

State of Rhode Island

JOURNAL

-OF THE-

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY SESSION of the General Assembly begun and held at the State House in the City of Providence on Tuesday, the Seventh Day of January in the year of Our Lord Two Thousand and Twenty-Five.

Volume 152, No. 9

Tuesday, February 4, 2025

Ninth-Day

The House of Representatives meets at the State House in Providence on Tuesday, February 4, 2025, and is called to order at 4:23 o'clock P.M. by the Honorable K. Joseph Shekarchi, Speaker.

The roll is called and a quorum is declared present with 68 members present and 7 members absent as follows:

PRESENT – 68: The Honorable Speaker Shekarchi and Representatives Abney, Ackerman, Ajello, Azzinaro, Baginski, Batista, Bennett, Biah, Blazejewski, Boylan, Brien, Caldwell, Carson, Casey, Chippendale, Cortvriend, Corvese, Costantino, Cotter, Craven, Cruz, Dawson, DeSimone, Diaz, Donovan, Edwards, Fascia, Felix, Fellela, Finkelman, Fogarty, Furtado, Giraldo, Hopkins, Hull, Kazarian, Kennedy, Kislak, Knight, Lima, Lombardi, Marszalkowski, McEntee, McGaw, McNamara, Morales, Nardone, Newberry, Noret, O'Brien, Paplauskas, Perez, Phillips, Place, Potter, Quattrocchi, Read, Roberts, Serpa, Shallcross Smith, Shanley, Slater, Solomon, Speakman, Spears, Stewart, and Voas.

ABSENT – 7: Representatives Alzate, Casimiro, Handy, Messier, Sanchez, Santucci and Tanzi.

INVOCATION

The Honorable Speaker Shekarchi presents Representative Joseph M. McNamara, who delivers the Invocation and leads the membership in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

(For Invocation, see Appendix, this Journal.)

APPROVAL OF RECORD

By unanimous consent, the House Journal of Thursday, January 30, 2025, is approved.

APPOINTMENTS

February 4, 2025

Speaker K. Joseph Shekarchi makes the following appointment:

Appointment to House Municipal Government and Housing Committee:

Representative Lauren Carson

Replacing vice Representative Evan Shanley

Appointment to House Oversight Energy Subcommittee:

Representative Mary Ann Shallcross Smith

Replacing vice Representative Susan Donovan

Read and placed on file.

COMMUNICATIONS

Representative Karen Alzate is unable to attend session today, Tuesday, February 4, 2025.

Representative Julie A. Casimiro is unable to attend session today, Tuesday, February 4, 2025.

Representative Mary Duffy Messier is unable to attend session today, Tuesday, February 4, 2025.

GUESTS

Representative Morales is honored to welcome Rochelle Lee, Commissioner of the Rhode Island Human Rights Commission; Valerie Reishuk, Organizer for the Rhode Island Transit Riders and the Providence Streets Coalition; Liza Burkin, Board President of the Providence Streets Coalition and Policy Analyst at the U.S. Department of Transportation; and Dylan Giles, Operations Manager of the Providence Streets Coalition.

Chairwoman McEntee is pleased to welcome South Kingstown Councilman Jason G. Wegimont to the House. He is here today to testify before the House Municipal Government and Housing Committee regarding proposed legislation.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Representative Craven announces that the Sojourner House will host a legislative briefing with the House Judiciary Committee and Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Matt LaMountain on Thursday, February 6, at 3:30 p.m. in the State House Library. All members are invited to attend.

GUESTS

Representative Spears welcomes Sophia McKean to the House Chamber. Sophia is attending the University of Rhode Island and interning with the House Communications Office this session. Speaker Shekarchi also extends a warm welcome.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Representative Noret invites all members to attend the Rhode Island Clean Water Association Legislative Summit on Thursday, February 6th, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. The event will feature remarks from Speaker Shekarchi, and the Clean Water Association will present its Legislator of the Year award to Representative Terry Cortvriend. We encourage all members to join in recognizing Representative Cortvriend's contributions and supporting the important work of the Clean Water Association.

GUESTS

Representative Noret welcomes his intern, Rachel Gosselin, who is attending Johnson & Wales University, to the House Chamber. Speaker Shekarchi also welcomes her to the House.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Representative Shallcross Smith announces that the legislative kick-off for the 2025 Right from the Start Agenda will occur tomorrow, Wednesday, February 5th, at 3:00 p.m. in the State Room. All members are invited to attend and take part in this important event.

Deputy Majority Whip Ackerman announces that AARP Rhode Island will host a legislative reception in the State Room on Thursday, February 6th, from 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. All members are invited to attend and engage with AARP representatives on key issues affecting older Rhode Islanders.

