

June 9, 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>



- **House, Senate pass bills adding e-cigarettes to indoor smoking ban**
E-cigarettes and vaporizers will join cigarettes in being banned from most indoor public places in Rhode Island under bills passed by the House and the Senate. The legislation ([2017-S 0446A](#), [2017-H 5821A](#)), sponsored by Senate President Dominick J. Ruggiero (D-Dist. 4, Providence, North Providence) and Rep. Teresa A. Tanzi (D-Dist. 34, South Kingstown, Narragansett), adds the use of e-cigarettes, vaporizers, and similar products designed for electronic, vapor or aerosol delivery of nicotine, to the definition of “smoking” in the Public Health and Workplace Safety Act, which in 2005 banned smoking in nearly all enclosed areas of places that are open to the public. Each bill will now progress to the other chamber.
[Click here to see House news release.](#)
[Click here to see Senate news release.](#)
- **Ruggiero bill expanding renewable energy program wins House approval**
The House approved legislation ([2017-H 5274A](#)) sponsored by Rep. Deborah Ruggiero (D-Dist. 74, Jamestown, Middletown) to extend the Renewable Energy Growth Program another 10 years to 2029, with targets of enrolling new systems totaling 40 additional megawatts every one of those years. The program allows homeowners, businesses and municipalities to install renewable energy systems with financing over a 15- to 20-year period for lower electricity costs. The legislation now goes to the Senate, which has passed identical legislation ([2017-S 0112A](#)) sponsored by Sen. William J. Conley Jr. (D-Dist. 18, East Providence, Pawtucket).
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More...

- **Senate OKs McCaffrey bill requiring notification of sex offenders near bus stops**
The Senate passed legislation ([2017-S 0608A](#)) introduced by Senate Majority Leader Michael J. McCaffrey (D-Dist. 29, Warwick) that would require local law enforcement to share information with local school departments for the purposes of notifying parents of students whose bus stop is within 1,000 feet of the residence of a level 3 sex offender. The measure now heads to the House of Representatives for consideration, where similar legislation ([2017-H 5724](#)) has been introduced by Rep. Joseph J. Solomon Jr. (D-Dist. 22, Warwick).
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate OKs Gallo bill for funding formula for career/tech programs**
The Senate has passed legislation ([2017-S 0437A](#)) introduced by Sen. Hanna M. Gallo (D-Dist. 27, Cranston, West Warwick) that would develop a funding formula for school districts sending students to career and technical programs outside the district. The measure now heads to the House of Representatives for consideration.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate OKs Goodwin's bill to create Aging and Disability Resource Center**
The Senate approved legislation ([2017-S 0270A](#)) sponsored by Senate Majority Whip Maryellen Goodwin (D-Dist. 1, Providence) to create an office within state government to help connect Rhode Islanders with helpful resources for long-term care. The legislation now goes to the House, where Rep. Lauren H. Carson (D-Dist. 75, Newport) is sponsoring companion legislation ([2017-H 5252](#)).
- **Senate passes legislation creating driver's ed course for parents of teen drivers**
The Senate has passed legislation ([2017-S 0555A](#)) introduced by Sen. Hanna M. Gallo (D-Dist. 27, Cranston, West Warwick) that would establish a free educational course for parents of students in driver's education classes. The measure now heads to the House of Representatives for consideration, which has passed similar legislation ([2017-H 5457A](#)) introduced by House Majority Leader K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick).
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- **Senate passes Ruggerio bill to stiffen penalties for assaulting a delivery person**
The Senate passed legislation ([2017-S 0230](#)) introduced by Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio (D-Dist. 4, Providence, North Providence) to create stiff penalties for assault on a delivery person. The bill now goes to the House, where Rep. Raymond A. Hull (D-Dist. 6, Providence, North Providence) is sponsoring companion legislation ([2017-H 5854](#)).
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Lima expungement bill passes House**
Rep. Charlene M. Lima's (D-Dist. 14, Cranston, Providence) bill ([2017-H 5205A](#)) that would enable persons with less than six misdemeanor convictions to obtain an expungement of the records of those convictions, as long as the person has not been convicted of any felony passed the House of Representatives. Misdemeanor convictions for domestic violence or driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs and refusal to submit to a chemical test would not be eligible for expungement under this act.

- **Senate passes Crowley bill to fix loophole in Madeline Walker tax lien program**
The Senate passed legislation ([2017-S 0843A](#)) introduced by Sen. Elizabeth A. Crowley (D-Dist. 16, Central Falls, Pawtucket) to close a loophole in the Madeline Walker tax lien program, administered by the Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation. The legislation would protect the agency from liability for any violations of environmental or minimum-housing standards, or any liability concerning the tax title property, for five years from the date of the tax sale.
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- **Rep. Johnston, Sen. Crowley bills would expedite merger of hospitals**
Rep. Raymond H. Johnston, Jr. (D-Dist. 61, Pawtucket) and Sen. Elizabeth A. Crowley (D-Dist. 16, Central Falls, Pawtucket) have introduced legislation ([2017-H 6284](#) / [2017-S 0937](#)) that would streamline the procedure for the approval of mergers of nonprofit hospitals in response to the proposed merger of Memorial Hospital in Pawtucket with Prime Healthcare Foundation. Representative Johnston's bill has been referred to the House Committee on Corporations and Senator Crowley's bill was heard by the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services.
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