

April 11, 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 approves two housing bills in Speaker Shekarchi’s housing package**
The House approved two bills included in the housing legislative package backed by Speaker K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23 Warwick). The first ([2025-H 5798aa](#)), sponsored by Rep. June S. Speakman (D-Dist. 68, Warren, Bristol), encourages municipalities to allow the development of attached single-family homes, such as townhomes, which can offer more affordable opportunities in Rhode Island’s housing market. The other ([2025-H 5796aa](#)), sponsored by Rep. Jason Knight (D-Dist. 67, Barrington, Warren), would require that local zoning ordinances provide options that aren’t limited to detached single-family housing in areas within the Urban Services Boundary. Both bills now go to the Senate, where Sen. Meghan E. Kallman (D-Dist. 15, Pawtucket, Providence) is sponsoring the townhome bill ([2025-S 0504](#)).
[Click here for Speakman release.](#)
[Click here for Knight release.](#)
- **House approves McGaw’s prescription refill legislation**
The House approved legislation ([2025-H 5633](#)) sponsored by Rep. Michelle McGaw (D-Dist. 71, Portsmouth, Tiverton, Little Compton) to protect patients from being unable to fill vital prescriptions because their prescriber cannot be reached or is no longer available for authorization. The legislation now goes to the Senate, where Sen. Pamela J. Lauria (D-Dist. 32, Barrington, Bristol, East Providence) is sponsoring companion legislation ([2025-S 0483](#)).
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- **Senate approves Gallo bill for universal pre-K**
The Senate approved legislation ([2025-S 0394](#)) sponsored by Senate Education

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Committee Chairwoman Hanna M. Gallo (D-Dist. 27, Cranston, West Warwick) to set Rhode Island on a path to offering universal free prekindergarten to 3- and 4-year-olds. The bill now goes to the House, where House Education Committee Chairman Joseph M. McNamara (D-Dist. 19, Warwick, Cranston) is sponsoring companion legislation ([2025-H 5199](#)).

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▪ **Senate OKs LaMountain bill to protect employees' First Amendment rights**

The Senate approved legislation ([2025-S 0126A](#)) introduced by Sen. Matthew L. LaMountain (D-Dist. 31, Warwick, Cranston) that would protect the rights of employees in the workplace who refuse attendance at employer-sponsored meetings regarding political or religious matters, or refuse to listen to a political or religious speech. The measure now moves to the House, where similar legislation ([2025-H 5506](#)) has been introduced by Rep. Robert E. Craven (D-Dist. 32, North Kingstown).

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▪ **House passes Solomon legislation to regulate pet insurance**

The House of Representatives passed the Pet Insurance Act ([2025-H 5569A](#)) introduced by Rep. Joseph J. Solomon Jr. that would create a comprehensive legal framework within which pet insurance may be sold in Rhode Island. The measure now moves to the Senate, where similar legislation ([2025-S 0649](#)) has been introduced by Sen. Jacob E. Bissaillon (D-Dist. 1, Providence).

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▪ **Senate OKs Acosta bill seeking right to education in state constitution**

The Senate passed legislation ([2025-S 0177](#)) sponsored by Sen. Jonathon Acosta (D-Dist. 16, Central Falls, Pawtucket) to place a question on the next statewide ballot asking voters to amend the state constitution to guarantee “an equitable, adequate and meaningful education to each child.” Such a constitutional guarantee would ensure that systems that are failing children are addressed because the guarantee would be legally enforceable. The legislation now goes to the House of Representatives, where Rep. Mary Duffy Messier (D-Dist. 62, Pawtucket) is sponsoring companion legislation ([2025-H 5459](#)).

[Click here to see news release](#)

▪ **House approves Casimiro legislation to regulate crypto ATMs**

The House approved legislation ([2025-H 5121A](#)) sponsored by Rep. Julie A. Casimiro (D-Dist. 31, North Kingstown, Exeter) that aims to protect Rhode Islanders from a rapidly growing category of scams that use cryptocurrency ATMs to defraud victims, particularly the elderly. The bill now heads to the Senate for consideration, where Sen. Victoria Gu (D-Dist. 38, Westerly, Charlestown, South Kingstown) has introduced the legislation ([2025-S 0016](#)).

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▪ **Serpa, DiPalma bill would end practice of predetermining winning bidders**

Rep. Patricia A. Serpa (D-Dist. 27, West Warwick, Coventry) and Sen. Louis P. DiPalma (D-Dist. 12, Middletown, Newport, Tiverton, Little Compton) have introduced the Rhode Island Bid Rigging Act ([2025-H 6173](#), [2025-S 0945](#)), which would make it unlawful for any person to knowingly conspire, collude, combine, or

agree with another to commit or attempt to commit bid rigging — a concerted activity of two or more persons to predetermine the winning bidder of a contract submitted for competitive bidding by a government entity.

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- **Bill would establish guardrails on internet platforms used by kids**
Senate Majority Leader Valarie J. Lawson (D-Dist. 14, East Providence) and Rep. Megan L. Cotter (D-Dist. 39, Exeter, Richmond, Hopkinton) have introduced legislation ([2025-H 5830](#), [2025-S 0903](#)) to require social media platforms, apps and other online services and products that are likely to be used by children to design their products to protect them.
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- **Sponsors, advocates push for passage of lead service line replacement bill**
Rep. David Morales (D-Dist. 7, Providence), Sen. Lammi J. Vargas (D-Dist. 28, Cranston, Providence) and Providence City Council President Rachel Miller were joined by parents and advocates from the Childhood Lead Action Project at a State House event in support of legislation ([2025-S 0492](#), [2025-H 5375](#)) enabling cities and towns to pass ordinances allowing tenants to sign off on lead service line replacements in the event that their landlord is unresponsive and the property is eligible for a free service line replacement.
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- **Valverde, Tanzi bill would extend childhood early intervention coverage**
Sen. Bridget Valverde (D-Dist. 35, North Kingstown, East Greenwich, South Kingstown) and Rep. Teresa A. Tanzi (D-Dist. 34, South Kingstown, Narragansett) were joined by advocates and parents with [RIPIN](#) to call for the passage of legislation ([2025-S 0247](#), [2025-H 5462](#)) to extend the period of eligibility for early intervention programs for infants and children with disabilities.
[Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Urso sponsors legislation to aid animal welfare efforts**
Sen. Lori Urso (D-Dist. 8, Pawtucket) introduced two bills ([2025-S 0550](#), [2025-S 0551](#)) to protect animals from cruelty and neglect by modernizing Rhode Island's animal welfare laws and removing roadblocks to protecting mistreated animals.
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