

May 10, 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>



- **House approves Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights reform**
The House of Representatives passed the Law Enforcement Officers' Due Process, Accountability and Transparency Act ([2024-H 7263A](#), [2024-S 2096A](#)), which will bring reforms to the Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights. The legislation was introduced by Deputy Speaker Raymond A. Hull (D-Dist. 6, Providence, North Providence) and Senate President Dominick J. Ruggiero (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence). Both identical bills are scheduled for a vote in the Senate on Tuesday, May 14.
[Click here to see news release](#)
- **General Assembly OKs bill on Washington Bridge reporting**
The General Assembly approved legislation ([2024-S 2727A](#), [2024-H 7759A](#)) introduced by Senate Majority Whip Valarie J. Lawson (D-Dist. 14, East Providence) and House Majority Whip Katherine S. Kazarian (D-Dist. 63, East Providence, Pawtucket) that would require regular monthly updates from the Rhode Island Department of Transportation on the state of the Washington Bridge. The bill now heads to the governor's desk for his signature.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Bills from housing package approved by House of Representatives**
The House approved three bills included in Speaker K. Joseph Shekarchi's (D-Dist. 23, Warwick) 2024 housing package. The first ([2024-H 7951A](#)), sponsored by Rep. Robert E. Craven (D-Dist. 32, North Kingstown), would clarify the circumstances under which a municipality can limit accepting and hearing applications related to the development of housing. The second ([2024-H 7986Aaa](#)), sponsored by Rep. José F.

More...

Batista (D-Dist. 12, Providence), would encourage housing production by requiring towns to publish lists of abandoned properties. The third ([2024-H 7978A](#)), sponsored by Speaker Shekarchi, would allow for municipalities to use electronic permitting for building permits. The bills now move to the Senate.

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

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

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

▪ **Senate passes Euer bill to protect contraceptive coverage**

The Senate passed a bill ([2024 S-2088](#)) sponsored by Sen. Dawn Euer (D-Dist. 13, Newport, Jamestown) that would ensure contraception remains covered in Rhode Island, even if the coverage requirements in the Affordable Care Act are overturned. The bill now heads to the House, where Rep. Karen Alzate (D-Dist. 60, Pawtucket, Central Falls) has introduced companion legislation ([2024-H 7255](#)).

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▪ **Senate passes bill to prevent auto insurers from charging higher rates to widows**

The Senate passed a bill ([2024-S 2269](#)) sponsored by Senate Majority Whip Valarie J. Lawson (D-Dist. 14, East Providence) to prohibit auto insurers from charging policyholders more solely because they have been widowed. It now moves to the House, which has already passed companion legislation ([2024-H 7606](#)) sponsored by Rep. Arthur Handy (D-Dist. 18, Cranston).

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▪ **Senate OKs bill to allow nursing home residents to use electronic surveillance**

The Senate voted to approve Sen. Dawn Euer's (D-Dist. 13, Newport, Jamestown) bill ([2024-S 2263](#)) to allow nursing home residents to choose to have cameras installed in their rooms. The bill now heads to the House, where Rep. Jason Knight (D-Dist. 67, Barrington, Warren) has introduced companion legislation ([2024-H 7969](#)).

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▪ **Senate passes Mack inclusive name change bill**

The Senate approved legislation ([2024-S 2667A](#)) sponsored by Sen. Tiara Mack (D-Dist. 6, Providence) that would make the process of changing an individual's name in municipal probate court more straightforward, while also updating the statute to make the language gender neutral and more inclusive. The legislation now heads to the House, where Rep. Robert E. Craven (D-Dist. 32, North Kingstown) has introduced the legislation ([2024-H 8155](#)).

[Click here to see news release](#)

▪ **Senate OKs Murray bill to extend winter moratorium on utility shut-offs**

The Senate passed legislation ([2024-S 2036](#)) sponsored by Sen. Melissa A. Murray (D-Dist. 24, Woonsocket, North Smithfield) to codify and extend the state's annual utility termination moratorium two weeks to May 1 to protect those struggling with their utility bills from energy shut-offs during the coldest months. The legislation now goes to the House, where Rep. David Morales (D-Dist. 7, Providence) is sponsoring companion legislation ([2024-H 7017](#)).

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▪ **Senate OKs solar industry consumer-protection bill**

The Senate passed legislation ([2024-S 2801Aaa](#)) sponsored by Sen. Jacob Bissaillon (D-Dist. 1, Providence) to protect consumers and ensure a healthy solar industry by regulating businesses selling home solar systems. The bill now goes to the House, where Rep. Mia A. Ackerman (D-Dist. 45, Cumberland, Lincoln) is sponsoring companion legislation ([2024-H 7603](#)).

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▪ **House OKs bill to join interstate physical therapy compact**

The House approved legislation ([2024-H 7213](#)) sponsored by Rep. Michelle E. McGaw (D-Dist. 71, Portsmouth, Tiverton, Little Compton) to have Rhode Island join an interstate compact that allows physical therapists licensed in member states to practice in other member states. The legislation now goes to the Senate, where Senate President Pro Tempore Hanna M. Gallo (D-Dist. 27, Cranston, West Warwick) is sponsoring the Senate version of the bill ([2024-S 2876](#)).

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