

April 11, 2014

Legislative Press Bureau at 222-2457

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.rilin.state.ri.us/News/>



- **Bill requires mammogram exam facilities to provide breast density information**
The Senate approved legislation ([2014-S 2522Aaa](#)), sponsored by Sen. James E. Doyle II (D-Dist. 8, Pawtucket), to require health care facilities that perform mammograms to notify their patients of any findings of dense breast tissue and basic information about breast density. The American Cancer Society has reported that having dense breast tissue increases a woman's chance of developing breast cancer. An identical House bill ([2014-H 7341](#)) has been introduced by Rep. Elaine Coderre (D-Dist. 60, Pawtucket).
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Speaker rounds out leadership team with appointments**
House Speaker Nicholas A. Mattiello made the following appointments to his leadership team: Rep. Charlene M. Lima (D-Dist. 14, Cranston, Providence) as deputy speaker, Rep. Donald J. Lally Jr. (D-Dist. 33, Narragansett, South Kingstown) as speaker pro tempore, and Rep. Elaine A. Coderre (D-Dist. 60, Pawtucket) as Democratic caucus chairwoman.
- **Costa's sex trafficking bill approved by House**
The House approved legislation ([2014-H 7916](#)) sponsored by Rep. Doreen Costa (R-Dist. 31, North Kingstown, Exeter) to increase the penalties for sex trafficking of a minor from 40 years of imprisonment to 50 years, and increase the penalties for obstruction or interference with enforcement of sex trafficking laws from 20 years to 35 years in prison. It also hikes the fine from \$20,000 to \$40,000.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate OKs Bruins license plates**
The Senate approved legislation ([2014-S 2555](#)) sponsored by Senate Majority Whip

More...

Maryellen Goodwin (D-Dist. 1, Providence) to create a new specialty license plate for the Boston Bruins Foundation, the Bruins' charity organization. A portion of fees from the plate would go to the foundation to support Rhode Island community groups. [Click here to see news release.](#)

▪ **Legislation introduced to lower Rhode Island sales tax**

Saying they are attempting to make Rhode Island a more business- and consumer-friendly state, Rep. Jan P. Malik (D-Dist. 67, Barrington, Warren) and Sen. Walter S. Felag Jr. (D-Dist. 10, Warren, Bristol, Tiverton) have introduced legislation to lower Rhode Island's sales tax. The legislators, who co-chaired a study commission that considered the possibility of eliminating the sales tax, each introduced bills in their respective chambers ([2014-H 8033](#), [2014-H 8039](#), [2014-S 2866](#)), one to lower the rate from 7 percent to 6 percent, the other to lower the rate to 3 percent.

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

▪ **House Oversight reviews EDC/38 Studios suit status**

The House Oversight Committee, led by Chairwoman Rep. Karen L. MacBeth (D-Dist. 52, Cumberland), met this week to discuss and review the status of the Superior Court hearing regarding the Economic Development Corporation loan guaranty program and 38 Studios lawsuit, including the potential release of depositions and the possibility of calling witnesses to testify before the committee.

▪ **Ruggerio bill calls for smartphone anti-theft 'kill switch'**

Legislation ([2014-S 2897](#)) introduced by Senate Majority Leader Dominick J. Ruggerio (D-Dist. 4, Providence, North Providence) will require that all smart phones and other advanced mobile communications devices sold in Rhode Island beginning next year be equipped with an anti-theft "kill switch" that can be used to disable the phone or device if it falls into the hands of someone who is not the rightful owner.

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

▪ **Guthrie proposes tax incentives for manufacturing facilities rehabilitation, reuse**

Rep. Scott Guthrie (D-Dist. 28, Coventry) has introduced legislation ([2014-H 7983](#)) intended to spur renovation and reuse of the many former and now vacant manufacturing buildings in the state in an effort to attract modern commercial manufacturing enterprises to Rhode Island. The bill would allow owners of facilities that incur rehabilitation costs for structures placed into service after Jan. 1, 2015, to receive a 30-percent credit on taxes for qualified rehabilitation expenses.

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

▪ **Walaska bill amends auto valuation method**

In an attempt to ease auto excise tax bills, many of which have increased since the state eliminated the \$6,000 excise tax exemption four years ago, Sen. William A. Walaska (D-Dist. 30, Warwick) has introduced legislation ([2014-S 2203](#)) to allow municipalities to assess vehicles based on the average trade-in price, rather than the clean retail value of the vehicle.

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

- **Finn proposes law to encourage ‘angel’ investors**

Rep. Linda Finn (D-Dist. 72, Middletown, Portsmouth) has introduced legislation ([2014-H 7812](#)) to encourage “angel investors” to put their money into Rhode Island businesses. The bill would add angel investors – individuals other than the entrepreneurs running a company who invest their money in that company to help it develop – to a statute that allows venture capital groups to receive tax benefits. Similar legislation ([2014-S 2795](#)) has been introduced in the Senate by Sen. Ryan W. Pearson (D-Dist. 19, Cumberland, Lincoln).
[Click here to see news release.](#)

- **State House holds Child Care Awareness Day**

The State House held the third annual Child Care Awareness Day, a celebration highlighting the collaborative efforts of legislators, child care providers, parents and policymakers to improve the lives of children and families. Children from several elementary schools and child care facilities from across the state put on a musical presentation, showcased their artwork, and indulged in a plethora of healthy snacks, pizza and activities. President of the Senate M. Teresa Paiva Weed and House Speaker Nicholas A. Mattiello spoke briefly at the event, hosted by Permanent Legislative Commission on Child Care (PLCCC) Chairwoman Rep. Grace Diaz (D-Dist. 11, Providence) and Vice Chairwoman Sen. Catherine Cool Rumsey (D-Dist. 34, Exeter, Charlestown, Hopkinton, Richmond, West Greenwich).
[Click here to see news release.](#)