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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>



- **Senate clears police bill of rights reform; Hull introduces measure in House**
The Senate approved legislation ([2024-S-2096](#)) introduced by President Dominick J. Ruggerio (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) that would reform the Law Enforcement Officers Bill of Rights. The bill now moves to the House of Representatives, where Deputy Speaker Raymond A. Hull (D-Dist. 6, Providence, North Providence) has introduced similar legislation ([2024-H 7263](#)).
[Click here to see Ruggerio release.](#)
[Click here to see Hull release.](#)
- **Senate passes Quezada legislation requiring traffic stop racial data collection**
The Senate passed legislation ([2024-S 2137](#)) introduced by Sen. Ana B. Quezada (D-Dist. 2, Providence) that would require the statewide collection and analysis of data about the races of drivers stopped and searched by police. The measure now moves to the House of Representatives, where similar legislation ([2024-H 7099](#)) has been introduced by Rep. Edith H. Ajello (D-Dist. 1, Providence).
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Shanley bill would establish statewide secure choice retirement savings plan**
Rep. Evan P. Shanley (D-Dist. 24, Warwick, East Greenwich), has introduced the Rhode Island Secure Choice Retirement Savings Program Act ([2024-H 7121](#)), which would establish a convenient, low-cost voluntary retirement savings plan for Rhode Islanders. A similar measure ([2024-S 2045](#)) has been introduced in the Senate by Sen. Meghan E. Kallman (D-Dist. 15, Pawtucket, Providence).
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More...

- **McNamara bill looks to combat school absenteeism due to asthma**
Rep. Joseph M. McNamara (D-Dist. 19, Warwick, Cranston) has introduced legislation ([2024-H 7195](#)) to authorize a one-year pilot program during the 2024-2025 school year that would provide outreach and tracking at two public high schools and two public middle schools to address issues of asthma and attendance among students.
[Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Vella-Wilkinson bill would create position of military spouse liaison**
Rep. Camille F.J. Vella-Wilkinson (D-Dist. 21, Warwick) has introduced legislation ([2024-H 7184](#)) that would create the position of military spouse liaison in the Office of Veterans Services to conduct outreach and advocate on behalf of military spouses in the state.
[Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Bill to boost ADU development introduced, heard in House**
Rep. June S. Speakman (D-Dist. 68, Warren, Bristol), chairwoman of the House Commission on Housing Affordability, has reintroduced legislation ([2024-H 7062](#)) to boost housing production by helping Rhode Islanders to develop accessory dwelling units, also known as in-law apartments, on their property. The House Municipal Government and Housing Committee heard the bill, which is cosponsored by Speaker K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick) and has been part of the House leadership team's effort to help address Rhode Island's housing crisis.
[Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Reps. Kislak, Shallcross Smith sponsor Right to Repair bills**
Rep. Rebecca Kislak (D-Dist. 4, Providence) and Rep. Mary Ann Shallcross Smith (D-Dist. 46, Lincoln, Pawtucket) have introduced two bills aimed at defending Rhode Islanders' right to repair their own belongings. Representative Kislak's Digital Electronics Right to Repair Act ([2024-H 7095](#)), which was heard by the House Innovation, Internet and Technology Committee, would require manufacturers to make manuals, parts and tools necessary to repair electronics or electronic components in their products available to owners and independent repair shops. The Agricultural Equipment Right to Repair Act ([2024-H 7229](#)), sponsored by Representative Shallcross Smith, would require the same of manufacturers of agricultural equipment.
[Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Cotter bill would hire much-needed DEM forestry staff**
Rep. Megan Cotter (D-Dist. 39, Exeter, Richmond, Hopkinton), who for the last several months has led a House study commission to identify ways to improve forest management in Rhode Island, introduced legislation ([2024-H 7258](#)) to require funding in the state budget bill for fiscal year 2025 for 10 additional full-time equivalent positions at the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) for forestry. Her commission has learned that DEM's forestry employees have been slashed by 70 percent since 1990, despite the acquisition of many more state-managed acres, jeopardizing proper protection of that land.
[Click here to see news release.](#)

- **House Oversight Committee meets to review St. Mary’s Home for Children**
The House Committee on Oversight met to review a report detailing incidents at St. Mary’s Home for Children in North Providence — a residential treatment center serving youth in state care. The meeting came in the wake of a report from the Office of the Child Advocate that details “significant safety concerns and abusive living conditions” at the facility. The committee is chaired by Rep. Patricia Serpa (D-Dist. 27, West Warwick, Coventry, Warwick).

- **SNAP Pilot Program to reward purchases of fruits and vegetables**
Senate Majority Whip Valarie Lawson (D-Dist. 14, East Providence) and Sen. Jonathon Acosta (D-Dist. 16, Central Falls, Pawtucket) attended the launch of the statewide Eat Well, Be Well Pilot Rewards Program. Senator Lawson sponsored the legislation ([2022-S 2310A](#)) that funded this program, the first statewide program of its kind in the country, which provides Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program recipients with up to \$25 a month in additional benefits for purchasing eligible fruits and vegetables.
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