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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>



- **Lawmakers host governor for State of the State address**

Gov. Gina M. Raimondo delivered her annual State of the State address to lawmakers, saying she is optimistic about the future, and that a bright future depends on making investments in education and affordable housing and making a commitment to the environment. House Minority Leader Blake A. Filippi (R-Dist. 36, New Shoreham, Charlestown, South Kingstown, Westerly) delivered the Republican response to the speech.

[Click here to see governor's address.](#)

[Click here to see Republican response.](#)

- **Assembly receives 2021 budget proposal**

The General Assembly received Gov. Gina M. Raimondo's proposed budget for fiscal year 2021, and will begin holding hearings on it in the coming weeks. Among her proposals are increased education funding and a bond to build more early-education classrooms, a dedicated revenue stream to support affordable-housing development and making permanent the Rhode Island Promise program, which provides students two years' free tuition at the Community College of Rhode Island.

[Click here to see bill.](#)

[Click here to see House Speaker's response.](#)

[Click here to see Senate President's response.](#)

- **House bills look to protect public from those who own guns illegally**

House leaders and members have introduced legislation designed to protect the public from people who are not law-abiding citizens and who possess guns illegally. The first bill ([2020-H 7101](#)), sponsored by Speaker of the House Nicholas A. Mattiello

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(D-Dist. 15, Cranston), would implement a statewide public safety computer-aided dispatch-records-management system to integrate all of Rhode Island's police departments. Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) plans to sponsor similar legislation in the Senate. The second bill ([2020-H 7102](#)), sponsored by Rep. Patricia Serpa (D-Dist. 27, West Warwick, Coventry, Warwick), would prohibit the manufacturing, importation, sale, shipment, delivery, possession, or transfer of any ghost gun or firearm that is undetectable by metal detectors commonly used at airports and public buildings, including 3D printed firearms. Similar legislation has been field by Sen. Cynthia A. Coyne (D-Dist. 32, Barrington, Bristol, East Providence) in the Senate. The third ([2020-H 7103A](#)), introduced by Rep. Daniel P. McKiernan (D-Dist. 7, Providence), would require gun sellers to forward firearm applications to the police department of the city or town where the buyer resides, or to the State Police if the buyer is a resident of Exeter, since the town has no local police department.

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

- **Rep. McNamara bill would allow schools to raise funds for field trips**
Rep. Joseph M. McNamara (D-Dist. 19, Warwick, Cranston) has introduced legislation that would allow school districts to raise the money necessary to fund certain extracurricular activities, including field trips and dances. The legislation ([2020-H 7069](#)) would allow a school district to request a contribution of money from a student or the student's parent or legal guardian to pay, in whole or in part, for the cost of district-sponsored field trips, dances, clubs, and other district-sponsored or based programs of extracurricular activities, provided that the district would pay the costs to meet any deficit.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Vella-Wilkinson bill would create Veterans' Affairs Oversight Commission**
Rep. Camille F.J. Vella-Wilkinson (D-Dist. 21, Warwick) has introduced legislation that would create a nine-member permanent joint military and veterans' affairs oversight commission. The bill ([2020-H 7175](#)) would establish the commission for the purpose of overseeing operations of Rhode Island Office of Veterans' Affairs and fiscal oversight of military affairs and defense.
- **Rep. Shanley bill would limit surprise billing for out-of-network care**
Rep. Evan P. Shanley (D-Dist. 24, Warwick) has introduced legislation ([2020-H 7042](#)) that would change the way out-of-network health care professionals are paid after rendering services to patients who didn't have the opportunity to select such health care services from in-network professionals. The bill would provide a method for the reimbursement to out-of-network professionals who provide unanticipated care and would provide guidelines for what payment those professionals may seek or accept from a patient for unanticipated out-of-network care.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senator 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. The bill would also raise the state's minimum wage to \$11.10 per hour by January 2021, giving a 60 cent boost

from \$10.50 per hour. Starting in 2022, the minimum wage would be tied to the CPI, which is released by the US Department of Labor, giving employees and employers nine months to prepare for the minimum wage increase based on 2021's CPI, which is released in March.

[Click here to see news release](#)

- **Ruggerio bill provides for Senate confirmation of education commissioners**
President of the Senate Dominick J. Ruggerio has introduced legislation ([2020-S 2005](#)) to require appointments to the offices of Elementary and Secondary Education Commissioner and Postsecondary Education Commissioner to be subject to the advice and consent of the Senate, just as other high-level state government appointments are. The legislation would also require that the governor resubmit the appointments of the secretaries of the Office of Health and Human Services and Commerce upon the governor's second term, as is required with department directors.
[Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Leaders meet with Environmental Council**
Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) and House Majority Leader K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick) addressed the Environmental Council of Rhode Island, a coalition of more than 60 groups dedicated to the environment. They urged members to work collaboratively with lawmakers and other stakeholders in designing solutions to the environmental challenges we face.

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