

June 23, 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 approves 2018 budget bill**

The House voted 64-11 to approve a \$9.2 billion 2018 state budget bill ([2017-H 5175Aaa](#)) that eliminates the \$134 million shortfall that opened up in May, funds the first year of a six-year phase-out of the car tax, raises the minimum wage, restores no-fare bus passes for low-income elderly and disabled people, includes a pilot program to provide two years of free tuition at CCRI and once again does not include any broad-based tax increases. The Senate Finance Committee takes up the bill Tuesday. [Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Assembly OKs background checks for church volunteers, employees**

The General Assembly approved legislation ([2017-S 0661A](#), [2017-H 6059A](#)) sponsored by Sen. Cynthia A. Coyne (D-Dist. 32, Barrington, Bristol, East Providence) and Rep. Jason Knight (D-Dist. 67, Barrington, Warren) to protect youth by requiring 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. The bill now goes to the governor. [Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Bill requiring rear-facing car seats for kids under 2 now law**

Children under 2 or under 30 pounds will be required to be restrained in rear-facing car seats under legislation ([2017-H 5456](#), [2017-S 0275](#)) passed by the General Assembly last week and now signed by the governor. The legislation was sponsored by Senate President Dominick J. Ruggiero (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) and House Majority Leader K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick).

More...

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- **House, Senate pass Craven, Lombardi bill that protects workers' pay**
The House and Senate have each passed legislation ([2017-H 5932A](#), [2017-S 0350A](#)) introduced by Rep. Robert E. Craven (D-Dist. 32, North Kingstown) and Sen. Frank S. Lombardi (D-Dist. 26, Cranston) respectively that prohibits employers from making deductions from an employee's wages without written authorization from the worker. The legislation states that employers cannot deduct wages from a worker for reasons such as spoilage or breakage of equipment or product, any amount of shortages or losses, and fines or penalties for tardiness, misconduct, or quitting without notice.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate OKs Quezada bill allowing translators during road tests**
The Senate passed legislation ([2017-S 0226A](#)) introduced by Sen. Ana B. Quezada (D-Dist. 2, Providence) that would allow driver's license applicants with limited English proficiency to be accompanied by an interpreter during road tests. The measure now heads to the House of Representatives for consideration.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Crowley bill to expedite hospital merger passes Senate**
The Senate passed Sen. Elizabeth A. Crowley's (D-Dist. 16, Central Falls, Pawtucket) legislation ([2017-S 0937A](#)) 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. Rep. Raymond H. Johnston Jr. (D-Dist. 61, Pawtucket) has sponsored companion legislation ([2017-H 6284](#)) in the House of Representatives.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate OKs marijuana study commission**
The Senate approved legislation ([2017-S 0277A](#)) sponsored by Sen. Cynthia A. Coyne (D-Dist. 32, Barrington, Bristol, East Providence) to create a 19-member joint legislative commission to study the effects of legalizing recreational marijuana use. The resolution now goes to the House, which has already approved identical legislation ([2017-H 5551A](#)) sponsored by Rep. Dennis M. Canario's (D-Dist. 71, Portsmouth, Little Compton, Tiverton).
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Bill disarming domestic abusers headed to floor vote**
The House Judiciary Committee recommended passage of the Protect Rhode Island Families Act ([2017-H 5510A](#)) sponsored by Rep. Teresa Tanzi (D-Dist. 34, South Kingstown, Narragansett) expanding a prohibition on gun ownership to cover more people who are convicted of domestic violence or are subject to a court-issued final protective order. The bill will now go to the full House. Sen. Harold M. Metts (D-Dist. 6, Providence) is sponsoring companion legislation ([2017-S 0405](#)).

- **Senate committee approves paid sick leave bill**

The Senate Labor Committee approved legislation ([2017-S 0290A](#)) sponsored by Sen. Maryellen Goodwin (D-Dist. 1, Providence) requiring employers with 11 or more workers to provide at least one hour of paid sick and safe leave time for every 30 hours worked, up to 32 hours next year and 40 in all subsequent years. The bill now goes to the full Senate. Rep. Aaron Regunberg (D-Dist. 4, Providence) is sponsoring companion legislation ([2017-H 5413](#)).

- **Senate approves termination of parental rights of rapists**

The Senate approved legislation ([2017-S 0595A](#)) sponsored by Sen. Maryellen Goodwin (D-Dist. 1, Providence) to allow judges to terminate parental rights of perpetrators of sexual assault who conceive a child as a result. It now goes to the House, where Rep. William W. O'Brien (D-Dist. 54, North Providence) is sponsoring a similar bill ([2017-H 5215](#)).

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