sponsoring companion legislation ([2019-S 0253](#)).
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- **House OKs Hawkins bill that prohibits misrepresenting pets as service animals**
The House of Representatives passed legislation ([2019-H 5299aa](#)) sponsored by Rep. Bernard A. Hawkins (D-Dist. 53, Smithfield, Gloucester) that prohibits the misrepresentation of pets as service animals in order to acquire any rights or privileges afforded to disabled. According to the legislation, if a person is found to have misrepresented a pet as a service animal, the person would be guilty of a civil violation, punishable with up to 30 hours of community service for an organization that serves people with disabilities. The measure now moves to the Senate, where similar legislation ([2019-S 0308](#)) has been introduced by Sen. Roger A. Picard (D-Dist. 20, Woonsocket, Cumberland).
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- **House OKs Marszalkowski bill that amends law to encourage food donation**
Rep. Alex D. Marszalkowski's (D-Dist. 52, Cumberland) legislation ([2019-H 5322aa](#)) which establishes comprehensive immunity provisions for individuals donating food to food banks passed the House of Representatives. The purpose of the legislation is to provide incentives and protections to implement and increase food recovery and donations in Rhode Island. The measure now moves to the Senate, where similar legislation ([2019-S 0027](#)) has been introduced by Sen. Frank S. Lombardi (D-Dist. 26, Cranston).
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- **Rep. Morin bill would require coverage of non-opioid pain treatments**
The House Committee on Health, Education and Welfare heard testimony on legislation ([2019-H 5120](#)) sponsored by Rep. Michael Morin (D-Dist. 49, Woonsocket) that would require health insurance contract plans or policies to provide coverage for certain licensed practices including physical therapy, occupational therapy, massage therapy, acupuncture and oriental medicine. Similar legislation ([2019-S 0068](#)) has been introduced in the Senate by Sen. Roger A. Picard (D-Dist. 20, Woonsocket, Cumberland).
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- **Sen. DiPalma bill would protect families with parents that have disabilities**
The Senate Judiciary Committee heard legislation ([2019-S 0702](#)) introduced by Sen. Louis P. DiPalma (D-Dist. 12, Middletown, Little Compton, Newport, Tiverton) that precludes the disability of a parent from serving as a basis for denial or restriction in

matters involving a child's welfare, foster care, family law, guardianship and adoption. The purpose of the legislation is to protect the best interests of children who have parents with disabilities by establishing procedural safeguards that require adherence to the Americans with Disabilities Act. Rep. Terri Cortvriend (D-Dist. 72, Portsmouth, Middletown) is the sponsor of the companion legislation ([2019-H 5562](#)) in the House of Representatives.

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▪ **Commission recommends moving adult education programs to DLT**

A Senate commission that studied the issue has issued its [final report](#) and determined that adult learners in Rhode Island would be better served by moving the administration of adult education programs from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to the Governor's Workforce Board within the Department of Labor and Training. The commission was led by Sen. Harold M. Metts (D-Dist. 6, Providence).

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▪ **Sen. Coyne sponsors three bills to support Alzheimer's care**

Sen. Cynthia A. Coyne (D-Dist. 32, Barrington, Bristol, East Providence) has introduced three bills aimed at better supporting Rhode Islanders affected by Alzheimer's disease. The bills establish a state program dedicated to Alzheimer's disease and an Alzheimer's advisory council ([2019-S 0223](#)), allow the spouses or partners of patients residing in Alzheimer's or dementia special care unit to live with them ([2019-S 0302](#)), and support a new five-year update to the state plan for Alzheimer's disease ([2019-S 0310](#)). Companion bills ([2019-H 5178](#), [2019-H 5141](#), [2019-H 5569](#)) have been filed in the House by House Majority Leader K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick), Rep. Joseph M. McNamara (D-Dist. 19, Warwick, Cranston) and Rep. Mia A. Ackerman (D-Dist. 45, Cumberland, Lincoln), respectively.

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