

June 21, 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>



- **Lawmakers pass Rep. Williams’ Reproductive Privacy Act; signed into law**  
The General Assembly passed and Gov. Gina Raimondo signed into law Rep. Anastasia P. Williams’ (D-Dist. 9, Providence) legislation ([2019-H 5125B](#)) to codify in state law the privacy rights and reproductive freedoms guaranteed by the United States Supreme Court in the case Roe v. Wade and its progeny. The bill expressly bans and prohibits all late-term abortions except when necessary for the life or health of the mother.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **House poised to vote on 2020 state budget bill**  
The House was scheduled to take up the \$9.97 billion 2020 state budget bill Friday afternoon. The bill ([2019-H 5151A](#)) fully funds education aid and the continued phase out of the car tax, while closing a \$200 million budget gap. The House proposal rejected nearly all new taxes, increased support for numerous education initiatives including pre-kindergarten and English language learning, and slimmed down the governor’s economic development spending proposals to keep spending within the state’s means. It is expected to go before the Senate in the coming week.
- **Lawmakers approve two bills to expand domestic violence protective orders**  
The General Assembly approved legislation ([2019-S 0321A](#), [2019-H 5489A](#)) sponsored by Senate Majority Whip Maryellen Goodwin (D-Dist. 1, Providence) and House Deputy Majority Whip Christopher R. Blazejewski (D-Dist. 2, Providence) to allow domestic violence protective orders sought in Family Court to include any children of the plaintiff who aren’t related to the defendant, so plaintiffs won’t have to get a second order from another court. Lawmakers also approved legislation ([2019-](#)

More...

[S 0225, 2019-H 5023](#)) introduced by Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) and Rep. William W. O'Brien (D-Dist. 54, North Providence) to allow protective orders to also provide for the safety and welfare of household pets.

[Click here to see news release on expansion for children.](#)

[Click here to see news release on provision for pets.](#)

- **Assembly OKs bill requiring pension fund updates from religious organizations**  
The General Assembly approved legislation ([2019-S 0431Aaa, 2019-H 5287Aaa](#)) sponsored by Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) and House Majority Leader K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick) to require pension plans managed by religious organizations to send regular updates on the financial health of the pension funds to their participants. The bill is a response to the St. Joseph pension plan, which, unbeknownst to its 2,700 members, was left insolvent when contributions to it ceased following the sale of Fatima and Roger Williams hospitals to Prospect Medical Holdings in 2014.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Lawmakers OK bill allowing gay discharges to be recorded as honorable**  
The General Assembly has passed legislation introduced by Rep. Camille F.J. Vella-Wilkinson (D-Dist. 21, Warwick) and Sen. Dawn Euer (D-Dist. 13, Newport, Jamestown) that would extend veterans' benefits to gay or transgender members of the armed forces who failed to receive honorable discharges. The bill ([2019-H 5443A, 2019-S 0837](#)) provides a petition process to have a discharge from service recorded as honorable for members of the armed services separated from the service with a general or other than honorable discharge due solely to their sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression. The measure now moves to the governor.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **General Assembly approves legislation to protect the right to pay with cash**  
The General Assembly passed legislation ([2019-H 5116A, 2019-S 0889](#)) introduced by Rep. Mia Ackerman (D-Dist. 45, Cumberland, Lincoln) and Sen. William J. Conley Jr. (D-Dist. 18, East Providence, Pawtucket) that would make it unlawful for any retail establishment offering goods or services for sale to discriminate against a prospective customer by requiring the use of credit for purchase of goods or services. The measure now moves to the governor's office.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **House OKs bill giving restroom access to those with medical issues**  
The House of Representatives passed a bill ([2019-H 6062A](#)) introduced by Rep. Mia Ackerman (D-Dist. 45, Cumberland, Lincoln) that would require retail establishments with three or more employees on the premises without public restroom facilities to allow customers suffering from eligible medical conditions access to their employee restrooms upon presentation of documentation issued by a licensed physician. The measure now moves to the Senate for consideration.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Sen. Lawson's bill that creates the 'Senior Savings Protection Act' passes Senate**

Sen. Valarie J. Lawson's (D-Dist. 14, East Providence) legislation ([2019-S 0433A](#)) that establishes the "Senior Savings Protection Act" was passed by the Senate. The act would require certain individuals to report the occurrence or suspected occurrence of financial exploitation of persons who are 60 years of age or older and persons who have a disability between the ages of 18 and 59 years old. It now moves to the House, where similar legislation ([2019-H 6091](#)) has been introduced by Rep. Joe R. Serodio (D-Dist. 64, East Providence).

[Click here to see news release](#)

- **Sen. Lynch Prata's bill that raises the minimum wage to \$11.50 passes Senate**  
Senate Judiciary Committee Chairwoman Erin Lynch Prata's (D-Dist. 31, Warwick, Cranston) legislation ([2019-S 0174A](#)) that would increase the hourly minimum wage to \$11.50 per hour was passed by the Senate. The current hourly minimum wage is \$10.50 per hour and was instituted on Jan. 1, 2019. If the legislation becomes law, the minimum wage would raise to \$11.50 per hour starting on Jan. 1, 2020.

[Click here to see news release](#)

- **House, Senate pass bills regarding pet store sales**

The House of Representatives gave its approval to legislation ([2019-H 5072](#)) introduced by Rep. Patricia A. Serpa (D-Dist. 27, West Warwick, Coventry, Warwick) that would ban the sale of dogs and cats at pet shops, except those that have come from an animal shelter, dog pound or animal rescue. The Senate passed legislation ([2019-S-699A](#)) sponsored by Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) that would ensure more humane treatment of dogs and cats sold in pet stores.

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

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

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