

Jan. 23, 2026

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>



- **O'Brien, Appollonio introduce bill to arm public college police officers**
Rep. William W. O'Brien (D-Dist. 54, North Providence) and Sen. Peter A. Appollonio Jr. (D-Dist. 29, Warwick) introduced legislation ([2026-H 7128](#), [2026-S 2053](#)) to arm public college police officers after the devastating tragedy at Brown University. The legislation would mandate arming campus police at public higher educational institutions and would require officers to complete a course of firearm instruction as provided by the Rhode Island Police Officers Commission on Standards and Training.
[Click here to see O'Brien release.](#)
[Click here to see Appollonio release.](#)
- **Potter bill to defend Rhode Islanders' constitutional rights from federal officials**
Rep. Brandon Potter (D-Dist. 16, Cranston) has introduced legislation ([2026-H 7202](#)) to protect the constitutional rights of Rhode Islanders from federal officials by creating a right to sue in state court.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Read bill would create electric car database to aid state's firefighting efforts**
Rep. Earl A. Read III has introduced legislation ([2026-H 7135](#)) that would direct the state fire marshal — in conjunction with the Division of Motor Vehicles — to create and maintain a vehicle identification database for electric or hybrid motor vehicles. Electric vehicle fires can be difficult to extinguish due to the potential for hidden, delayed thermal events. Similar legislation ([2026-S 2181](#)) has been introduced in the Senate by Sen. John Burke (D-Dist. 9, West Warwick).
[Click here to see news release.](#)

More...

- **Boylan, McKenney bill to ban invasive plants heard in committee**
Legislation ([2026-H 7071](#)) sponsored by Rep. Jennifer Boylan (D-Dist. 66, Barrington, East Providence) and Sen. Mark McKenney (D-Dist. 30, Warwick) would ban the introduction of invasive plants to Rhode Island. The House bill was heard by the Environment and Natural Resources Committee Thursday.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Ackerman introduces legislation to combat bullying**
House Deputy Majority Whip Mia A. Ackerman (D-Dist. 45, Cumberland, Lincoln) has introduced legislation ([2026-H 7114](#)) to address bullying in schools by creating a restorative justice program in which the student found to have engaged in bullying based on religion, sexual orientation or ethnicity would perform community service designed to educate them and deter future bullying.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Carson introduces maternal health bills**
Rep. Lauren H. Carson (D-Dist. 75, Newport) introduced two bills and a resolution focusing on maternal health. The first ([2026-H 7272](#)) would prohibit the closure or significant reduction of services of a birthing center without notice, application, financial disclosure, public hearing, and approval by the Department of Health. The second would establish permanent statewide support for maternal health, creating a permanent Maternal Health Advisory Board. The House also passed her resolution ([2026-H 7263](#)) declaring Friday, Jan. 23, “Maternal Health Awareness Day.”
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Gallo bill would allow use of campaign funds for security systems**
Sen. Hanna M. Gallo (D-Dist. 27, Cranston, West Warwick) introduced legislation ([2026-S 2334](#)) to explicitly allow candidates for public office to use campaign funds for home security systems. Known as the SECURE Act, or the Safeguarding Election Candidates Using Reasonable Expenditures Act, the bill would allow the funding of systems such as alarms, video surveillance and access control systems.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **O’Brien introduces legislation that reforms teacher pension system**
Rep. William W. O’Brien (D-Dist. 54, North Providence) introduced legislation ([2026-H 7160](#)) that will reform the teacher pension system to address the state’s teacher shortage. Representative O’Brien’s legislation would allow teachers, and other public-sector workers, to retire without reduced benefits if their age and years of service add up to 85.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **State lawmakers announce Fair Share for Rhode Island package**
A group of lawmakers came together Thursday to announce an emergency “Fair Share for Rhode Island Package,” a set of four bills that will ensure the wealthiest people in the state pay a comparable share of their income in taxes as the rest of Rhode Island filers.
[Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Rep. Alzate elected as co-chair of RIBLIA Caucus**

Rep. Karen Alzate (D-Dist. 60, Pawtucket, Central Falls) has been elected as a co-chair of the Rhode Island Black, Latino, Indigenous, Asian-American and Pacific Islander (RIBLIA) Caucus. Sen. Tiara Mack (D-Dist. 6, Providence) is the other co-chair of RIBLIA. Representative Alzate will be replacing Rep. David Morales (D-Dist. 7, Providence), who resigned from his co-chair position at a recent caucus meeting.

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