

May 22, 2026

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>



- **Senate approves several bills in package of healthcare legislation**

The Senate approved several of its healthcare bills centered on supporting Rhode Islanders in crisis, protecting patients and providers and strengthening the state's health workforce. The first ([2026-S 2195Aaa](#)), sponsored by Sen. Lori Urso (D-Dist. 8, Pawtucket), would require developers to protect vulnerable users who may express harmful intentions while interacting with a chatbot. The second ([2026-S 2197Aaa](#)), also sponsored by Senator Urso, would establish guidelines regarding the permitted and restricted uses of AI technology in mental healthcare. Rep. Tina L. Spears (D-Dist. 36, Charlestown, New Shoreham, South Kingstown, Westerly) has introduced similar bills ([2026-H 7350](#), [2026-H 7349](#)) in the House. A joint resolution ([2026-S 3056](#)) sponsored by Sen. Melissa Murray (D-Dist. 24, Woonsocket, North Smithfield) addresses a gap in Medicaid that can leave nursing home patients with complex needs stranded in hospitals. Rep. Stephen M. Casey (D-Dist. 50, Woonsocket) is sponsoring House companion legislation ([2026-H 8205](#)). A bill ([2026-S 2563](#)) sponsored by Sen. Linda L. Ujifusa (D-Dist. 11, Portsmouth, Bristol) would create an independent study of the prescription drug management within the state's Medicaid program. Rep. Teresa A. Tanzi (D-Dist. 34, South Kingstown, Narragansett) has the House bill ([2026-H 8172](#)). A Senate resolution ([2026-S 3063A](#)) by Sen. Mark McKenney (D-Dist. 30, Warwick) creates a commission to study the impact of medical malpractice on Rhode Island's healthcare system.

[Click here for Urso release.](#)

[Click here for Murray release.](#)

[Click here for Ujifusa release.](#)

[Click here for McKenney release.](#)

More...

- **Senate approves Sosnowski bill to create medical school at URI**

Also part of its healthcare package, the Senate passed legislation ([2026-S 3604](#)) introduced by Sen. V. Susan Sosnowski (D-Dist. 37, South Kingstown) that would establish a medical school at the University of Rhode Island. The measure now moves to the House, where companion legislation ([2026-H 8389](#)) has been introduced by Rep. Kathleen A. Fogarty (D-Dist. 35, South Kingstown). The Senate also approved a resolution ([2026-S 3057](#)) sponsored by Sen. Pamela J. Lauria (D-Dist. 32, Barrington, Bristol, East Providence) to establish a permanent commission to explore ways to support retention of the state's primary care workforce and strengthen graduate medical education programs.
[Click here for Sosnowski release.](#)
[Click here for Lauria release.](#)
- **Senate passes Lawson bill to establish limits on grocery self-checkouts**

The Senate approved legislation ([2026-S 2342Aaa](#)) from Senate President Valarie J. Lawson (D-Dist. 14, East Providence) to establish limits on the use of self-checkout lanes at grocery stores in Rhode Island. The bill now heads to the House where Rep. Megan L. Cotter (D-Dist. 39, Exeter, Richmond, Hopkinton) has introduced similar legislation ([2026-H 7290](#)).
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **House OKs Fogarty bill requiring school plans for students with epilepsy**

The House of Representatives passed legislation ([2026-S 7481A](#)) sponsored by Rep. Kathleen A. Fogarty (D-Dist. 35, South Kingstown) that would require schools to adopt action plans for students diagnosed with epilepsy and seizure disorders. The measure now moves to the Senate, which has already passed companion legislation ([2026-S 2350](#)) introduced by Sen. Louis P. DiPalma (D-Dist. 12, Middletown, Newport, Tiverton, Little Compton).
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate OKs Urso bill for license plates on cars adapted for those with disabilities**

The Senate voted to approve a bill ([2026-S 2178A](#)) from Sen. Lori Urso (D-Dist. 8, Pawtucket) that would create special license plates for disabled individuals whose vehicles are modified to accommodate their disability. The bill now goes to the House for consideration, where Rep. Earl A. Read III (D-Dist. 26, Coventry, West Warwick, Warwick) has introduced similar legislation ([2026-H 7308](#)).
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate approves Gallo bill allowing use of campaign funds for security systems**

Responding to the growing number of threats and incidents of violence against candidates and elected officials in Rhode Island and across the country, the Senate approved legislation ([2026-S 2334A](#)) sponsored by Senate President Pro Tempore Hanna M. Gallo (D-Dist. 27, Cranston, West Warwick) to explicitly allow campaign funds to be used for home security systems. The bill now goes to the House, where Rep. Jennifer Boylan (D-Dist. 66, Barrington, East Providence) has introduced similar legislation ([2026-H 7495](#)).
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- **Chambers advance legislation to offer drink lids at bars**
The Senate and the House each approved legislation ([2026-S 3000A](#), [2026-H 7975A](#)) sponsored by Sen. Pamela J. Lauria (D-Dist. 32, Barrington, Bristol, East Providence) and Rep. June S. Speakman (D-Dist. 68, Warren, Bristol) to require bars and similar establishments to have lids available upon request to protect patrons from having their drinks spiked. Each bill now goes to the other chamber for consideration.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate passes Felag bill that helps disabled veterans**
The Senate passed legislation sponsored by Sen. Walter S. Felag Jr. (D-Dist. 10, Warren, Bristol, Tiverton) that would help disabled veterans when modifying their homes. The bill ([2026-S 2694](#)) states that any veteran with a disability rating from the United States Department of Veteran Affairs would not be charged any building fees, including permit fees, plan review or plan examination fees, inspection fees, reinspection fees or other fees required to make improvements to the residence of the veteran if the improvements are required to accommodate the disability of the veteran. The legislation now heads to the House for consideration.
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- **House passes Casimiro bill to enhance foster care youth academic reporting**
The House passed legislation introduced by Rep. Julie A. Casimiro (D-Dist. 31, North Kingstown, Exeter) that would expand academic reporting requirements for foster care youth. The legislation ([2026-H 8362](#)) would expand foster care academic youth reports to include information regarding 504 eligibility, graduation progress and educational advocates. The bill now heads to the Senate for consideration.
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- **McGaw, Ujifusa sponsor Broadband Oversight and Accountability Act**
Rep. Michelle McGaw (D-Dist. 71, Portsmouth, Tiverton, Little Compton) and Sen. Linda L. Ujifusa (D-Dist. 11, Portsmouth, Bristol) have introduced legislation ([2026-H 7333](#), [2026-S 2345](#)) to repeal an outdated law that prohibits regulation of broadband service in Rhode Island and replace it with one that sets the stage for the establishment of a broadband oversight authority to address statewide planning, deployment coordination, performance monitoring, consumer concerns and equitable access to broadband.
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