

March 7, 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>



- **House passes Shekarchi legislation for emergency housing options**
The House of Representatives passed legislation ([2025-H 5100A](#)) sponsored by Speaker K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick) to enable cities and towns to allow for temporary emergency housing structures, Supportive and Versatile Emergency units (“SAVE units”), for people experiencing homelessness during severe weather and/or natural or man-made disasters. The bill now heads to the Senate, where Sen. Jacob E. Bissaillon (D-Dist. 1, Providence) has introduced the legislation ([2025-S 0501](#)).
[Click here to see news release](#)
- **House OKs ban on PFAS chemicals in firefighters’ gear**
The House of Representatives approved legislation sponsored by Rep. June S. Speakman (D-Dist. 68, Warren, Bristol) to prohibit the manufacture, sale or distribution of any firefighting personal protective equipment containing intentionally added PFAS chemicals in Rhode Island beginning Jan. 1, 2027. The bill ([2025-H 5019](#)) now goes to the Senate, where Sen. Walter S. Felag Jr. (D-Dist. 10, Warren, Bristol, Tiverton) is sponsoring its Senate companion ([2025-S 0241](#)).
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **House OKs Fellela bill that would require AEDs on golf courses**
The House of Representatives approved the David Casey Act ([2025-H 5083A](#)) introduced by Rep. Deborah A. Fellela (D-Dist. 43, Johnston) that would mandate automatic external defibrillators on public and private golf courses. The measure now moves to the Senate, where similar legislation ([2025-S 0475](#)) has been introduced by

More...

Sen. Andrew R. Dimitri (D-Dist. 25, Johnston).

[Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Legislation would permit public utilities to purchase clean nuclear power**
Sen. David P. Tikoian (D-Dist. 22, Smithfield, Lincoln, North Providence) and Rep. Joseph J. Solomon Jr. (D-Dist. 22, Warwick) have introduced legislation ([2025-S 0318](#), [2025-H 5575](#)) that would allow public utilities that provide electric and gas distribution to purchase clean, safe nuclear power at a competitive cost from out-of-state facilities.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Bill would acknowledge grief in lawsuits regarding negligent death of pets**
Rep. Thomas E. Noret (D-Dist. 25, Coventry, West Warwick) and Rep. Jon D. Brien (I-Dist. 49, Woonsocket, North Smithfield) have introduced a bill ([2025-H 5926](#)) that would create a cause of action for the intentional or negligent injury or death of a pet.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Healthy School Meals for All Act introduced**
Rep. Justine Caldwell (D-Dist. 30, East Greenwich, West Greenwich) and Sen. Lammis J. Vargas (D-Dist. 28, Cranston, Providence) have introduced the Healthy School Meals for All Act ([2025-H 5742](#), [2025-S 0430](#)) to provide all public-school students access to breakfast and lunch at no cost, regardless of family income, to ensure they are fed and prepared to learn.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Ujifusa, Stewart bills would lower prescription and Medicaid costs**
Legislation filed by Sen. Linda L. Ujifusa (D-Dist. 11, Portsmouth, Bristol) and Rep. Jennifer A. Stewart (D-Dist. 59, Pawtucket) would curb the harmful activities of pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs), private corporations that work on behalf of insurers and make enormous profits as middlemen, driving up prescription costs. The bills ([2025-S 0173](#), [2025-H 5498](#), [2025-S 0117](#), [2025-H 5463](#)) would ban PBMs from engaging in “spread pricing,” wherein they charge health plans and payers more for a prescription drug than what they reimburse to the pharmacy — and then keep the difference or “spread.”
[Click here for more information.](#)
- **Boylan, McKenney bill would keep guns out of hands of hate crime perpetrators**
Rep. Jennifer Boylan (D-Dist. 66, Barrington, East Providence) and Sen. Mark McKenney (D-Dist. 30, Warwick) have introduced legislation ([2025-H 5652](#), [2025-S 0530](#)) to reduce gun violence by prohibiting those sentenced to a hate crime from purchasing and possessing guns.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Gu, Carson introduce bill to set liability standards for artificial intelligence**
Sen. Victoria Gu (D-Dist. 38, Westerly, Charlestown, South Kingstown) and Rep. Lauren H. Carson (D-Dist. 75, Newport) are sponsoring legislation ([2025-S 0358](#), [2025-H 5224](#)) to ensure that victims of accidental harm caused by artificial intelligence systems have legal recourse.
[Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Murray, Furtado introduce bill to address mental health crisis in schools**
Chairwoman of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee Melissa Murray (D-Dist. 24, Woonsocket, North Smithfield) and Rep. Jenni A. Furtado (D-Dist. 64, East Providence, Pawtucket) have introduced legislation ([2025-S 0256](#), [2025-H 5532](#)) to provide additional support to schools to fund mental and behavioral health support for students.
[Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Legislators, advocates rally in support of freedom to read**
Rep. David Morales (D-Dist. 7, Providence) and Sen. Mark McKenney (D-Dist. 30, Warwick) were joined by the Rhode Island Library Association, the American Library Association, the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island and local authors and advocates at a State House event Thursday to call for the passage of legislation ([2025-H 5726](#), [2025-S 0238](#)) to protect libraries and their patrons from partisan or doctrinal book-banning efforts.
[Click here to see news release.](#)

-30-

For an electronic version of this and all press releases published by the Legislative Press and Public Information Bureau, please visit our website at www.rilegislature.gov/pressrelease.