

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-Six.

Volume 153, No. 16

Tuesday, March 10, 2026

Sixteenth Day

The House of Representatives meets at the State House in Providence on Tuesday, March 10, 2026, and is called to order at 4:12 o'clock P.M. by the Honorable K. Joseph Shekarchi, Speaker.

The roll is called, and a quorum is declared present with 71 members present and 4 members absent as follows:

PRESENT – 71: The Honorable Speaker Shekarchi and Representatives Abney, Ackerman, Ajello, Alzate, Azzinaro, Baginski, Batista, Bennett, Biah, Blazejewski, Boylan, Brien, Caldwell, Carson, Casey, Casimiro, Cortvriend, Corvese, Costantino, Cotter, Craven, Cruz, Dawson, DeSimone, Diaz, Donovan, Edwards, Fascia, Felix, Fellela, Finkelman, Fogarty, Furtado, Giraldo, Handy, Hopkins, Hull, Kazarian, Kislak, Knight, Lombardi, McEntee, McGaw, McNamara, Morales, Nardone, Newberry, Noret, O'Brien, Paplauskas, Perez, Phillips, Place, Potter, Quattrocchi, Read, Roberts, Sanchez, Santucci, Serpa, Shallcross Smith, Shanley, Slater, Solomon, Speakman, Spears, Stewart, Tanzi, and Voas.

ABSENT – 4: Representatives Chippendale, Kennedy, Lima, Marszalkowski, and Messier.

INVOCATION

The Honorable Speaker Shekarchi presents Representative John G. Edwards, 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, March 5, 2026, is approved.

COMMUNICATIONS

Representative Brian Patrick Kennedy is unable to attend session today, Tuesday, March 10, 2026.

GUESTS

Chairman McNamara warmly welcomes Pilgrim High School freshman Lysander (Tre) Roberson, his mother, Nicole Pacheco, his father, Lysander Roberson, John Pacheco, and Science Teacher at Pilgrim High School, Dr. Mark Fontaineto, to the House Chamber. Tre participated in the Pilgrim High School Science Fair, where he tested the effectiveness of padded football helmet covers. Tre will testify today before the Education Committee on House Bill 7115, the Soft-Shell Helmet Cover Device. Speaker Shekarchi congratulates Tre and welcomes him to the House.

Representative Biah cordially welcomes Roger Williams University School of Law's Black Mock Trial Team, Ebonie Aghahowa, and Emanuell Smith to the House Chamber. Representative Biah extends his congratulations on their remarkable achievement of securing second place at the National Black Law Students Association New England Regional Thurgood Marshall Moot Court Competition, as well as on qualifying for the national competition in Oregon. Speaker Shekarchi congratulates them on their achievement and welcomes them to the House.

NOW PRESIDING

At 4:28 o'clock P.M., the Honorable Speaker Shekarchi yields the rostrum to the Honorable Deputy Speaker Hull.

By unanimous consent, the House returns to:

GUESTS

Representative Carson welcomes Rhode Island State Council on the Arts Deputy Director Sara Leonard, Board Members Elvys Ruiz and Steven Boudreau, and Dance Alliance of Rhode Island Board Member Marty Sprague to the House Chamber in celebration of Arts in the Schools Month.

Representative Batista, in heartfelt memory of his father, Francisco, shares some warm remarks and sincerely appreciates everyone who offered their condolences during this difficult time. He warmly welcomes to the House Councilman from Central Falls, Franklin Solano, along with his partner, Jacqueline Perez, and thanks them genuinely for their support.

Deputy Speaker Hull, Representative Slater, Chairwoman Diaz, and Majority Leader Blazejewski also send their heartfelt condolences to Representative Batista and his entire family.

In celebration of Homeless Service Provider Day, Representative Tanzi warmly welcomes the Director of Strategic Partnerships for the Housing Network of Rhode Island, the President & CEO of Crossroads Rhode Island, Michelle Wilcox, the President & CEO of Amos House, Eileen Hayes, and the Assistant Director of Community Development at Women's Development Corporation, Ben Darby, to the House.

Representative Noret warmly welcomes Pack 13, Cub Scout Den Leader Jim McLellan, and his scouts, Quentin Emison, Parker Beauvais, and Lorenzo Domenech, to the House.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Bennett offers his heartfelt condolences to Tony and the entire Patraca family on the passing of his mother, Catherine “Kitty” Patraca.