Chairman Solomon announces that the Committee on Corporations will meet today, at the rise of the House, in Room 135 of the State House.

Chairman Casey announces that the Committee on Municipal Government & Housing will meet today, at the rise of the House, in Room 101 of the State House.

GUESTS

Representative Spears warmly welcomes her intern, Lachland McCann, who attends Brown University, to the House.

Majority Leader Blazejewski announces that the next House session will be this Thursday, February 6, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. Next week, the House will convene on Tuesday, February 11, and Wednesday, February 12, both at 4:00 p.m. There will be no House session on Thursday, February 13; however, committees will meet that day.

IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION**House Resolution No. 5287**

BY Hull, Abney, Biah, Chippendale, Morales, Felix, Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Batista, Phillips
ENTITLED, HOUSE RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING FEBRUARY OF 2025, AS "BLACK HISTORY MONTH" IN THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND {LC732/1}

With the agreement of the majority and the minority, Deputy Speaker Hull requests unanimous consent for immediate consideration.

There is no objection.

Deputy Speaker Hull discusses the resolution.

Read and passed, on a motion of Deputy Speaker Hull, seconded by many others, by unanimous consent, on a voice vote.

House Resolution No. 5288

BY McNamara, Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Chippendale, Kislak, Corvese, Ackerman, Kennedy, Ajello, Costantino
ENTITLED, HOUSE RESOLUTION COMMEMORATING "NATIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELING WEEK" ON FEBRUARY 3-7, 2025, IN THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND {LC735/1}

With the agreement of the majority and the minority, Chairman McNamara requests unanimous consent for immediate consideration.

There is no objection.

Chairman McNamara discusses the resolution.

Read and passed, on a motion of Chairman McNamara, seconded by many others, by unanimous consent, on a voice vote.

House Resolution No. 5289

BY Blazejewski, Chippendale
ENTITLED, HOUSE RESOLUTION EXTENDING CONDOLENCES {LC1133/1}

Majority Leader Blazejewski requests unanimous consent for immediate consideration.

There is no objection.

Read and passed, on a motion of Majority Leader Blazejewski, seconded by Minority Leader Chippendale, by unanimous consent, on a rising vote.

House Resolution No. 5290**BY** Blazejewski, Chippendale**ENTITLED**, HOUSE RESOLUTION EXTENDING CONGRATULATIONS {LC1132/1}

Majority Leader Blazejewski requests unanimous consent for immediate consideration.

There is no objection.

Read and passed, on a motion of Majority Leader Blazejewski, seconded by Minority Leader Chippendale, by unanimous consent, on a voice vote.

TRANSMITTAL

By unanimous consent, all matters on the clerk's desk are ordered to be transmitted to His Excellency, the Governor, to the Honorable Senate, and the Honorable Secretary of State forthwith.

(For Transmittals to Governor, see Appendix of this Journal.)

DESK HELD OPEN

The Honorable Speaker Shekarchi announces that the desk will be held open.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Honorable Senate transmits with announcement of passage, of the following measures:

Senate Bill No. 157**BY** DiPalma**ENTITLED**, AN ACT TO VACATE THE FORFEITURE OR REVOCATION OF THE CHARTER OF F.H.J. MOVING & STORAGE, INC. {LC469/1}

02/05/2025 Referred to House Corporations

NEW BUSINESS**House Bill No. 5291****BY** Spears, Cotter, Donovan, Fogarty, Boylan, Speakman, McNamara, Chippendale, Tanzi, Casimiro**ENTITLED**, AN ACT RELATING TO COMMERCIAL LAW -- GENERAL REGULATORY PROVISIONS -- RHODE ISLAND SOCIAL MEDIA REGULATION ACT (Creates the Rhode Island Social Media Regulation act, which would not permit a Rhode Island resident who is a minor to be an account holder on a social media's platform unless the minor has the express consent of a parent or guardian.) {LC157/1}

02/05/2025 Introduced, referred to House Corporations

House Bill No. 5292**BY** Fellela, Serpa, Read, Phillips**ENTITLED**, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- REGIONAL VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS (Requires that the basic education program data collection information for students that attend career and technical education schools be charged to the receiving school district and not the sending school district.) {LC1073/1}

02/05/2025 Introduced, referred to House Education

House Bill No. 5293**BY** Hull, Sanchez, Lombardi, DeSimone, O'Brien, Fogarty, Diaz**ENTITLED**, AN ACT RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY (Creates a public education program on methods to recycle textiles.) {LC1127/1}

