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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>



- **Shanley bill allows caregivers of developmentally disabled to unionize**
Rep. Evan P. Shanley (D-Dist. 24, Warwick, East Greenwich) has introduced legislation ([2025-H 5228](#)) that would ensure that more developmentally disabled adults can self-direct the care they need and want by allowing care professionals to collectively negotiate with the state. Self-directed personal care services are a way for those receiving services to have more control about how they spend service funding. [Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Zurier introduces bills to shore up RIPTA funding**
Sen. Samuel D. Zurier (D-Dist. 3, Providence) has introduced a package of legislation ([2025-S 0046](#), [2025-S 0047](#)) to ensure that gas tax revenue assigned to the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority keeps up with inflation. [Click here to see news release.](#)
- **House adopts rules for 2025 and 2026 sessions**
The House of Representatives voted to adopt new rules ([2025-H 5007Aaa](#)) for the 2025 and 2026 sessions Tuesday. Under the new rules, bills introduced on behalf of a study commission may now be introduced after the February legislative deadline and members may ask to vote by proxy after three consecutive absences, rather than five under the previous rules.
- **Caldwell named chair of House Conduct Committee**
Speaker of the House K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick) has appointed Rep. Justine Caldwell (D-Dist. 30, East Greenwich, West Greenwich) chairwoman of the House Committee on Conduct, which addresses any potential ethical misconduct by

More...

members of the House of Representatives.

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- **RIBLIA Caucus holds first meeting, elects chairs, welcomes new members**
The Rhode Island Black, Latino, Indigenous, Asian-American and Pacific Islander Caucus (RIBLIA) held its first meeting of the 2025 legislative session. Sen. Tiara T. Mack (D-Dist. 5, Providence) and Rep. David Morales (D-Dist. 7, Providence) were elected as the new co-chairs of the caucus. The caucus also welcomed two new members, Rep. Jenni A. Furtado (D-Dist. 64, East Providence, Pawtucket) and Sen. Lammis J. Vargas (D-Dist. 28, Cranston, Providence).
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Legislative leaders help kick off REGENT's seaglider facility in Quonset**
Legislative leaders, along with other federal, state and local officials joined the Quonset Development Corporation for a groundbreaking ceremony to mark the beginning of construction at REGENT Craft Inc.'s new seaglider manufacturing facility. The company's expansion is expected to create 300 new jobs, with the potential of up to 750, over the next 10 years.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Handy joins Economic Policy Institute in highlighting working families' needs**
Rep. Arthur Handy (D-Dist. 18, Cranston) joined the Economic Progress Institute and African American Museum of Rhode Island Executive Director Christopher West at a State House event highlighting the difficult realities facing working families and to propose solutions to advance their economic security. EPI's [2024 Rhode Island Standard of Need](#) report shows that even with work support programs factored in, many Rhode Islanders' wages are too low to meet basic living costs such as housing, food, health care and child care.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Finance Chairmen Abney and DiPalma honored by RI Community Food Bank**
The Rhode Island Community Food Bank recognized House Finance Chairman Marvin L. Abney (D-Dist. 73, Newport, Middletown) and Senate Finance Chairman Louis P. DiPalma (D-Dist. 12, Middletown, Little Compton, Newport, Tiverton) with the Dorothy Licht Community Award at an event held at the State House. The award was presented for their strong support of the food bank and their continued advocacy to reduce food insecurity in the state.
- **Shekarchi joins South County Habitat for Humanity to cut ribbon on homes**
Speaker of the House K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick) joined South County Habitat for Humanity to celebrate the ribbon cutting of a new home on Cardinal Lane in Hopkinton. The event marked the completion of the Cardinal Lane development, as well as the 35th anniversary of South County Habitat for Humanity.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Plastic Bottle Waste Commission meets**
The Special Joint Legislative Commission to Study and Provide Recommendations to Protect Our Environment and Natural Resources from Plastic Bottle Waste met this week. Chaired by Rep. Carol Hagan McEntee (D-Dist. 33, South Kingstown,

Narragansett) and Sen. Mark P. McKenney (D-Dist. 30, Warwick), the commission is tasked with creating a comprehensive study on the issues concerning current practices for the recycling of plastic bottles, miniature alcoholic beverage containers, and single-use plastic packaging, and identifying pathways to improve the state's ability to address and recycle these materials. The commission heard testimony from Scott Cassel, CEO of the Product Stewardship Institute.

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