Vice-Chairwoman Kislak announces that the Committee on Education will meet today, at the rise of the House, in Room 135 of the State House.

GUESTS

Representative Read warmly welcomes Coventry High School student Arrianna Rhall to the House.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairwoman Fogarty warmly congratulates the URI Women’s Basketball team for their exciting victory in the Atlantic 10 Season Conference Championship and their well-deserved spot in the NCAA tournament. She also extends heartfelt congratulations to Coach Tammi Reiss on being honored as the Atlantic 10 Coach of the Year.

Vice-Chairman Phillips announces that the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources will meet tomorrow, at 4:00 p.m., in the House Lounge of the State House.

Chairwoman Cortvriend announces that the Finance Subcommittee on Environment and Transportation will meet today, at the rise of the House, in Room 35 of the State House.

Majority Leader Blazejewski, on behalf of the entire House of Representatives, would like to welcome Chairman Abney back to the House.

Majority Leader Blazejewski announces the next House session will be held on Thursday, March 12, 2026, at 4:00 p.m. The House will not be in session tomorrow. However, the Finance Subcommittee on Human Services will meet at 3:00 p.m. in Room 35, and the Environment & Natural Resources Committee will meet at 4:00 p.m. in the House Lounge.

Majority Leader Blazejewski wishes Representative Kislak a happy belated birthday.

IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION

House Resolution No. 8257

BY Shekarchi, Blazejewski, McNamara, Bennett, Place, Hopkins, Shanley, Fellela, Ajello, Diaz
ENTITLED, HOUSE RESOLUTION EXPRESSING DEEPEST CONDOLENCES ON THE
PASSING OF MICHAEL D. ZARUM {LC6060/1}

With the agreement of the majority and the minority, on behalf of Speaker Shekarchi and the entire Warwick Delegation, 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 Speaker Shekarchi, and the entire Warwick Delegation and many others, by unanimous consent, on a rising vote.

House Resolution No. 8258

BY Donovan, Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Chippendale, Fellela, Ajello, Diaz, Ackerman, Alzate, Tanzi
ENTITLED, HOUSE RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING MARCH OF 2026, AS "BLEEDING DISORDERS AWARENESS MONTH" IN THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND {LC3527/1}

With the agreement of the majority and the minority, Chairwoman Donovan requests unanimous consent for immediate consideration.

There is no objection.

Chairwoman Donovan discusses the resolution.

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

House Resolution No. 8259

BY Batista, Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Diaz, Place, Shanley, Phillips, Fellela, Ajello, Ackerman
ENTITLED, HOUSE RESOLUTION EXPRESSING DEEPEST CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF FRANCISCO J. BATISTA {LC6091/1}

With the agreement of the majority and the minority, Representative Batista requests unanimous consent for immediate consideration.

There is no objection.

Representative Batista discusses the resolution.

Read and passed, on a motion of Representative Batista, seconded by many others, by unanimous consent, on a rising vote.

House Resolution No. 8260

BY Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Bennett, Place, McNamara, Shanley, Solomon, Edwards, Hopkins, Casimiro
ENTITLED, HOUSE RESOLUTION EXPRESSING DEEPEST CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF CATHERINE "KITTY" PETRARCA {LC6068/1}

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

There is no objection.

Chairman Bennett discusses the resolution.

Read and passed, on a motion of Chairman Bennett, seconded by several others, by unanimous consent, on a rising vote.

House Resolution No. 8261

BY Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Slater, Chippendale, Diaz, Corvese, Kislak, O'Brien, Casey, Fogarty
ENTITLED, HOUSE RESOLUTION EXPRESSING DEEPEST CONDOLENCES ON THE
PASSING OF THE HONORABLE JOHN MICHAEL SKEFFINGTON, JR. {LC6016/1}

With the agreement of the majority and the minority, Representative Slater requests unanimous consent for immediate consideration.

There is no objection.

Representative Slater discusses the resolution.

Read and passed, on a motion of Representative Slater, seconded by many others, by unanimous consent, on a rising vote.

House Resolution No. 8262

BY Tanzi, Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Chippendale, Fellela, Diaz, Ajello, Fogarty, Potter, Felix
ENTITLED, HOUSE RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING MARCH 10TH, 2026, TO BE
"HOMELESS SERVICE PROVIDER DAY" IN THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND {LC5982/1}

With the agreement of the majority and the minority, Representative Tanzi requests unanimous consent for immediate consideration.

