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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>



- **Assembly approves bill banning auto insurers from raising widows' rates**
The General Assembly approved legislation sponsored by Senate Majority Whip Valarie J. Lawson (D-Dist. 14, East Providence) and Rep. Arthur Handy (D-Dist. 18, Cranston) to prohibit auto insurers from charging policyholders more solely because they have been widowed. The legislation ([2024-H 7606](#), [2024-S 2269](#)) now heads to the governor's desk.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate passes bills that are part of HEALTH legislative package**
The Senate this week passed several bills that are part of the chamber's HEALTH (Holistic Enhancement and Access Legislation for Total Health) initiative. The first ([2024-S 2723](#)), by Senate Majority Leader Ryan W. Pearson (D-Dist. 19, Cumberland, Lincoln), would address the low reimbursement rates to primary care providers. The second ([2024-S 2184](#)), by Sen. Alana M. DiMario (D-Dist. 36, Narragansett, North Kingstown, New Shoreham), would make Rhode Island one of the founding states in the interstate licensure compact for social workers. The third ([2024-S 2183](#)), by Sen. Matthew L. LaMountain (D-Dist. 31, Warwick, Cranston), would adopt an existing compact for counselors. The fourth ([2024-S 2719](#)), by Senator DiMario, would create a drug affordability commission to review and manage drug prices. The bills now move to the House for consideration.
[Click here to see reimbursement release.](#)
[Click here to see compacts release.](#)
[Click here to see commission release.](#)

More...

- **House OKs Knight bill prohibiting deepfake sexual exploitation**

The House approved legislation ([2024-H 7101](#)) sponsored by Rep. Jason Knight (D-Dist. 67, Barrington, Warren) to update the state’s “revenge porn” law to prohibit the dissemination of “deepfake” content generated using artificial intelligence to impose a person’s likeness onto sexually explicit material. The bill goes to the Senate.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate approves Miller health care bills**

The Senate approved three health care bills sponsored by Senate Health and Human Services Committee Chairman Joshua Miller (D-Dist. 28, Cranston, Providence). The bills mandate that insurers cover behavioral health treatment without prior authorization so patients can go directly upon hospital discharge ([2024-S 2872](#)); protect nursing home solvency by requiring state approval before their operators withdraw equity or transfers assets worth more than 3% of the facility’s total annual revenue for patient care ([2024-S 2818](#)); and develop a plan to create a new state Department of Hospitals. The bills now go to the House, where House Health and Human Services Committee Chairwoman Susan R. Donovan (D-Dist. 69, Bristol, Portsmouth) is sponsoring the patient discharge bill ([2024-H 7901](#)), Rep. June S. Speakman (D-Dist. 68, Warren, Bristol) is sponsoring the nursing homes bill ([2024-H 7819](#)) and Rep. Tina L. Spears (D-Dist. 36, Charlestown, New Shoreham, South Kingstown, Westerly) is sponsoring the Department of Hospitals bill ([2024-H 7180](#)).
[Click here to see patient discharge and nursing home solvency news release.](#)
[Click here to see Department of Hospitals news release.](#)
- **Senate passes Acosta bill to extend teacher certifications**

The Senate approved legislation ([2024-S 2743](#)) sponsored by Sen. Jonathon Acosta (D-Dist. 16, Central Falls, Cranston) that would extend teacher certifications to address the significant teacher shortage plaguing Rhode Island. The bill would also direct the Department of Education to revise its regulations pertaining to certification to create multiple pathways to obtain teacher and administrator certification. The bill now heads to the House, where Rep. Joshua J. Giraldo (D-Dist. 56, Central Falls) has introduced the legislation ([2024-H 7906](#)).
[Click here to see news release](#)
- **House passes Slater bill allowing cannabis cultivators to advertise**

The House of Representatives passed legislation ([2024-H 7505](#)) sponsored by Rep. Scott A. Slater (D-Dist. 10, Providence) that would allow cannabis cultivators to advertise their services within the state. Last session, Representative Slater introduced a new law that allowed the state’s recreational cannabis dispensaries to advertise their products, better positioning the state’s dispensaries to compete with Massachusetts’s cannabis dispensaries, which were allowed to advertise in Rhode Island. The bill now heads to the Senate, where Sen. Jacob Bissaillon (D-Dist. 1, Providence) has introduced the legislation ([2024-S 2885](#)).
[Click here to see news release](#)
- **Senate OKs Cano bill to cover kidney treatment for Rhode Island residents**

The Senate approved legislation ([2024-S 2397](#)) sponsored by Sen. Sandra Cano (D-Dist. 8, Pawtucket) to cover treatment for Rhode Islanders with end stage kidney

disease, regardless of their immigration status. This applies to both undocumented residents and non-citizens who qualify for Medicaid but have been present in the United States for under five years, making them only eligible for coverage of an emergency medical condition. The bill now heads to the House, where Rep. David Morales (D-Dist. 7, Providence) has introduced the legislation ([2024-H 7398](#)).
[Click here to see news release](#)

- **Senate approves Euer bill to ban unfair sales practices in automatic renewals**
The Senate passed a bill ([2024-S 2273](#)) sponsored by Sen. Dawn Euer (D-Dist. 13, Newport, Jamestown) to protect consumers from duplicitous practices common in many auto-renewing subscriptions. The bill now heads to the House for consideration.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **House passes Craven inclusive name change bill**
The House of Representatives approved legislation ([2024-H 8155A](#)) sponsored by Rep. Robert E. Craven (D-Dist. 32, North Kingstown) 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 Senate, which has approved companion legislation ([2024-S 2667A](#)) sponsored by Sen. Tiara Mack (D-Dist. 6, Providence).
[Click here to see news release](#)
- **Senate passes DiPalma bill to create an Olmstead plan commission**
The Senate approved legislation ([2024-S 2618](#)) sponsored by Sen. Louis P. DiPalma (D-Dist. 12, Middletown, Little Compton, Newport, Tiverton) that would create an Olmstead plan commission to establish a permanent, renewable, and working five year "Integration for all" plan for people vulnerable to unnecessary institutionalization in Rhode Island. The bill now heads to the House, where Rep. David A. Bennett (D-Dist. 20, Warwick, Cranston) has introduced the legislation ([2024-H 7821](#)).
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