

June 19, 2020

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>



- **Assembly OKs ghost guns ban; bill headed to governor**  
The General Assembly approved legislation ([2020-S 2004B](#), [2020-H 7102Aaa](#)) sponsored by Sen. Cynthia A. Coyne (D-Dist. 32, Barrington, Bristol, East Providence) and Rep. Patricia A. Serpa (D-Dist. 27, West Warwick, Coventry, Warwick) to prohibit the manufacturing, transfer, purchase or possessing of any plastic, fiberglass or 3-D printed gun, as well as “ghost guns,” untraceable guns and undetectable guns.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **General Assembly approves supplemental budget**  
Legislators approved a supplemental budget for the fiscal year ending June 30 that uses a combination of new federal funding, the state’s rainy day fund and unspent funds throughout state agencies to address a budget gap of about \$250 million caused largely by revenue losses linked to the COVID-19 pandemic. The legislation ([2020-H 7170Aaa](#)), sponsored by House Finance Chairman Marvin L. Abney (D-Dist. 73, Newport, Middletown), now goes to the governor’s desk.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate to study reform of Law Enforcement Officers’ Bill of Rights**  
A special legislative task force will review and provide recommendations on policies pertaining to the Rhode Island Law Enforcement Officers’ Bill of Rights (LEOBOR), under legislation ([2020-S 2867](#)) sponsored by Sen. Harold M. Metts (D-Dist. 6, Providence) and approved by the Senate. Rep. Anastasia P. Williams (D-Dist. 9, Providence) has also introduced legislation ([2020-H 8036](#)) in the House to make

More...

changes to the LEOBOR.

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- **Senate OKs resolution asking voters to remove ‘Plantations’ from state name**  
 The Senate voted unanimously to support legislation ([2020-S 2902aa](#)) sponsored by Sen. Harold M. Metts (D-Dist. 6, Providence) to ask voters in November whether to change the official state name. The proposal would eliminate “and Providence Plantations” from the state’s official name because the outdated reference conjures an image of a time and place when slavery was widely accepted. The bill now heads to the House, where Rep. Anastasia P. Williams (D-Dist. 9, Providence) introduced a similar measure ([2020-H 8077](#)).  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate votes to permanently enact telemedicine insurance requirement**  
 The Senate approved legislation ([2020-S 2525A](#)) sponsored by Health and Human Services Committee Chairman Joshua Miller (D-Dist. 28, Cranston, Providence) to permanently require health insurers to comprehensively cover telemedicine visits. The bill now goes to the House. An executive order put in place March 18 required insurers to cover telemedicine visits as a means to allow Rhode Islanders to access health care without having to leave their homes during the COVID-19 pandemic.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Legislature OKs bill giving flexibility to cities, towns during emergencies**  
 The General Assembly approved legislation to allow communities and fire districts to continue their operations and conduct public hearings virtually during a state of emergency. The bill ([2020-H 8015](#), [2020-S 2864](#)), which is sponsored by House Majority Whip John G. Edwards (D-Dist. 70, Tiverton, Portsmouth) and Sen. William J. Conley Jr. (D-Dist. 18, East Providence, Pawtucket), would allow a municipality or fire district to pass a resolution or an ordinance to continue its prior budget past the end of its fiscal year, or adopt a new one during a state of emergency. In either case, the town would need to hold a public hearing with public input, which could be held virtually. The measure now moves to the governor.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Williams letter urges Congress to make Juneteenth a national holiday**  
 Rep. Anastasia P. Williams (D-Dist. 9, Providence) has written to Rhode Island’s congressional delegation urging them to sponsor legislation marking Juneteenth as a federal holiday. Juneteenth is celebrated on June 19 and recognizes the day that Union Maj. Gen. Gordon Granger rode into Galveston, Texas, on June 19, 1865, to inform slave owners and the populace that the Civil War had ended and all slaves were to be set free. The Senate also passed a resolution ([2020-S 2897](#)) introduced by Sen. Harold M. Metts (D-Dist. 6, Providence) that proclaims June 19 as Juneteenth National Freedom Day.  
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