There is no objection.

Representative Tanzi discusses the resolution.

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

House Resolution No. 8263

BY Carson, Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Chippendale, Fellela, Diaz, Tanzi, Fogarty, Ajello, Felix
ENTITLED, HOUSE RESOLUTION CELEBRATING MARCH OF 2026 AS "ARTS IN THE
SCHOOLS MONTH" IN THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND {LC3534/1}

With the agreement of the majority and the minority, Representative Carson requests unanimous consent for immediate consideration.

There is no objection.

Representative Carson discusses the resolution.

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

RULE 7D

The following bills were received pursuant to Rule 7D:

Representative Craven-An Act relating to Criminal Procedure-Arrest

Representative Handy-A Resolution making an appropriation of 150,000 to the Main Street Rhode Island Program

Representative Read-An Act relating to Criminal Procedure
An Act relating to State Affairs-Government

Representative Speakman-An Act relating to Property Abandoned Property

Representative Tanzi-An Act relating to Bicycle Infrastructure

By unanimous consent, the House returns to:

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 Resolution No. 2018

BY Acosta, Lawson, Gallo, Mack, Zurier, Bissailon, Valverde, Quezada, Thompson, Ujifusa
ENTITLED, JOINT RESOLUTION TO APPROVE, PUBLISH AND SUBMIT TO THE

ELECTORS A PROPOSITION OF AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION -- RIGHT TO AN ADEQUATE EDUCATION (Amends the constitution to guarantee Rhode Island residents with equal opportunity to receive an education that is adequate, equitable and meaningful and provides judicial enforcement of this provision.) {LC3203/1}

03/11/2026 Referred to House State Government & Elections

Senate Bill No. 2037

BY Lauria

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION -- PROPERTY SUBJECT TO TAXATION (Authorizes the town of Barrington to provide a tax dollar credit reduction for legally blind persons by ordinance.) {LC3418/1}

03/11/2026 Referred to House Municipal Government & Housing

Senate Bill No. 2040

BY Ujifusa, Felag, Lauria

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION - LEVY AND ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL TAXES (Authorizes the town of Bristol to apply the owner-occupied tax rate for mixed-used properties where the residential portion is owner-occupied.) {LC3488/1}

03/11/2026 Referred to House Municipal Government & Housing

Senate Bill No. 2041

BY DiPalma

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION -- LEVY AND ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL TAXES (Authorizes the town council of Little Compton to establish a homestead exemption for residential dwellings.) {LC3740/1}

03/11/2026 Referred to House Municipal Government & Housing

Senate Bill No. 2422

BY Euer

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION -- PROPERTY SUBJECT TO TAXATION (Authorizes the town of Jamestown to authorize, by ordinance, the expansion of the local tax exemption ordinance for seniors.) {LC4592/1}

03/11/2026 Referred to House Municipal Government & Housing

Senate Bill No. 2470

BY Lauria

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO ANIMALS AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY -- DOGS (Permits the town of Barrington to assess an annual dog licensing fee of seven dollars (\$7.00).) {LC4837/1}

03/11/2026 Referred to House Municipal Government & Housing

Senate Bill No. 2472

BY Lauria

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO ANIMALS AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY -- DOGS (Increases the fines for dog ordinance violations in the town of Barrington.) {LC4838/1}

03/11/2026 Referred to House Municipal Government & Housing

Senate Bill No. 2700

(By Request)

BY DiPalma

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

(Authorizes the town of Middletown to adopt by ordinance, a veterans' property tax exemption to any veteran, who was honorably discharged, or discharged under conditions other than dishonorable, regardless of dates or periods of service.) {LC5409/1}

03/11/2026 Referred to House Municipal Government & Housing

NEW BUSINESS**House Bill No. 8264**

BY Phillips, Batista, Brien, Casey, Corvese, Noret, Read

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO COMMERCIAL LAW -- GENERAL REGULATORY

PROVISIONS -- UNFAIR SALES PRACTICES (Requires that retailers retain money received for gift certificates in a separate account, until the gift certificate is used or redeemed.) {LC5990/1}

03/11/2026 Introduced, referred to House Corporations

House Bill No. 8265

BY Felix, Potter, Morales, Alzate, Batista, Sanchez, Kislak, Stewart, Cruz, Kazarian

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO FOOD AND DRUGS -- THE RHODE ISLAND

CANNABIS ACT (Makes several amendments to the cannabis act relating to applications for licensure, the social equity assistance program and the application of cannabis tax revenue.)

