

April 10, 2015

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.rilin.state.ri.us/News/>



- **Bill banning ‘revenge porn’ passes Senate**

Acknowledging the growing problem of having lewd and graphic photos and videos posted on the Internet with the intent to embarrass or harm another individual, the Senate has approved legislation ([2015-S 0625](#)) to prohibit the posting of “revenge porn” without the consent of the individual depicted in the images. Sponsored by Sen. Erin P. Lynch (D-Dist. 31, Warwick, Cranston), in cooperation with the Office of the Attorney General, the bill sets penalties for violators, beginning at a fine of \$1,000 and/or a year in prison for a first offense, increasing to a fine of \$3,000 and/or three years in prison for subsequent offenses. A similar bill in the House ([2015-H 5770](#)) is sponsored by Rep. Grace Diaz (D-Dist. 11, Providence).

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- **Senate OKs bill targeting unauthorized computer access**

The Senate has approved legislation ([2015-S 0567](#)) to update the state’s computer crime laws. Introduced by Sen. Frank S. Lombardi (D-Dist. 26, Cranston) in conjunction with the Office of the Attorney General, the legislation will criminalize the intentional access of confidential information on a computer or computer network without authorization or in excess of one’s authorization. It will carry a felony charge, with a fine of up to \$5,000 and/or five years in prison. A companion House bill ([2015-H 5458](#)) was introduced by Rep. Robert E. Craven (D-Dist. 32, North Kingstown).

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- **House, Senate finance committees hear budget articles for FY 2016**

The House Committee on Finance met three times this week to hear the various

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sections of FY 2016 Budget Article 11. Among the sections heard was section 15, known as “the Taylor Swift tax,” that would establish a state tax of \$2.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value on a non-owner occupied real property valued at \$1 million or more, sections 10-11, which would increase the cigarette tax from \$3.50 to \$3.75 per pack and section 12, which would exempt Social Security benefits from the state personal income tax. The Senate Committee on Finance also met three times this week to discuss the FY 2016 budget. The committee heard articles relating to the budget for DCYF, article 6, which eliminates school district funding for busing and textbook sharing for private school students and article 9, which creates a school building authority at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

- **Senate passes bill for mental health, substance abuse treatment for prisoners**
The Senate passed legislation requiring the creation of an evidence-based behavioral health care program for incarcerated adults with co-occurring substance use and mental disorders. The bill ([2015-S 0652](#)) is sponsored by Chairman of the Senate Committee on Health & Human Services Joshua Miller (D-Dist. 28, Cranston, Providence). [Click here to see news release.](#)
- **House passes Rep. Johnston bill stiffening fines for bus driver cell phone use**
Rep. Raymond H. Johnston Jr.’s (D-Dist. 61, Pawtucket) bill ([2015-H 5881](#)) passed the full House of Representatives this week with a unanimous vote. The bill clarifies the fines for unauthorized use of personal wireless devices on a school bus and clarifies the definition of “use” to prohibit the use of a wireless handset or personal wireless communication device other than hands-free to conform to federal guidelines.
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- **Sen. Goldin, Rep. Ajello bills would allow terminally ill to end their lives**
Sen. Gayle L. Goldin (D-Dist. 3, Providence) has introduced the Lila Manfield Sapinsley Compassionate Care Act ([2015-S 0598](#)), which would provide a legal mechanism for suffering, terminally ill patients who decide to hasten their own death through medication prescribed by a physician. Rep. Edith H. Ajello (D-Dist. 1, Providence) has sponsored identical legislation ([2015-H 5507](#)) in the House, which was heard this week in the House Committee on Health, Education and Welfare.
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- **Senate urges passage of federal Marketplace Fairness Act**
In an effort to protect local businesses and in an attempt to collect the sales taxes the state believes it is owed, the Senate adopted a resolution ([2015-S 0798](#)) calling on the U.S. Senate to pass the “Marketplace Fairness Act of 2015.” The federal act would require e-commerce businesses to collect sales tax from buyers in the 45 states that impose a sales tax. The resolution was introduced by Senate Majority Leader Dominick J. Ruggerio (D-Dist. 4, Providence, North Providence).
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- **Bill to regulate ‘body works’ spas heard in House committee**
The House Committee on Corporations this week heard testimony on legislation ([2015-H 5958](#)) to establish Department of Health licensing requirements and

procedures for operating any establishment and for personnel in the business of body works services (spas). The bill introduced by Rep. Carlos E. Tobon (D-Dist. 58, Pawtucket) closely mirrors a recently-enacted Providence city ordinance which closed spas suspected of operating as a brothel. The bill bars any sexual contact and requires all personnel in the establishment to be at least 18 years old.

- **Rep. Maldonado bill would increase aid to libraries in distressed communities**
Rep. Shelby Maldonado (D-Dist. 56, Central Falls) has submitted legislation ([2015-H 5836](#)) that would increase state aid to public libraries in distressed communities. Similar legislation ([2015-S 0705](#)) was introduced in the Senate by Sen. Elizabeth A. Crowley (D-Dist. 16, Central Falls, Pawtucket).
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- **Rep. Filippi bill would repeal saltwater fishing license requirement**
The House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources has heard a bill ([2015-S 5352](#)) submitted by Rep. Blake A. Filippi (I-Dist. 36, New Shoreham, Charlestown, South Kingstown, Westerly) that would repeal the saltwater fishing license requirement.
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