02/05/2025 Introduced, referred to House Environment and Natural Resources

House Bill No. 5294**BY** Shanley, Bennett, Phillips**ENTITLED**, AN ACT RELATING TO AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY -- OLD GROWTH FOREST PROTECTION ACT (Creates the Old Growth Forest Protection Act to provide protection for state-owned forestland in their natural state prohibiting extractive logging and clearcutting in any forest on state-owned land.) {LC1096/1}

02/05/2025 Introduced, referred to House Environment and Natural Resources

House Bill No. 5295**BY** Perez, Hull, Fellela, Biah, Brien, Hopkins, Roberts, Diaz**ENTITLED**, AN ACT RELATING TO CRIMINAL OFFENSES -- CHILDREN (Criminalizes the knowing and intentional failure of a physician, nurse, or other licensed medical person to provide reasonable medical care and treatment to an infant born alive as a felony.) {LC667/1}

02/05/2025 Introduced, referred to House Judiciary

House Bill No. 5296**BY** Perez, Hull, Fellela, Azzinaro, Biah, Brien, Roberts, Diaz**ENTITLED**, AN ACT RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- BORN-ALIVE INFANT PROTECTION ACT (Provides duties/obligations of medical personnel to born-alive infants resulting from an abortion punishable as a felony along with a civil action for compensatory/punitive damages/automatic one year license suspension.) {LC668/1}

02/05/2025 Introduced, referred to House Judiciary

(For Co-sponsorship removal request, see Journal of 2-12-2025, page 2.)**House Bill No. 5297****BY** Perez, Felix, Hull, Lombardi, Fellela, DeSimone, Batista, Diaz, Morales, Ackerman**ENTITLED**, AN ACT RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- CORRECTIONS DEPARTMENT (Sets standards and procedures to allow and implement conjugal visitation at state correctional facilities.) {LC649/1}

02/05/2025 Introduced, referred to House Judiciary

(For Co-sponsorship removal request, see Journal of 2-25-2025, page 2.)**House Bill No. 5298****BY** Kislak, Knight, Cruz, Ajello, Felix, Craven, Caldwell, Batista, McEntee, Potter**ENTITLED**, AN ACT RELATING TO DELINQUENT AND DEPENDENT CHILDREN --

PROCEEDINGS IN FAMILY COURT (Prohibits any questioning of a juvenile who is suspected of delinquent or criminal behavior, unless the parent or guardian of the juvenile is present, or unless an attorney is present or the juvenile and their parents have waived their presence.) {LC962/1}

02/05/2025 Introduced, referred to House Judiciary

House Bill No. 5299

BY McNamara, Cruz, Solomon, Potter, Slater, Fogarty, Cotter, Carson, Spears, McEntee
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO PROPERTY -- LEASED LAND DWELLINGS (Directs RI Housing to work with stakeholders to investigate and determine ways to assist an incorporated homeowners' association to exercise rights to purchase leased land.) {LC1146/1}

02/05/2025 Introduced, referred to House Judiciary

House Bill No. 5300

(Secretary of State)

BY Dawson, Shanley, Kazarian, Furtado, Boylan
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO CRIMINAL OFFENSES -- THREATS AND EXTORTION (Considers election officials and poll workers "public officials" for purposes of the prohibition on making threats to public officials.) {LC1107/1}

02/05/2025 Introduced, referred to House Judiciary

House Bill No. 5301

BY Phillips, Serpa, Fellela, Casey, Brien, Cruz, O'Brien, Batista, Costantino
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO CRIMINAL OFFENSES-IDENTITY THEFT PROTECTION ACT OF 2015 (Expands responsibilities of agencies, persons or entities that store, own, collect, process, maintain, acquire, use, or licenses data, who experiences a security breach, include providing additional information to persons affected and law enforcement) {LC745/1}

02/05/2025 Introduced, referred to House Innovation, Internet, & Technology

House Bill No. 5302

BY Morales, Donovan, Batista, Azzinaro, Kennedy, Giraldo, Caldwell, Fogarty, Handy, Stewart
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO INSURANCE -- PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFITS (Caps the total amount that a covered person is required to pay for a covered prescription inhaler, prescription device, or prescription equipment to twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) per thirty (30) day supply.) {LC452/1}

02/05/2025 Introduced, referred to House Health & Human Services

House Bill No. 5303

BY Knight, Speakman, Fogarty, McEntee, Cotter, Carson, Donovan, Read, Corvese
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL COMPLAINT HISTORY TRANSPARENCY ACT (Establishes a searchable database of healthcare professionals' complaint histories, accessible to employers. License holders can review and dispute inaccuracies, while maintaining current criminal background check requirements.) {LC767/1}