{LC5995/1}

03/11/2026 Introduced, referred to House Corporations

House Resolution No. 8266

BY Diaz, Slater, Batista, Giraldo, Stewart, Alzate, Hull, Lombardi, Furtado, Edwards

ENTITLED, HOUSE RESOLUTION CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION

TO STUDY EXPANDING PATHWAYS INTO THE TEACHING PROFESSION (Creates a special legislative commission of 17 members whose purpose would be to study evaluate and make recommendations regarding educator preparation, licensure, certification and early-career support systems in the state.) {LC6095/1}

03/11/2026 Introduced, referred to House Education

House Bill No. 8267

BY Noret, Read, Cotter, Brien, Paplauskas, Corvese, Azzinaro, Dawson, Fellela, Bennett

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO INSURANCE -- EQUITABLE FUNDING FOR

HEALTHCARE PROVIDER BAD DEBT (Establishes a procedure for a health insurer to reimburse a healthcare provider no less than sixty-five percent (65%) of each unpaid co-payment, co-insurance or deductible amount due, after reasonable collection efforts.) {LC5841/1}

03/11/2026 Introduced, referred to House Health & Human Services

House Bill No. 8268

BY Shallcross Smith, Casimiro, Giraldo, Fellela, Tanzi, Fogarty, Bennett, Ajello, Boylan, Carson

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

HEALTHCARE SERVICES FUNDING PLAN ACT (Includes both the MomsPRN and PediPRN

teleconsultation lines in the healthcare services funding contributions payable by health insurers.)
{LC6051/1}
03/11/2026 Introduced, referred to House Finance

House Bill No. 8269

BY Kazarian, Casimiro

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- THE RHODE ISLAND HOLOCAUST AND GENOCIDE EDUCATION COMMISSION (Annually allocate thirty thousand dollars to the Rhode Island Holocaust and Genocide Education commission.) {LC5359/1}

03/11/2026 Introduced, referred to House Finance

House Bill No. 8270

BY Felix, Cruz, Morales, Batista, Hull, Tanzi, Sanchez, Kislak, Potter, Furtado

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- THE EDUCATION EQUITY AND PROPERTY TAX RELIEF ACT (Revises the calculation for the student success factor in the education-aid formula by adding an additional multiplier for twenty-five percent (25%) for each resident child who is identified as a multilingual learner.) {LC5888/1}

03/11/2026 Introduced, referred to House Finance

House Resolution No. 8271

BY Finkelman, Casimiro

ENTITLED, JOINT RESOLUTION MAKING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$1,000,000 TO 401 TECH BRIDGE TO STUDY AND EXPLORE SEAGLIDERS IN RHODE ISLAND (Makes an appropriation of \$1,000,000 to 401 Tech Bridge to study and explore seaglidgers.) {LC5958/1}

03/11/2026 Introduced, referred to House Finance

House Bill No. 8272

BY Hull, Azzinaro, Bennett, Lombardi, Fogarty, Slater

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO CRIMINAL OFFENSES -- LAW ENFORCEMENT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT (Makes sexual contact or penetration between any law enforcement officer that is on duty and a person that is a detainee, arrestee, in custody or a suspect a felony.) {LC6061/1}

03/11/2026 Introduced, referred to House Judiciary

House Bill No. 8273

BY McNamara, Ackerman

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO PROPERTY -- HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION LAW (Creates the homeowners association law to provide operational procedures for residential communities subject to the management of a homeowner association.) {LC5928/1}

03/11/2026 Introduced, referred to House Judiciary

House Bill No. 8274

BY Ajello, Morales, Tanzi, Kazarian, McGaw

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO PROPERTY -- RHODE ISLAND FAIR HOUSING PRACTICE ACT (Amends the Rhode Island Fair Housing Practices Act to clarify housing-status enforcement, ban discriminatory housing notices, aligns state law with federal standards and removes a ban on public discussion of fair housing cases.) {LC6018/1}

