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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>



- **Twin River Tiverton proposal headed to governor's desk**

The General Assembly gave its approval to legislation necessary to allow Twin River to transfer its operations at Newport Grand to a new facility in Tiverton, pending voters' approval. The legislation ([2016-S 2081A](#), [2016-H 7228A](#)), sponsored by Senate Majority Whip Maryellen Goodwin (D-Dist. 1, Providence) and House Majority Leader John J. DeSimone (D-Dist. 5, Providence), would put questions on the ballot in November. The referendum would have to pass both statewide and in Tiverton.

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- **Senate passes Archambault bill on animals confined in vehicles**

The Rhode Island Senate has passed legislation ([2016-S 2109](#)) sponsored by Sen. Stephen R. Archambault (D-Dist. 22, Smithfield, North Providence, Johnston) that would allow law enforcement officials to hold animals that are found confined in motor vehicles for up to 72 hours, pending a district court hearing.

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- **Senate OKs Sen. Crowley bills to protect children from substance abuse**

The Senate passed two bills sponsored by Sen. Elizabeth A. Crowley (D-Dist. 16, Central Falls, Pawtucket) aimed at protecting children from new and dangerous forms of substance abuse. The first ([2016-S 2056](#)) prohibits the sale of powdered caffeine to anyone under the age of 18 and prohibits its possession on school premises or public playgrounds. Rep. David A. Bennett (D-Dist. 20, Warwick, Cranston) has sponsored similar legislation ([2016-H 7063](#)) in the House. The second bill ([2016-H 2061](#)) bans any form of alcohol other than in an ingestible liquid state.

More...

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- **Rep. Naughton, Sen. Algiere bills would require girls' softball protective gear**
Rep. Eileen S. Naughton (D-Dist. 21, Warwick) and Senate Minority Leader Dennis L. Algiere (R-Dist. 38, Westerly, Charlestown, South Kingstown) have introduced legislation ([2016-H 7756](#), [2016-S 2336](#)) that would require that Interscholastic League athletes and youth sports athletes who are female and 19 years of age or younger and who play certain softball positions wear protective face masks during practice and at games.
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- **Rep. Chippendale bill would help domestic abuse victims collect unemployment**
Rep. Michael W. Chippendale (R-Dist. 40, Foster, Glocester, Coventry) has introduced legislation ([2016-H 7693](#)) that would provide an accelerated process for collecting unemployment benefits for persons claiming benefits after voluntarily leaving work for circumstances resulting from domestic abuse.
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- **Sen. Goldin, Rep. Ajello sponsor bill to help pregnant women get insurance**
Legislation sponsored by Rep. Edith H. Ajello (D-Dist. 1, Providence) and Sen. Gayle L. Goldin (D-Dist. 3, Providence) would help uninsured pregnant women get insurance by allowing them to sign up for it outside regular open enrollment periods. Under the bill ([2016-H 7301](#), [2016-S 2052](#)), pregnancy would become a “qualifying life event,” which means that uninsured women who become pregnant can enroll in private or employer-sponsored health insurance outside of the designated open enrollment periods.
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- **Rep. Marcello bill would enable municipalities to regulate sale of fireworks**
Rep. Michael J. Marcello (D-Dist. 41, Scituate, Cranston) has introduced legislation ([2016-H 7656](#)) that would authorize cities and towns to regulate, by local ordinance, the sale of fireworks within their municipal boundaries. The legislation enables municipalities to adopt an ordinance to create a firework license in each city or town by which the municipalities can regulate the time, place and manner of their sale.
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- **Rep. Amore introduces bill providing compensation for wrongfully convicted**
Rep. Gregg Amore (D-Dist. 65, East Providence) has introduced legislation ([2016-H 7749](#)) that would allow those who have been wrongfully convicted of a crime and have been imprisoned for more than a year to petition the Superior Court for an award of compensation and damages, including their attorney fees. This law would not affect wrongful convictions that were the result of misfeasance or malfeasance by the state.
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- **Rep. Shekarchi's off-label prescription drug legislation heard in committee**
The House Committee on Corporations heard two bills sponsored by Rep. K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick) concerning the use of off-label prescription drugs. The first ([2016-H 7471](#)) would require insurance coverage for off-label prescription

drugs when there is evidence in peer-reviewed medical literature to support their use in certain medical situations. The second ([2016-H 7512](#)) would require a health insurer with prescription drug benefits to provide prescription coverage for disabling or life-threatening chronic diseases even if not approved by the FDA for that condition as long as its use is supported in medical literature for that condition.

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▪ **Rep. Slater introduces bills on compassion centers, medical marijuana**

Rep. Scott A. Slater (D-Dist. 10, Providence) introduced several bills this week pertaining to the state's medical marijuana program including legislation ([2016-H 7808](#)) that would increase the number of permits for medical marijuana compassion centers from three to six, with permits being distributed in each of Rhode Island's counties. He also reintroduced legislation ([2016-H 7142](#)) which adds post-traumatic stress disorder to the list of medical conditions acceptable to join the medical marijuana program and also accelerates the application process for those in hospice care. Similar legislation ([2016-S 2115](#)) was introduced in the Senate by Sen. Stephen R. Archambault (D-Dist. 22, Smithfield, North Providence, Johnston).

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