02/05/2025 Introduced, referred to House Health & Human Services

House Bill No. 5304

BY Hull, Perez, Lombardi, Bennett, Biah, O'Brien, Fogarty, Diaz
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS -- THE

COMMUTER TRANSPORTATION BENEFITS ACT (Establishes the commuter transportation benefit chapter. Employers with five hundred (500) or more employees would be required to establish a pre-tax commuter transportation fringe benefit program.) {LC1075/1}

02/05/2025 Introduced, referred to House Labor

House Bill No. 5305

BY Morales, Furtado, McNamara, Stewart, Shanley, Casimiro, Alzate, McEntee, Potter, Cruz

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- DIVISION OF

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH (Requires employers to protect employees from extreme temperatures through rest breaks, PPE, training, and equipment, and mandates quarterly supervisor training, to recognize and mitigate heat- and cold-related risks.) {LC638/1}

02/05/2025 Introduced, referred to House Labor

House Bill No. 5306

(City of Providence)

BY DeSimone, Biah, Diaz, Slater, Hull

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT COMMISSION -- CAPITAL CENTER COMMISSION (Repeals legislation establishing the Capital Center Commission, which is a special development district commission for downtown Providence.)

{LC967/1}

02/05/2025 Introduced, referred to House Municipal Government & Housing

House Bill No. 5307

(City of Providence)

BY DeSimone, Biah, Azzinaro, Ajello, Diaz, Slater, Hull

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION -- PROPERTY SUBJECT TO TAXATION

(Authorizes the Providence city council to set the veterans tax exemption limit to an amount determined by the city council via ordinance or resolution.) {LC972/1}

02/05/2025 Introduced, referred to House Municipal Government & Housing

House Bill No. 5308

BY Voas, Giraldo, Messier, Stewart, Slater, Casey, Finkelman, Marszalkowski, Solomon

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION -- LEVY AND ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL

TAXES (Permits every municipality in the state to offer a homestead tax exemption of up to 20% of assessed value on residential properties, and also provides that municipalities that grant greater exemptions not be limited by this section.) {LC870/1}

02/05/2025 Introduced, referred to House Municipal Government & Housing

House Bill No. 5309

BY Voas, Giraldo, Messier, Stewart, Casey, Finkelman, Marszalkowski, DeSimone, Read, Solomon

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION -- PROPERTY SUBJECT TO TAXATION

(Increases the minimum veterans' exemption from one thousand dollars (\$1,000) to five thousand dollars (\$6,000) with respect to municipal taxes.) {LC871/1}

02/05/2025 Introduced, referred to House Municipal Government & Housing

House Bill No. 5310

BY Speakman, Boylan, Carson, Cotter, Spears, Giraldo, Tanzi, Cortvriend, Donovan, Morales

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- RHODE

ISLAND HOUSING AND CONSERVATION TRUST FUND ACT (Restructures the Rhode Island Housing and Conservation Trust Fund, increases its membership to 15 members, 11 of whom are to be from the general public and reallocates the percentage of the funds for housing, conservation and other goals.) {LC604/1}

02/05/2025 Introduced, referred to House Municipal Government & Housing

House Bill No. 5311

(Board of Elections)

BY Shanley, Batista, Hull, Biah

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO ELECTIONS -- MAIL BALLOTS (Allows the board of elections to tabulate mail ballots in local special elections in the same manner as in tabulate mail ballots in statewide elections.) {LC957/1}

02/05/2025 Introduced, referred to House State Government & Elections

House Bill No. 5312

BY Carson, Shanley

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO ELECTIONS -- LOCAL CANVASSING AUTHORITIES (Establishes a process by which vacancies in a municipal election office and local canvassing board are filled.) {LC1204/1}

02/05/2025 Introduced, referred to House State Government & Elections

House Resolution No. 5313

BY Morales, Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Biah, Stewart, Cruz, Giraldo, Furtado, Batista, Cortvriend

ENTITLED, HOUSE RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING FEBRUARY 4, 2025, AS "TRANSIT EQUITY DAY" IN THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND IN HONOR OF ROSA PARKS AND HER HISTORIC FIGHT FOR EQUITABLE PUBLIC TRANSIT {LC734/1}

02/05/2025 Introduced, referred to House Special Legislation

House Bill No. 5314

(City of Providence)

BY Kislak, Diaz, Lombardi, Hull, Ajello, Slater, Batista, Biah

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION -- THE PARKING SERVICES TAXATION ACT (Grants municipalities the authority to impose a parking services sales tax on parking lots and parking structures that charge for parking services through an ordinance.) {LC966/1}

