

June 14, 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, Senate pass bills from education reform legislation package**

The Senate and House of Representatives approved bills that are part of a package of education reform legislation that was unveiled earlier this year. The first bill ([2019-S 0863Aaa](#), [2019-H 5008A](#)), sponsored by Sen. Hanna M. Gallo (D-Dist. 27, Cranston, West Warwick) and Rep. Joseph M. McNamara (D-Dist. 19, Warwick, Cranston) would require the commissioner of education to align statewide academic standards with curriculum and the Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System. The second ([2019-S 0869](#), [2019-H 6085](#)) sponsored by Sen. Harold M. Metts (D-Dist. 6, Providence) and Rep. Jean Philippe Barros (D-Dist. 59, Pawtucket), would require the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to establish a fast-track program to certify new principals. In addition, the Senate passed a third bill ([2019-S 0864A](#)) sponsored by Sen. Adam J. Satchell (D-Dist. 9, West Warwick) that would cause the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to become a professional support partner with local education agencies regarding effective ways to evaluate student improvement and proficiency. That measure now moves to the House, where similar legislation ([2019-H 6111](#)) has been introduced by Rep. Daniel P. McKiernan (D-Dist. 7, Providence).

[Click here to see House release.](#)

[Click here to see Senate release.](#)

- **Senate passes Conley bill to increase earned income tax credit**

The Senate passed legislation ([2019-S 0272](#)) introduced by Sen. William J. Conley Jr. (D-Dist. 18, East Providence, Pawtucket) that would increase Rhode Island's earned income tax credit from 15 percent to 20 percent for the tax years 2020 and beyond. The measure now moves to the House of Representatives, where similar legislation

More...

([2019-H 5245](#)) has been introduced by Rep. Scott A. Slater (D-Dist. 10, Providence). [Click here to see news release.](#)

- **House OKs Vella-Wilkinson bill allowing pharmacists to prescribe birth control**  
The House of Representatives passed legislation ([2019-H 5549](#)) introduced by Rep. Camille F.J. Vella-Wilkinson (D-Dist. 21, Warwick) that would allow pharmacists to prescribe and dispense hormonal contraceptive patches and self-administered oral hormonal contraceptives, provided that the pharmacist has completed a training program approved by the state Board of Pharmacy. The measure now moves to the Senate for consideration.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate OKs ‘Rhode Island T.F. Green International Airport’ renaming**  
The Senate passed legislation ([2019-S 0855](#)) introduced by Majority Leader Michael J. McCaffrey (D-Dist. 29, Warwick) that would rename the state airport “Rhode Island T.F. Green International Airport.” The measure now moves to the House of Representatives, where similar legislation ([2019-H 6149](#)) has been introduced by Rep. Charlene M. Lima (D-Dist. 14, Cranston, Providence).  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate OKs Ruggiero bill to streamline development on large tracts of state land**  
The Senate passed legislation ([2019-S-803Aaa](#)) sponsored by President of the Senate Dominick J. Ruggiero (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) that takes a new approach to economic development on large tracts of state land. Spurred by delays and impediments imposed upon the Hope Point Tower proposal for the I-195 Redevelopment District, the bill intends to create a more streamlined process for approvals on these state-owned parcels moving forward.  
[Click here to see news release](#)
- **House OKs Edwards bill expanding support after overdose hospital visits**  
The House of Representatives passed legislation ([2019-H 5383](#)) introduced by House Majority Whip John G. Edwards (D-Dist. 70, Portsmouth, Tiverton) that would expand the Alexander C. Perry and Brandon Goldner Act on hospital discharge planning. The change will improve support for those hospitalized for drug overdoses and mental health emergencies by increasing the likelihood that their families or others wishing to assist them with treatment are aware of their hospitalization. The measure now moves to the Senate, which passed similar legislation ([2019-S 0139A](#)) introduced by Sen. Joshua Miller (D-Dist. 28, Cranston, Providence).  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate approves McCaffrey bill to curtail use of plastic straws in restaurants**  
The Senate passed legislation ([2019-S 0202A](#)) introduced by Majority Leader Michael J. McCaffrey (D-Dist. 29, Warwick) that would prohibit a food service establishment from providing a consumer with a single-use plastic straw, unless the straw is from a self-service dispenser or the consumer requests such a straw. The measure now moves to the House of Representatives, where similar legislation ([2019-H 5314](#)) has been introduced by Rep. David A. Bennett (D-Dist. 20, Warwick, Cranston).  
[Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Senate passes Sen. Coyne's bills on Alzheimer's care, elder abuse**

The Senate has approved four bills sponsored Sen. Cynthia A. Coyne (D-Dist. 32, Barrington, Bristol, East Providence) to better support Rhode Islanders affected by Alzheimer's disease and to protect against elder abuse. One bill ([2019-S 0223](#), [2019-H 5178](#)), which is also sponsored in the House by House Majority Leader K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick), would establish a program within the Department of Health dedicated to Alzheimer's disease. Another bill ([2019-S 0302A](#), [2019-H 5141](#)), which is also sponsored in the House by Rep. Joseph M. McNamara (D-Dist. 19, Warwick, Cranston), allows the spouses or partners of patients residing in Alzheimer's or dementia special care units or programs to live with them. The Senate also passed her bill ([2019-S 0603A](#), [2019-H 5573](#)), which is sponsored in the House by Rep. David E. Bennett (D-Dist. 20, Warwick, Cranston), expanding a law that requires people to report elder abuse and neglect and her bill ([2019-S 0845A](#), [2019-H 6114](#)) requiring those who serve as guardians for other adults to pass nationwide background checks, which is sponsored in the House by Rep. Patricia A. Serpa (D-Dist. 27, West Warwick, Coventry, Warwick). [Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Reproductive Privacy Act approved by Senate Committee**

The Senate Health and Human Services Committee approved the Reproductive Privacy Act ([2019-H 5125B](#)), sponsored by Rep. Anastasia P. Williams (D-Dist. 9, Providence). The bill, which codifies the protections set forth by the Roe v. Wade decision, now heads to the full Senate and must also return to the House for approval of amendments before it can go to the governor.
- **House Finance Committee expected to vote on FY 2020 state budget**

The House Finance Committee was expected to vote on the FY 2020 state budget ([2019-H 5151](#)) on Friday night. Once passed by the committee, the entire House of Representatives will vote on the budget one week later due to House rules.

-30-

*For an electronic version of this and all press releases published by the Legislative Press and Public Information Bureau, please visit our website at [www.rilegislature.gov/pressrelease](http://www.rilegislature.gov/pressrelease).*