

March 25, 2016

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>



- **House passes Rep. Kennedy bill streamlining prescription drug pricing**
The House of Representatives has passed legislation ([2016-H 7438A](#)) introduced by Rep. Brian Patrick Kennedy (D-Dist. 38, Hopkinton, Westerly) that would streamline the process that pharmacy benefit managers use to update pricing information for prescription drugs. Similar legislation ([2016-S 2467](#)) has been introduced in the Senate by Sen. William A. Walaska (D-Dist. 30, Warwick).
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **House OKs Serpa bill that would repeal antiquated itinerant vendor law**
The House of Representatives has passed legislation ([2016-H 7590](#)) introduced by Rep. Patricia Serpa (D-Dist. 27, West Warwick, Coventry, Warwick) that would repeal an antiquated law regulating itinerant vendors, defined as people who engage in a temporary or transient business in the state. Similar legislation ([2016-S 2751](#)) has been introduced in the Senate by Sen. Frank S. Lombardi (D-Dist. 26, Cranston).
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **House passes Rep. Edwards bill increasing campaign finance accountability**
The House of Representatives has passed legislation ([2016-H 7147A](#)) submitted by Majority Whip John G. Edwards (D-Dist. 70, Tiverton, Portsmouth) that would increase the accountability of the campaign finance law by clarifying the definition of the term “entity” for purposes of campaign finance as it pertains to advocating for the approval or rejection of any question presented to voters at a financial town meeting, financial town referendum, or local election involving charter amendments. Similar legislation ([2016-S 2369](#)) has been introduced in the Senate by Sen. Joshua Miller (D-

More...

Dist. 28, Cranston, Providence).

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▪ **House OKs Rep. Lima bill allowing dogs in outdoor eating areas**

The House of Representatives has passed legislation ([2016-H 7257](#)) introduced by Rep. Charlene M. Lima (D-Dist. 14, Cranston, Providence) that would permit dogs in outdoor dining areas of restaurants under certain circumstances and where allowed by restaurant owners. The act would not affect the right of an individual to use a service animal.

▪ **House approves Rep. Carson bill to ban powdered alcohol**

The House approved legislation ([2016-H 7026A](#)) sponsored by Rep. Lauren H. Carson (D-Dist. 75, Newport) to ban powdered alcohol in Rhode Island. The legislation is aimed at protecting Rhode Islanders, particularly youth, from a substance with an unknown potential for danger and abuse. The Senate passed identical legislation ([2016-S 2059](#)) sponsored by Sen. Frank Lombardo III (D-Dist. 25, Johnston) last month.

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• **Sen. Crowley's bill that raises jurors' pay passes Senate**

The Rhode Island Senate has passed Sen. Elizabeth A. Crowley's (D-Dist. 16, Central Falls, Pawtucket) legislation ([2016-S 2062](#)) that raises the pay jurors receive for serving in the Rhode Island Superior Court. The legislation is now before the House Committee on Finance. The legislation raises the jurors' daily pay while serving in the Superior Court from \$15 per day to \$35 dollars per day. Similar legislation ([2016-H 7727](#)) has been introduced in the House by Rep. Shelby Maldonado (D-Dist. 56, Central Falls).

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• **Rep. Maldonado wants panel to study Low and Moderate Income Housing Act**

Rep. Shelby Maldonado (D-Dist. 56, Central Falls) has introduced a proposal to establish a commission to study the Low and Moderate Income Housing Act and its compliance by cities and towns. The resolution ([2016-H 7989](#)) would create a 13-member special legislative study commission for the purpose of making a comprehensive study on implementation of the Low and Moderate Income Housing Act.

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

• **Bills to create a wine direct shipper license heard in committee**

Two bills that would create a wine direct shipper license for licensed wine producers were heard in committee this week. House Minority Leader Brian C. Newberry's (R-Dist. 48, North Smithfield, Burrillville) legislation ([2016-H 7620](#)) was heard in the House Corporations Committee and Sen. Adam J. Satchell's (D-Dist. 9, West Warwick) legislation ([2016-S 2072](#)) was heard in the Senate Committee on Special Legislation and Veterans Affairs. The legislation would allow wine producers to directly ship a limited amount of wine to residents for personal consumption with oversight by the Department of Business Regulation and/or the Division of Taxation.

- **House Judiciary Committee hears hours of debate on firearms bills**
Hundreds came to the State House for hearings before the House Judiciary Committee on numerous bills concerning firearms. The committee took hours of testimony from those on all sides of the issues.
[Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Reinventing Medicaid program savings may top expectations**
In a hearing before the House Finance Committee, Executive Office of Health and Human Services Secretary Elizabeth Roberts said the Reinventing Medicaid program approved last year may exceed its projected savings of \$70 million this year, possibly saving \$75 million by the end of the fiscal year. It is expected to save about \$120 million next year, she said. She called Rhode Island a “national leader” in reducing costs without program or eligibility cuts.

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