

Feb. 28, 2025

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>



- **Speaker Shekarchi announces 2025 housing legislation**
Speaker of the House K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick) announced a 12-bill package of legislation regarding housing issues — his fifth comprehensive suite of housing bills since becoming speaker in 2021. The legislation has been influenced by two housing commissions established by Speaker Shekarchi, which have been meeting regularly since July 2022 to address ways Rhode Island can meet its affordable housing needs in a manner that is sustainable and equitable.
[Click here to see news release](#)
- **Senate OKs Acosta bill to redefine felonies, misdemeanors, petty misdemeanors**
The Senate approved legislation sponsored by Sen. Jonathon Acosta (D-Dist. 16, Central Falls, Pawtucket) that revises the state’s definitions of felonies, misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors. The proposal ([2025-S 0063](#)) is an effort to reform the state’s criminal justice system by focusing on easing pressures on the correctional system and promoting diversion and rehabilitation while increasing public safety. The legislation now heads to the House, where Rep. Leonela Felix (D-Dist. 61, Pawtucket) has introduced the legislation ([2025-H 5502](#)).
[Click here to see news release](#)
- **House OKs Knight bill prohibiting deepfake sexual exploitation**
The House approved legislation ([2025-H 5046](#)) sponsored by Rep. Jason Knight (D-Dist. 67, Barrington, Warren) updating the state’s law prohibiting “revenge porn” to include “deepfake” content generated using artificial intelligence to impose a person’s likeness onto sexually explicit material. The legislation now goes to the Senate,

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where Sen. Andrew R. Dimitri (D-Dist. 25, Johnston) has introduced companion legislation ([2025-S 0355](#)).

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- **Kallman, Kislak reintroduce Building Decarbonization Act**
Sen. Meghan E. Kallman (D-Dist. 15, Pawtucket, Providence) and Rep. Rebecca Kislak (D-Dist. 4, Providence) have reintroduced the Building Decarbonization Act ([2025-H 5493](#), [2025-S 0091](#)) to set Rhode Island on a path toward a future with lower carbon emissions.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Azzinaro, Gu bill would cap home insurance premium hikes for certain seniors**
Rep. Samuel A. Azzinaro (D-Dist. 37, Westerly) and Sen. Victoria Gu (D-Dist. 38, Westerly, Charlestown, South Kingstown) are sponsoring legislation ([2025-H 5333](#), [2025-S 0015](#)) to protect low- and moderate-income seniors from spiking home insurance rates and provide advance notice to all homeowners facing large insurance increases or declined coverage.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Boylan introduces legislation to tackle microplastics pollution**
Rep. Jennifer Boylan (D-Dist. 66, Barrington, East Providence) has introduced a pair of bills ([2025-H 5492](#), [2025-H 5340](#)) to address synthetic polymer microparticles — better known as microplastics — in Rhode Island, as well as direct the Department of Environmental Management to begin a statewide microplastic monitoring and reduction plan.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Sponsors, Save RIPTA Coalition back package of bills to shore up transit**
Legislative sponsors joined a broad coalition of community groups, transit riders and drivers in calling for the passage of seven bills to fund the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority to address its \$32.6 million operational deficit for FY 2026 and enable its transformation into the thriving transit system the state needs for the future.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Boylan, Ujifusa introduce R.I. Climate Superfund Act**
Sen. Linda L. Ujifusa (D-Dist. 11, Portsmouth, Bristol) and Rep. Jennifer Boylan (D-Dist. 66, Barrington, East Providence) have introduced the Rhode Island Climate Superfund Act of 2025 ([2025-S 0326](#), [2025-H 5424](#)) to require large fossil fuel companies to pay for cleanup and damages they have caused in Rhode Island based on their carbon emissions over the last three decades, a period during which the damaging effects of their products have been well-known.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **RIBLIA Caucus celebrates Black History Month**
The Rhode Island Black, Latino Indigenous, Asian-American and Pacific Islander Caucus held their annual Black History Month celebration at the State House. The event was a joyful celebration of Black culture and the contributions of Black Rhode Islanders to the state’s history, culture and commerce.
[Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Diaz hosts observance of Dominican Republic independence, heritage**

A celebration observing the 181st anniversary of the independence of the Dominican Republic took place Thursday at the State House. Rep. Grace Diaz (D-Dist. 11, Providence) led the celebration as the Dominican Independence and Heritage Award Committee of Rhode Island commemorated the anniversary of the Dominican Republic's independence from Haiti, which took place on Feb. 27, 1844.

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