

March 8, 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 Reproductive Privacy Act**

The House of Representatives passed legislation ([2019-H 5125A](#)) introduced by Rep. Anastasia P. Williams' (D-Dist. 9, Providence) that codifies in state law the privacy rights and reproductive freedoms guaranteed by the United States Supreme Court in the case Roe v. Wade and its constitutional progeny. The Senate Judiciary Committee also heard testimony on the companion legislation ([2019-S 0152A](#)) sponsored by Sen. Gayle L. Goldin (D-Dist. 3, Providence).

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

- **House passes Solomon bill to curb development on State House grounds**

The House of Representatives passed legislation ([2019-H 5041](#)) introduced by Rep. Joseph J. Solomon Jr. (D-Dist. 22, Warwick) that would prohibit the development of any land contiguous to the State House unless approved by the General Assembly. The measure now moves to the Senate, where similar legislation ([2019-S 0221](#)) has been introduced by Sen. Walter S. Felag Jr. (D-Dist. 10, Bristol, Tiverton, Warren).

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

- **Bills would bring more transparency to Hospital Conversion Act**

Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) has introduced bills that would bring further transparency to the St. Joseph's Health Services pension plan and the Hospital Conversions Act. The first bill ([2019-S 0431](#)), would require all pension plans to submit to public scrutiny, including public reporting of all its liabilities and assets. The second bill ([2019-S 0500](#)) would strengthen a law passed last year that brings greater transparency to the hospital

More...

conversion process.

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▪ **Speaker Mattiello introduces bills to address opioid crisis**

Building upon new laws he sponsored last year, House Speaker Nicholas A. Mattiello (D-Dist. 15, Cranston) has introduced two bills to help address the opioid overdose epidemic in Rhode Island. One bill ([2019-H 5537](#)) would limit most first-time opioid prescriptions to a seven-day supply. The other ([2019-H 5536](#)) would shield police and first responders from civil liability for using or providing lifesaving opioid antagonists.

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

▪ **Rep. Caldwell introduces package of gun laws supported by governor, AG**

Rep. Justine Caldwell (D-Dist. 30, East Greenwich, West Greenwich) introduced legislation proposed by Gov. Gina Raimondo's Gun Safety Working Group and by Attorney General Peter Neronha to curb gun violence. The bills would bar the sale and possession of assault weapons ([2019-H 5741](#)), ban the sale and possession of devices capable of holding more than 10 rounds of ammunition ([2019-H 5739](#)) and require that weapons be stored in a locked container or with tamper-resistant mechanical lock or safety device ([2019-H 5740](#)). Sen. James A. Seveney (D-Dist. 11, Portsmouth, Bristol, Tiverton) has introduced companion legislation ([2019-S 0502](#)) to the final bill.

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▪ **Sen. Ciccone, Rep. Williams bill allows driving privileges for undocumented**

Sen. Frank A. Ciccone (D-Dist. 7, Providence, North Providence) and Rep. Anastasia P. Williams (D-Dist. 9, Providence) held a press conference concerning legislation ([2019-S 0153](#), [2019-H 5511](#)) they sponsored that would allow the Department of Motor Vehicles to issue driving privilege licenses and permits to applicants unable to establish lawful presence in the United States.

[Click here for Ciccone release.](#)

[Click here for Williams release.](#)

▪ **Rep. Place submits bill to reform Energy Facility Siting Act**

Rep. David Place (R-Dist. 47, Burrillville, Glocester) introduced legislation ([2019-H 5446](#)) to reform the Energy Facility Siting Act. The proposed updates include increasing public and municipal participation, increased environmental protections, a faster and more transparent application process, expansion of members, and compliance from construction to operation. The proposed bill would also expand the EFSA from three to seven members for substantial energy projects.

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

▪ **Ruggiero bill would add more biodiesel to heating oil**

Rep. Deborah Ruggiero (D-Dist. 74, Jamestown, Middletown) has introduced legislation ([2019-H 5447](#)) that would help Rhode Island meet its carbon emissions reduction goals by phasing in higher percentages of biodiesel in heating oil sold in Rhode Island.

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▪ **Advocates back bills for economic justice**

At a State House event, a coalition of advocates and organizations backed the “Women’s Economic Justice Platform,” a group of bills that includes equal pay legislation ([2019-H 5659](#), [2019-S 0460](#)) sponsored by Rep. Susan R. Donovan (D-Dist. 69, Bristol, Portsmouth) and Sen. Gayle L. Goldin (D-Dist. 3, Providence), legislation ([2019-S 0508](#)) to raise the minimum wage to \$15 by 2023 sponsored by Sen. Ana B. Quezada (D-Dist. 2, Providence) and Rep. Marcia Ranglin-Vassell (D-Dist. 5, Providence), and others pertaining to sexual harassment, paid leave, child care and more.

▪ **Senator Lombardi bill would allow municipal regulation of wind farms**

Sen. Frank S. Lombardi (D-Dist. 26, Cranston) has submitted legislation ([2019-S 0414](#)) that would allow cities and towns to pass ordinances regarding wind farms, requiring notice be given to nearby property owners before construction. [Click here to see news release.](#)

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