

Jan. 30, 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/>



- **DiPalma, Ucci introduce Identity Theft Protection Act of 2015**  
Sen. Louis P. DiPalma (D-Dist. 12, Middletown, Little Compton, Tiverton) and Rep. Stephen R. Ucci (D-Dist. 42, Johnston, Cranston) are introducing the Identity Theft Protection Act of 2015 ([2015-S 0134](#)) to bring the state's decade-old cybersecurity law up to date. Under it, those with access to personal information about Rhode Island residents will be required to implement reasonable security procedures and to provide swift notification whenever there is a breach in a security system protecting personal information that poses a risk of identity theft to any Rhode Islander.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Bennett bill would make Narcan available in schools**  
Rep. David A. Bennett (D-Dist. 20, Warwick, Cranston) has introduced legislation ([2015-H 5047](#)) to require public schools with students in grades 6 through 12 to be equipped with opioid antagonist kits to treat overdoses of heroin and commonly abused prescription painkillers like OxyContin and Vicodin. The measure is aimed at protecting teens and the general public during a regional overdose epidemic.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Solomon bill would prohibit keeping dogs outside in extreme temperatures**  
Rep. Joseph J. Solomon Jr. (D-Dist. 22, Warwick) has introduced legislation that would regulate the treatment of dogs kept outside in extreme temperatures. The bill ([2015-H 5162](#)) would make it a violation to keep any dog outside when the ambient temperature is beyond the industry standard for the weather safety scale as set forth in the most recent adopted version of the Tufts Animal Care and Condition Weather

More...

Safety Scale if the dog is showing signs of poor health due to the weather conditions.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Picard, Kettle introduce tax exemptions for financially vulnerable populations**  
Sen. Roger A. Picard (D-Dist. 20, Woonsocket, Cumberland) has introduced legislation ([2015-S 0021](#)) to exempt from state income taxes the wages of working Rhode Islanders 21 and younger and 62 and older. Meanwhile, Sen. Nicholas D. Kettle (R-Dist. 21, Coventry, Foster, Scituate, West Greenwich) has introduced legislation ([2015-S 0111](#)) to exempt military pensions from Rhode Island state income tax.  
[Click here to see Picard news release.](#)  
[Click here to see Kettle news release.](#)
- **Rep. Amore bill would legalize ‘social gaming’**  
Legislation to allow ‘social gaming’ in Rhode Island, such as office football pools, has been introduced by Rep. Gregg Amore (D-Dist. 65, East Providence). The legislation ([2015-H 5244](#)) allows a group of friends or co-workers, a liquor license holder or a nonprofit organization to conduct a social game, defined as one where no person other than those participating in the game derives a profit. Liquor license holders could operate games by paying a \$100 annual fee to the state, and nonprofits would be allowed to use up to 25 percent of a pool for charitable purposes.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Sen. Sheehan reintroduces ethics amendment**  
Sen. James C. Sheehan (D-Dist. 36, Narragansett, North Kingstown) has again introduced legislation to put a constitutional amendment question before Rhode Island voters to reestablish the authority of the Ethics Commission over core legislative acts, such as voting and proposing legislation, while preserving the tradition of unfettered free speech for members of the legislature. If approved, the constitutional question would be before voters on the 2016 election ballot.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Sen. Lynch bill calls for beach smoking ban**  
Smoking would not be allowed on or within 20 feet of Rhode Island’s public beaches, under legislation ([2015-S 0124](#)) introduced by Sen. Erin P. Lynch (D-Dist. 31, Warwick, Cranston). The bill would make smoking or depositing smoking products on or near state beaches punishable by a fine of between \$150 and \$1,000, with the minimum fine escalating for subsequent offenses. The bill, said its sponsor, addresses concerns about dangers of smoking products to humans and to beach and ocean wildlife.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Sen. Metts proposes ‘micro-zones’ in distressed communities**  
Sen. Harold M. Metts (D-Dist. 6, Providence) has introduced legislation to allow communities to create ‘micro-zones’ in exceptionally distressed areas and to encourage revitalization of those areas through a combination of expedited permitting and tax and fee waivers for refurbishing dilapidated, abandoned structures. The bill ([2015-S 0106](#)) would require local community ordinances to establish the zones.

Building owners wanting to participate in the program would need certification from the Commerce Corporation.

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

- **Bill makes dyslexia assistance part of state's literacy program for early grades**  
Rep. William W. O'Brien (D-Dist. 54, North Providence) has introduced legislation ([2015-H 5136](#)) to add dyslexia-targeted assistance as a required aspect of the state's literacy program for students at the elementary grade level. The bill directs the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to offer districts training and professional development services to enhance skills of elementary teachers in the use of strategies to improve literacy skills of students with dyslexia.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
  
- **Sen. Crowley calls for regulations, standards for homeless shelters**  
Legislation ([2015-S 0097](#)) introduced by Sen. Elizabeth A. Crowley (D-Dist. 16, Central Falls, Pawtucket) would require regulations and standards to be established for the safe, effective and proper operation of homeless shelters for individuals and families. The standards would be proposed by a committee appointed by the Housing Resources Commission and cover areas such as admission and discharge policies and health and safety issues. The committee proposal would be subject to the state's regulatory approval process. A companion bill ([2015-H 5242](#)) has been introduced in the House by Rep. John J. Lombardi (D-Dist. 8, Providence).  
[Click here to see news release.](#)