

April 4, 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 two bills in Speaker Shekarchi’s housing package**

The House passed two bills that are part of House Speaker K. Joseph Shekarchi’s (D-Dist. 23, Warwick) 12-bill package of legislation regarding housing issues. The first bill ([2025-H 5800](#)), sponsored by Rep. Robert E. Craven Sr. (D-Dist. 32, North Kingstown), would require municipalities to provide for village or mixed-use zoning to allow residential use in some or all areas of their commercial zoning districts. The second bill ([2025-H 5797](#)), sponsored by Rep. Carol Hagan McEntee (D-Dist. 33, South Kingstown, Narragansett), would add a definition for “co-living housing” to the zoning ordinance provisions of the General Laws and would include such housing as a special provision to be included in a zoning ordinance. Both bills now head to the Senate for consideration.

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

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

- **House OKs bill renewing state’s commitment to harm reduction program**

The House of Representatives approved legislation ([2025-H 5171Aaa](#)) introduced by Rep. John G. Edwards (D-Dist. 70, Tiverton) that would extend the sunset provision of the four-year pilot program to prevent drug overdoses through the establishment of harm reduction centers for two years to March 1, 2028. It would also require a report on the number of individuals served by each center and any data relating to the occurrence of and/or prevention of overdoses or deaths associated with each center. The measure now heads to the Senate, where similar legislation ([2025-S 0462](#)) has been introduced by Sen. Melissa Murray (D-Dist. 24, Woonsocket, North Smithfield).

- **House passes Dawson legislation to protect election workers**

More...

The House passed legislation ([2025-H 5300](#)) sponsored by Rep. Matthew S. Dawson (D-Dist. 65, East Providence) that would protect election officials and poll workers. The bill would consider election officials and poll workers “public officials” for purposes of the prohibition on making threats to public officials. The bill now heads to the Senate for consideration, where Majority Whip David P. Tikoian (D-Dist. 22, Smithfield, North Providence, Lincoln) has introduced the legislation ([2025-S 0729](#)). [Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Senate OKs Felag bill to allow transfer of disabled veterans’ plates to spouses**  
The Senate approved legislation ([2025-S 0072](#)) sponsored by Sen. Walter S. Felag Jr. (D-Dist. 10, Warren, Bristol, Tiverton) that would allow disabled veterans’ license plates to be transferred to spouses. The bill would allow the transfer of a disabled veteran’s license plate to the veteran’s spouse if the veteran is no longer able to operate a vehicle. The bill now heads to the House for consideration.  
[Click here to see news release](#)
- **House OKs Hull bill establishing search warrant timeframes for tracking devices**  
The House approved legislation ([2025-H 5438](#)) sponsored by Deputy Speaker Raymond A. Hull (D-Dist. 6, Providence, North Providence) that would define and dictate the timeframe of a search warrant involving a tracking device. The measure now heads to the Senate, where Sen. Matthew L. LaMountain (D-Dist. 31, Warwick, Cranston) has introduced the legislation ([2025-S 0617](#)).  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **House passes Dawson bill that escalates penalties for tinted car windows**  
The House passed legislation ([2025-H 5644](#)) sponsored by Rep. Matthew S. Dawson (D-Dist. 65, East Providence) that would provide escalating penalties for second and subsequent violations of installing and possessing a vehicle with tinted windows prohibited by law. The bill now heads to the Senate for consideration.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **American Cancer Society press conference highlights cost-sharing bills**  
Rep. Kathleen A. Fogarty (D-Dist. 35, South Kingstown), Sen. Robert Britto (D-Dist. 18, East Providence, Pawtucket) and Sen. Samuel D. Zurier (D-Dist. 3, Providence) highlighted their cost-sharing legislation during a press conference with the American Cancer Society this week. Representative Fogarty and Senator Zurier’s bill ([2025-H 5430](#), [2025-S 0197](#)) would prohibit an insurance company from imposing any cost-sharing requirements for any diagnostic or supplemental breast examinations. Senator Britto’s bill ([2025-S 0477](#)) would include any costs paid by an enrollee when calculating the overall contribution to any cost-sharing requirement under a health plan.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Spears, Patalano bill would establish PURPLE alert system**  
Rep. Tina L. Spears (D-Dist. 36, Charlestown, New Shoreham, South Kingstown, Westerly) has introduced legislation ([2025-H 6165](#)) to establish a “PURPLE alert” system to help quickly find missing adults with serious disabilities that put their own health and safety at risk. Sen. Todd M. Patalano (D-Dist. 26, Cranston) will shortly introduce companion legislation in the Senate.

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

▪ **Patalano introduces legislation to lower electrical bills**

Sen. Todd M. Patalano (D-Dist. 26, Cranston) has introduced a package of five bills to provide relief to electrical customers facing rising bills. The bills take aim at the components of residential electrical bills that are influenced by state mandates and fund a study to find ways to reduce customer bills further. Rep. Charlene M. Lima (D-Dist. 14, Cranston, Providence) has introduced matching companion bills in the House.

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

▪ **Child Care is Essential Act would expand access to affordable child care**

Sen. Lammis J. Vargas (D-Dist. 28, Cranston, Providence) and Rep. Grace Diaz (D-Dist. 11, Providence) in partnership with the [Right from the Start](#) Coalition, highlighted their Child Care is Essential Act at the Comprehensive Community Action Program Child Development Center in Cranston. The bill ([2025-H 5281](#), [2025-S 0240](#)) would expand eligibility for the Child Care Assistance Program and raise child care provider reimbursement rates to meet federal standards.

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