

March 15, 2024

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>



- **Firearms safe storage bill advances to full Senate for consideration**
The Senate Judiciary Committee approved legislation ([2024-S 2202](#)) sponsored by Sen. Pamela J. Lauria (D-Dist. 32, Barrington, Bristol, East Providence) to require safe storage of firearms. The bill will be sent to the full Senate for consideration next week. Rep. Justine A. Caldwell (D-Dist. 30, East Greenwich, West Greenwich) is sponsoring the bill ([2024-H 7373](#)) in the House.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate approves bill clearing barriers to HIV prevention prescriptions**
The Senate approved legislation ([2024-S 2255](#)) sponsored by Sen. Melissa A. Murray (D-Dist. 24, Woonsocket, North Smithfield) to prohibit out-of-pocket costs and prior authorization for pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), two extremely effective HIV prevention medications. The legislation is intended to remove barriers to patient access that discourage use. The legislation now goes to the House, where Rep. Rebecca Kislak (D-Dist. 4, Providence) is sponsoring companion legislation ([2024-H 7625](#)).
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate OKs bill banning noncompete clauses for nurse practitioners**
The Senate approved legislation sponsored by Sen. Pamela J. Lauria (D-Dist. 32, Barrington, Bristol, East Providence) to prohibit noncompete clauses in employment contracts for nurse practitioners. The legislation aims to eliminate a barrier that not only prevents nurse practitioners from changing jobs, but also contributes to the shortage of primary care providers in Rhode Island. The bill goes to the House, where Rep. June S. Speakman (D-Dist. 68, Warren, Bristol) is sponsoring companion

More...

legislation ([2024-H 7696](#)).

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- **McNamara bill would protect storage of human reproductive tissue**
Rep. Joseph M. McNamara (D-Dist. 19, Warwick, Cranston) has introduced the Reproductive Tissue Safety and Storage Act of 2024 ([2024-H 8025](#)), which would require any facility in Rhode Island that stores human eggs, sperm, testicular tissue, ovarian tissue and embryos to complete the accreditation checklist of the College of American Pathologists.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Shallcross Smith bill would protect patients from harmful medical debt practices**
Rep. Mary Ann Shallcross Smith (D-Dist. 46, Lincoln, Pawtucket) has introduced legislation ([2024-H 7103](#)) that would protect vulnerable Rhode Islanders from harmful medical debt collection practices, prohibiting credit bureaus from reporting a consumer's medical debt as well as the filing of an execution and attachment against a consumer's principal residence for judgments based on medical debt. Similar legislation ([2024-S 2711](#)) has been introduced in the Senate by Sen. Jacob Bissaillon (D-Dist. 1, Providence).
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- **Coalition supports Healthy School Meals for All bill**
A coalition of more than 40 local organizations joined Senate Education Committee Chairwoman Sandra S. Cano (D-Dist. 8, Pawtucket) and House Deputy Majority Leader Justine A. Caldwell (D-Dist. 30, East Greenwich, West Greenwich) in support of their legislation ([2024-H 7400](#), [2024-S 2320](#)) to provide a free and nutritious breakfast and lunch to all students daily, regardless of their household income, as part of the school day.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Miller, Boylan want state agencies to lead by example on sustainability**
Sen. Joshua Miller (D-Dist. 28, Cranston, Providence) and Rep. Jennifer Boylan (D-Dist. 66, Barrington, East Providence) have introduced legislation ([2024-H 7857](#), [2024-S 2543](#)) to amend state purchasing law to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions and landfill waste produced by state agencies.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Murray, Potter introduce bill to end rent-a-bank predatory lending schemes**
Sen. Melissa A. Murray (D-Dist. 24, Woonsocket, North Smithfield) and Rep. Brandon Potter (D-Dist. 16, Cranston) introduced legislation ([2024-S 2275](#), [2024-H 7941](#)) to close a loophole that allows out-of-state banks to charge an effective annual rate as high as 260% on payday loans in Rhode Island.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Legislators join students and educators in calling for civics education funding**
Legislative sponsors, students, educators and members of the Rhode Island Civic Learning Coalition rallied at the State House for a greater focus on civics education in public schools, starting with legislation ([2024-H 7036](#), [2024-S 2321](#)) sponsored by Rep. June S. Speakman (D-Dist. 68, Warren, Bristol) and Senate Education

Committee Chairwoman Sandra Cano (D-Dist. 8, Pawtucket) and Senate President Pro Tempore Hanna M. Gallo (D-Dist. 27, Cranston, West Warwick) for increased, dedicated funding established as part of the state's education funding formula.

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- **Economic Progress Institute recommends expansion of paid family leave**
The Economic Progress Institute recommended expanding Rhode Island's paid family leave program at a policy briefing for legislators, staffers and members of the public Thursday. They were invited to present at the State House by Senate Majority Whip Valarie Lawson (D-Dist. 14, East Providence) and Rep. Joshua J. Giraldo (D-Dist. 56, Central Falls), who have introduced legislation ([2024-S 2121](#), [2024-H 7171](#)) to expand paid family leave coverage in Rhode Island.
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-30-

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