03/11/2026 Introduced, referred to House Judiciary

House Bill No. 8275

BY Felix, Potter, Cruz, Batista, Sanchez, Kazarian, Kislak, Stewart, Alzate, Handy
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT --
RESTRICTIVE CONFINEMENT OVERSIGHT ACT (Establishes the restrictive housing oversight
committee ("committee") for the purpose of monitoring the use of restrictive housing ("solitary
confinement"), as well as disciplinary and administrative confinement at the department of
corrections.) {LC5994/1}

03/11/2026 Introduced, referred to House Judiciary

House Bill No. 8276

BY Azzinaro, Fellela, Hull, Lombardi, Read, Noret, Corvese, Kennedy, Casey
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION -- TAX SALES (Requires specific notice of
the tax sale to the taxpayer with a copy of this § 44-9-10 attached thereto. Failure to do so would
render the tax sale null and void.) {LC6019/1}

03/11/2026 Introduced, referred to House Judiciary

House Bill No. 8277

BY Fellela, Shallcross Smith, Edwards, Azzinaro
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO BUSINESSES AND PROFESSIONS -- PLUMBERS,
IRRIGATORS, AND WATER SYSTEM INSTALLERS (Grants hourly credit of 288 hours against
576 hours if graduate of accredited trade school/raises to 4 years of work under master plumber and
requires 8,000 hours of on-the-job training plus 5 years of registration with DLT.) {LC6024/1}

03/11/2026 Introduced, referred to House Labor

House Bill No. 8278

BY Costantino, Santucci
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION -- COLLECTION OF TAXES GENERALLY
(Adds the town of Smithfield to those towns specifically named to tax any person for either a mobile
or manufactured home and automatically lien the a mobile or manufactured home.) {LC5947/1}

03/11/2026 Introduced, referred to House Municipal Government & Housing

House Bill No. 8279

BY Costantino, Santucci
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- LOW AND MODERATE
INCOME HOUSING (Authorizes the town of Smithfield, if an aggregate of two hundred fifty (250)
or more units should be proposed in comprehensive permit project(s), to enact an emergency
moratorium until the permit requirement of § 45-53-4 are amended.) {LC5950/1}

03/11/2026 Introduced, referred to House Municipal Government & Housing

House Bill No. 8280

BY Costantino, Santucci
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- LOW AND MODERATE
INCOME HOUSING--PARKING SPACES (Permits Smithfield to require 2 parking spaces for each
studio, one-bedroom, or two-bedroom low- or moderate-income housing unit upon the determination
that limited or no local public transportation or off-street parking is available near these units.)
{LC5949/1}

03/11/2026 Introduced, referred to House Municipal Government & Housing

House Bill No. 8281

BY Costantino, Santucci

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- ZONING ORDINANCES

(Allows the town of Smithfield to determine its density bonuses based upon its underlying zoning.)

{LC5948/1}

03/11/2026 Introduced, referred to House Municipal Government & Housing

House Bill No. 8282

(Secretary of State)

BY Voas, Alzate, Stewart, Giraldo, Shanley, Edwards, Bennett, Dawson, Caldwell, Morales

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO ELECTIONS -- NOMINATION OF PARTY AND

INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES (Makes several amendments to provide for an online nomination paper portal for election nomination papers.) {LC5962/1}

03/11/2026 Introduced, referred to House State Government & Elections

ADJOURNMENT

At 5:00 o'clock P.M. on motion of Representative McNamara, and as a further mark of respect to the memory of Michael Zarum; on motion of Representative Bennett, and as a further mark of respect to the memory of Catherine "Kitty" E. Petrarca; on motion of Representative Slater and as a further mark of respect to the memory of the Hon. John Michael (Jack) Skeffington, Jr. on motion of Representative Batista, and as a further mark of respect to the memory of Francisco J. Batista, seconded by Leader Blazejewski and Minority Whip Place, the House adjourns on a unanimous rising vote.

Diane M. DePina
Recording Clerk

APPENDIX

INVOCATION

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN G. EDWARDS

Holy God, guide us to always stay faithful to the needs of our communities. Let us be mindful that we hold the hopes of those we serve. Amen.

APPENDIX

CALENDAR

IN ORDER FOR THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2026:

1. **2026-H 7661**
BY McGaw
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION -- LEVY AND ASSESSMENT OF
LOCAL TAXES

Committee on Municipal Government & Housing recommends passage.

Francis McCabe
Clerk of the House

Friday, March 6, 2026