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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>



- **Senate OKs Conley bill to protect furloughed workers during shutdowns**
The Senate has passed legislation ([2019-S 0065aa](#)) introduced by Sen. William J. Conley Jr. (D-Dist. 18, East Providence, Pawtucket) that enables city and town councils to grant relief from the payment of taxes during periods where federal or state government cease governmental operations for employees of the state or federal government. The measure moves to the House of Representatives, where similar legislation ([2019-H 5191](#)) has been introduced by Rep. Carlos E. Tobon (D-Dist. 58, Pawtucket).
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Lima reintroduces legislation to ban the renting or leasing of ‘forever pets’**
Deputy Speaker Charlene M. Lima (D-Dist. 14, Cranston, Providence) has reintroduced legislation ([2019-H 5246](#)) to prohibit any business or individual in Rhode Island from renting, leasing, or in any other way offering a live animal for sale as a “forever pet” other than by a full outright sale. A “forever pet” is defined as any dog or cat purchased from a business or individual which purchase does not vest permanent ownership in the buyer.
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- **Rep. Amore reintroduces bill to allow 17-year-olds to vote in primary elections**
Rep. Gregg Amore (D-Dist. 65, East Providence) has reintroduced legislation ([2019-H 5139](#)) that would allow 17-year-olds to vote in primary elections as long as the individual will be 18 years old by the date of the general or special election. Sen. Gayle L. Goldin (D-Dist. 3, Providence) is introducing the bill in the Senate.

More...

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- **Rep. Shanley legislation would create office of inspector general**
Rep. Evan P. Shanley (D-Dist. 24, Warwick) has introduced legislation that would create the office of inspector general. The bill ([2019-H 5236](#)) would establish the office as an independent administrative agency charged with the responsibility to investigate, detect, and prevent fraud, waste, abuse and mismanagement in the expenditure of public funds.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. McLaughlin bill would authorize \$20 million to capital plan funds**
Rep. James N. McLaughlin (D-Dist. 57, Cumberland, Central Falls) has introduced legislation that would authorize \$20 million to the Rhode Island Capital Plan Funds, which allows certain funds to be allocated to agencies for the purpose of completing preliminary planning studies for proposed projects. The bill ([2019-H 5148](#)) would make an appropriation for transportation projects.
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- **Sen. Raptakis to reintroduce bill tying minimum wage increases to CPI**
Sen. Leonidas P. Raptakis (D-Dist. 33, Coventry, West Greenwich, East Greenwich) will be reintroducing legislation that ties any future increase in the hourly minimum wage to the Consumer Price Index of the Northeast Region. Senator Raptakis introduced the same bill ([2018-S 2246](#)) last session.
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- **Sen. Lawson, Sen. Archambault bills would aid furloughed workers**
Sen. Valarie J. Lawson (D-Dist. 14, East Providence) has introduced legislation ([2019-S 0175](#)) that would allow federal employees who are working during a government shutdown to receive unemployment benefits while they are working but not being paid. Sen. Stephen R. Archambault (D-Dist. 22, Smithfield, North Providence, Johnston) has submitted legislation ([2019-S 0192](#)) that would establish a new program to assist federal employees who have been affected by a shutdown by making available state-backed loans not to exceed \$5,000.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Corvese files bill to create animal abuse registry**
Rep. Arthur Corvese (D-Dist. 55, North Providence) has introduced legislation ([2019-H 5113](#)) to create a statewide animal abuser registry aimed at preventing those with a history of mistreating animals from obtaining other animals. The registry would be available online for anyone transferring a pet, and pet sellers and shelters would be required to check all those to whom they provide pets.
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- **Sen. Miller bill aims to expand support after overdose, mental health ER visits**
The Senate Health and Human Services Committee held a hearing on legislation ([2019-S 0139](#)) sponsored by its chairman, Sen. Joshua Miller (D-Dist. 28, Cranston, Providence) to expand the Alexander C. Perry and Brandon Goldner Act on hospital discharge planning to allow hospitals to contact patients' emergency contact and

recovery coach in certain situations, in accordance with federal HIPAA guidance. The bill is meant to help ensure that those hospitalized for drug overdoses and mental health emergencies have personal support when they are discharged.

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▪ **Study commission on effects of wind turbines on marine life forms**

Rep. Justin K. Price (R-Dist. 39, Richmond, Hopkinton, Exeter) was elected chairman at the first meeting of a legislative commission that will study the effects of wind turbines on all marine wildlife.

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