02/05/2025 Introduced, referred to House Finance

House Bill No. 5315

(Board of Elections)

BY Finkelman

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO ELECTIONS -- GENERAL PROVISIONS (Allows retired election officials to work for the state board of elections on a temporary basis in any year in which a statewide, congressional or referendum general election is held.) {LC956/1}

02/05/2025 Introduced, referred to House Finance

House Bill No. 5316

BY Finkelman, Solomon, Shanley, Morales, Dawson, Noret, Phillips, Batista, Caldwell, Voas
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION -- HOUSING FLEXIBLE SPENDING ACCOUNT ACT OF 2025 (Establishes the Housing Flexible Spending Account Act of 2025 allowing Rhode Island employers to contribute pre-tax income into a housing flexible spending account (H-FSA), for employees to be used for qualified housing expenses.) {LC904/1}
02/05/2025 Introduced, referred to House Finance

House Bill No. 5317

BY McGaw, Cortvriend, Edwards, Morales, Potter, Cotter, DeSimone
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO HIGHWAYS -- RELOCATION OF UTILITY SERVICES (Utility relocation costs related to highway construction to be partially or fully paid for by the state.) {LC529/1}
02/05/2025 Introduced, referred to House Finance

House Bill No. 5318

BY Edwards, Fellela, Serpa, Kazarian, Shanley, Spears, Donovan, Corvese, Bennett, O'Brien
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO PUBLIC OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES -- RETIREMENT SYSTEM--ADMINISTRATION (Changes the teacher and state employees' retirement benefit calculations' cutoff date from July 1, 2024, to July 1, 2012, for all retirement members eligible to and who retire on or after the new July 1, 2012, cutoff date.) {LC1240/1}
02/05/2025 Introduced, referred to House Finance

House Bill No. 5319

BY Chippendale, Fascia, Casey, Noret, Read, Hull, Solomon, Costantino, Baginski, Brien
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- RETIREMENT OF MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES (Allows any peace officer working in a Rhode Island school as a full or part-time resource officer to work in excess of the seventy-five (75) working days in a calendar year, and not have an interruption in their benefits.) {LC1081/1}
02/05/2025 Introduced, referred to House Finance

House Bill No. 5320

BY Casey, Potter, Donovan, Speakman, McGaw, Kazarian, Dawson, Chippendale, Serpa, Cortvriend
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES -- MEDICAL ASSISTANCE -- PRESCRIPTION DRUGS (Prohibits the Rhode Island medical assistance program and managed care organizations that it contracts with from requiring prior authorization or step therapy protocol for a prescription of a nonpreferred anticonvulsant or antipsychotic.) {LC814/1}
02/05/2025 Introduced, referred to House Finance

House Bill No. 5321

BY Cruz, Diaz, Kislak, Ajello, Morales, Messier, Sanchez, Potter, Giraldo, Speakman
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES -- RHODE ISLAND CHILD CARE FOR ALL ACT (Establishes the Rhode Island Child Care for All Act which would provide high quality and affordable child care to families throughout the state.) {LC523/1}
02/05/2025 Introduced, referred to House Finance

House Bill No. 5322

BY O'Brien, Dawson, McNamara, Slater, Diaz, Solomon, Kazarian, Brien, Hull, Lombardi
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- TEACHERS' RETIREMENT [SEE
TITLE 16 CHAPTER 97 -- THE RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION ACT] (Extends the
sunset provision allowing retired teachers to substitute teach for up to 180 days from June 20, 2025
until July 1, 2026.) {LC1139/1}

02/05/2025 Introduced, referred to House Finance

House Resolution No. 5323

BY Casey, Ajello, Brien, Kislak, Phillips, Cruz, Potter, Lombardi, Shallcross Smith, Corvese
ENTITLED, JOINT RESOLUTION MAKING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$500,000 TO
SOJOURNER HOUSE IN RHODE ISLAND (Authorizes the appropriation of the sum of \$500,000
to Sojourner House to support its permanent housing development program that provides safe, secure
housing to individuals and families fleeing from dangerous situations.) {LC1176/1}

02/05/2025 Introduced, referred to House Finance

ADJOURNMENT

At 4:46 o'clock P.M. on motion of Majority Leader Blazejewski seconded by Minority Leader
Chippendale the House adjourns, on a unanimous voice vote.

Diane M. DePina
Recording Clerk

APPENDIX

INVOCATION

REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH M. MCNAMARA

Dear God, As we start Black History Month, help us value and honor African American contributions to our country. Often ignored or discounted, Black history is American history. When we fully educate ourselves on their great sacrifices and contributions to America, we will better appreciate the diversity that has so blessed this country. Amen.