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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>



- **House passes O'Brien bill protecting electronic ballots for disabled, military**  
The House of Representatives passed Rep. William W. O'Brien's (D-Dist. 54, North Providence) bill that continues to let disabled and military voters utilize electronically transmitted ballots. The legislation ([2026-H 7007aa](#)) extends an existing law passed in 2022, which expired on Dec. 31, 2025. The legislation now heads to the Senate for consideration, where Sen. Matthew L. LaMountain (D-Dist. 31, Warwick, Cranston) has introduced the legislation ([2026-S 2341](#)).  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Solomon seeks to rescind Rhode Island's support of pro-slavery amendment**  
Rep. Joseph J. Solomon Jr. (D-Dist. 22, Warwick) has introduced a resolution to rescind an 1861 action of the General Assembly that ratified an amendment that would have protected the institution of slavery for all time. Rhode Island was one of only five states to ratify the amendment. Three states have since rescinded their ratification, most recently Illinois in 2022, leaving only Rhode Island and Kentucky as signatories.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Kennedy bill would protect telecommunications equipment from vandalism**  
House Speaker Pro Tempore Brian Patrick Kennedy (D-Dist. 38, Hopkinton, Westerly) has introduced legislation ([2026-H 7173](#)) that would add telecommunications infrastructure to a law protecting electric and communications lines from tampering and improve providers' ability to strengthen protective security at telecommunications sites.  
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More...

- **Shanley bill would allow electronic shift platforms for health care workers**  
Rep. Evan P. Shanley (D-Dist. 24, Warwick, East Greenwich) has introduced the Health Care Worker Platform Act ([2026-H 7030](#)), which would allow for health care worker platforms through which workers can accept one or more shifts to perform services at a health care facility. Electronic shift platforms are digital workforce management tools designed to streamline scheduling, communication and time tracking for hourly or shift-based teams. Similar legislation ([2026-S 2107](#)) has been introduced in the Senate by Sen. Jacob Bissaillon (D-Dist. 1, Providence).  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Lawson, Furtado bill would extend waivers, license plates to disabled veterans**  
Senate President Valarie J. Lawson (D-Dist. 14, East Providence) and Rep. Jenni A. Furtado (D-Dist. 64, East Providence, Pawtucket) have introduced legislation ([2026-S 2418](#), [2026-H 7096](#)) to expand the eligibility for disabled veterans to receive disabled veterans license plates and have their vehicle registration and license fees waived.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **DiMario, Fogarty support training for childhood mental health professionals**  
Sen. Alana M. DiMario (D-Dist. 36, Narragansett, North Kingstown, New Shoreham) and Rep. Kathleen A. Fogarty (D-Dist. 35, South Kingstown) are supporting workforce training for child mental health professionals by covering membership fees for infant and child care professionals.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **O'Brien reintroduces bill to repeal social gaming ban**  
Rep. William W. O'Brien (D-Dist. 54, North Providence) has reintroduced his legislation ([2026-H 7197](#)) that would allow social gaming in private residences, public taverns and private clubs. Representative O'Brien's bill would legalize activities such as Super Bowl "squares" and NCAA Basketball Tournament bracket "pools" if there is a social relationship between participants and no person other than the participants receives anything of value.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **AG uses law sponsored by Ujifusa, Kislak to protect independent pharmacies**  
A law sponsored by Sen. Linda L. Ujifusa (D-Dist. 11, Portsmouth, Bristol) and Rep. Rebecca Kislak (D-Dist. 4, Providence) and enacted in June by the General Assembly has resulted in a legal win protecting Rhode Island's independent pharmacies. Attorney General Peter F. Neronha announced the resolution of an enforcement action taken against pharmacy benefits manager Prime Therapeutics LLC for violating the law ([2025-H 5248A](#), [2025-S 0314A](#)), which placed reasonable limits on pharmacy audits and clearly established the attorney general's enforcement authority.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Speaker Shekarchi wins international honor for protecting water resources**  
The [Water Environment Federation](#), an international nonprofit federation of water quality professionals, chose House Speaker K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick) for its 2025 Public Officials Award, honoring his leadership and support of efforts to protect water quality. The Rhode Island Clean Water Association nominated

Speaker Shekarchi for his longtime leadership in environmental and water stewardship. He was one of only three public officials worldwide to receive the award in 2025, alongside Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo and an Illinois state representative.

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