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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/>



- **New transportation funding plan would nix Sakonnet tolls**
A group of East Bay legislators led by Sen. Louis P. DiPalma (D-Dist. 12, Middletown, Newport, Little Compton, Tiverton), Rep. John G. Edwards (D-Dist. 70, Portsmouth, Tiverton) and Sen. Christopher Scott Ottiano (R-Dist. 11, Portsmouth, Bristol) submitted legislation to create a predictable statewide funding source for roads and bridges, without a toll on the Sakonnet River Bridge. The legislation ([2014-S 2335](#), [2014-H 7432](#)) creates a new Infrastructure Trust Fund using a number of existing revenue streams to create a pool of funding for the maintenance of all state-controlled roads and bridges as well as adding funding to the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Ajello, Miller introduce bill to regulate, tax marijuana**
Senate Health and Human Services Committee Chairman Joshua Miller (D-Dist. 28, Cranston, Providence) and House Judiciary Committee Chairwoman Edith H. Ajello (D-Dist. 1, Providence) introduced legislation ([2014-S 2379](#), [2014-H 7506](#)) to make marijuana legal for adults 21 and older and establish a system in which marijuana is regulated and taxed similarly to alcohol.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Lynch proposes early voting for Rhode Island**
Sen. Erin P. Lynch (D-Dist. 31, Warwick, Cranston) has introduced legislation ([2014-S 2237](#)) to make in-person early voting available for all Rhode Island elections, except special elections. Early voting would begin on the 21st day before a general election and end on, and include, the Saturday before the scheduled election. In-

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person early voting would begin the 13th day before a primary and end on, and include, the Saturday before the primary election.

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▪ **House, Senate committees consider Board of Education revamp**

The Assembly held hearings on an article of the governor's proposed budget and an identical Senate bill that would restructure the governance and responsibilities of the Rhode Island Board of Education. The House Finance Committee and its Health, Education and Welfare Committee met jointly on Article 20 of the budget bill ([2014-H 7133](#)). The Senate Education and Finance committees met jointly on legislation ([2014-S 2265](#)) introduced by Sen. Hanna M. Gallo (D-Dist. 27, Cranston, West Warwick).

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

▪ **Murder/parole, registry bills heard by Senate committee**

Three bills dealing with individuals convicted of murder were heard by the Senate Judiciary Committee this week, following a State House news conference held by sponsors to outline the specifics of the legislation. Two of the bills would affect parole eligibility for convicted murderers. The other would require convicted murderers, upon release, to register with local law enforcement. Sen. Leonidas P. Raptakis (D-Dist. 33, Coventry, East Greenwich, West Greenwich) sponsored the bills in the Senate ([2014-S 2029](#), [2014-S 2031](#), [2014-S 2036](#)). Rep. Raymond A. Hull (D-Dist. 6, Providence, North Providence) introduced two of the bills in the House ([2014-H 7103](#), [2014-H 7100](#)) and Rep. Patricia A. Serpa (D-Dist. 27, West Warwick, Coventry, Warwick) introduced the other ([2014-H 7101](#)).

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

▪ **Assembly leaders address annual Chamber of Commerce luncheon**

Legislative leaders participated in a question-and-answer forum on economic development at the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce's annual luncheon at the Rhode Island Convention Center, attended by about 600 government officials, business leaders and nonprofit organizers. The legislators' discussion, which covered topics including jobs, tax and regulatory reform, workforce training and economic development projects throughout the state, featured House Speaker Gordon D. Fox (D-Dist. 4, Providence), President of the Senate M. Teresa Paiva Weed (D-Dist. 13, Newport, Jamestown), House Majority Leader Nicholas A. Mattiello (D-Dist. 15, Cranston), Senate Minority Leader Dennis L. Algieri (R-Dist. 38, Westerly, Charlestown, South Kingstown), House Minority Leader Brian C. Newberry (R-Dist. 48, North Smithfield, Burrillville) and Senate Commerce Committee Chairman Roger A. Picard (D-Dist. 20, Woonsocket, Cumberland).

▪ **Ucci proposes improvements to transparency in quasi-public corporations**

House Majority Whip Stephen R. Ucci (D-Dist. 42, Johnston, Cranston) has introduced a bill ([2014-H 7138](#)) that would impose a clear set of standards to improve accountability and transparency for quasi-public corporations. The corporations are typically governed by independent boards that serve a critical oversight function involving government resources and assets. Examples include the Rhode Island Convention Center Authority, the Quonset Development Corporation, the Rhode

Island Airport Corporation and the Rhode Island Resource and Recovery Corporation.
[Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Senate, House bills would make R.I.-style calamari state’s official appetizer**
Legislation has been introduced in the Senate and House to christen Rhode Island-style calamari as the state’s “official appetizer” in recognition of the popularity of the dish and the importance of the squid industry, which reports annual landings of about 23.5 million pounds worth about \$18.5 million. Sen. V. Susan Sosnowski (D-Dist. 37, South Kingstown, New Shoreham) introduced the Senate bill ([2014-S 2398](#)). Rep. Joseph M. McNamara (D-Dist. 19, Warwick, Cranston) introduced the House bill ([2014-H 7446](#)).
[Click here to see news release.](#)