

June 2, 2017

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>



- **Speaker Mattiello introduces bill to eliminate car tax**
House Speaker Nicholas A. Mattiello (D-Dist. 15, Cranston) introduced legislation ([2017-H 6267](#)) to eliminate the excise tax on motor vehicles throughout Rhode Island. The bill offers immediate relief to all Rhode Islanders who pay the car tax, will help mitigate its regressive nature during the six-year phase-out and will boost Rhode Island's ranking when compared to other states in terms of residents' tax burdens.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate passes Ruggiero bill to improve transparency of I-195 Commission**
The Senate unanimously passed legislation ([2017-S-0850A](#)) introduced by Senate President Dominick J. Ruggiero (D-Dist. 4, Providence, North Providence) to increase the transparency of the I-195 Redevelopment Commission, the panel charged with overseeing development of the prime downtown Providence real estate made available through the relocation of the highway. The measure now heads to the House of Representatives for consideration.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate OKs Archambault bill to require opioid education for patients**
The Senate has passed legislation ([2017-S 0493A](#)) introduced by Sen. Stephen R. Archambault (D-Dist. 22, Smithfield, North Providence, Johnston) that would require health care professionals to discuss the dangers of opioid addiction before prescribing the medication. The measure now heads to the House of Representatives for consideration.
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More...

- **Senate OKs Sosnowski bill to ban gender rating in health insurance premiums**
The Senate passed legislation ([2017-S 0578](#)) introduced by Sen. V. Susan Sosnowski (D-Dist. 37, South Kingstown, New Shoreham) that would ban health insurers from utilizing the discriminatory practice known as gender rating, or routinely charging women and men different premiums for individual insurance. The measure now heads to the House of Representatives, where similar legislation ([2017-H 5109](#)) has been introduced by Rep. Katherine S. Kazarian (D-Dist. 63, East Providence).
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **House OKs Coughlin bill that automatically registers people to vote at DMV**
The House of Representatives has passed legislation ([2017-H 5702A](#)) introduced by Rep. David A. Coughlin (D-Dist. 60, Pawtucket) that would provide for the automatic voter registration of persons who apply to the Division of Motor Vehicles for a driver's license, its renewal or personal identification document — unless they expressly decline to do so. The measure now heads to the Senate for consideration, where similar legislation ([2017-S 0770](#)) has been introduced by Sen. Gayle L. Goldin (D-Dist. 3, Providence).
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **House approves ban on 'conversion therapy' for children**
The House unanimously approved legislation ([2017-H 5277A](#)) sponsored by Rep. Edith H. Ajello (D-Dist. 1, Providence) banning “conversion therapy” on children by licensed health care or human services professionals. The discredited practice seeks to change an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity or eliminate or reduce a person's attraction or feelings toward individuals of the same sex. Sen. Donna M. Nesselbush (D-Dist. 15, Pawtucket, North Providence) is sponsoring companion legislation ([2017-S 0267](#)).
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **House OKs Maldonado bill paving the way for workers' cooperatives**
The House of Representatives passed legislation ([2017-H 6155aa](#)) introduced by Rep. Shelby Maldonado (D-Dist. 56, Central Falls) that would create a statutory vehicle for the creation and functioning of workers' cooperatives to incentivize workers to create enterprises that are democratically controlled and operated by their own workers. The measure now heads to the Senate, where similar legislation ([2017-S 0676](#)) has been introduced by Sen. Donna M. Nesselbush (D-Dist. 15, Pawtucket, North Providence).
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- **Senate OKs bill background checks for church employees, volunteers**
The Senate unanimously approved legislation ([2017-S 0661A](#)) sponsored by Sen. Cynthia A. Coyne (D-Dist. 32, Barrington, Bristol, East Providence) to require all adults who seek employment or volunteer opportunities with routine contact with children in churches or religious organizations to submit to a national criminal background check if asked. Rep. Jason Knight (D-Dist. 67, Barrington, Warren) is sponsoring companion legislation ([2017-H 6059](#)).
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- **Senate OKs bill to allow schools to make up lost days through at-home learning**
Schools may have the opportunity to make up lost school days through the use of at-home learning plans under enabling legislation sponsored by Sen. Roger A. Picard (D-Dist. 20, Woonsocket, Cumberland) and unanimously approved by the Senate. The legislation ([2017-S 0101](#)) would require the Department of Education to create a policy by Dec. 1 that would allow school districts to submit plans to provide students with at-home lessons that can be used to replace a school day missed due to inclement weather or another emergency.
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- **House gives nod to further expansion of net metering**
The House approved legislation ([2017-H 5618Aaa](#)) sponsored by Rep. Aaron Regunberg (D-Dist. 4, Providence) that could significantly increase local renewable energy generation in Rhode Island by expanding the state's remote net metering program to allow nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, hospitals and houses of worship to participate.
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-30-

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