

Jan. 24, 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/>



- **Senate unveils ‘Rhode to Work’ action plan to address skills gap crisis**
The Rhode Island Senate unveiled a major legislative action plan called “Rhode to Work,” which is intended to tackle Rhode Island’s jobs crisis. The action plan promotes job training opportunities to better prepare Rhode Island’s unemployed workers for jobs and new workers for the demands of a modern economy.
[Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Firearms Safety Task Force issues recommendations**
The task force studying the nexus of gun rights and mental health law, led by Rep. Deborah Ruggiero (D-Dist. 74, Jamestown, Middletown) and Sen. Catherine Cool Rumsey (D-Dist. 34, Exeter, Charlestown, Hopkinton, Richmond, West Greenwich), issued recommendations that Rhode Island begin submitting limited additional information about mental or behavioral health actions taken in District Court to the national database used to screen gun buyers.
[Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Legislation offers incentives for companies to hire**
Legislation is being introduced in the House and Senate to establish “The Rhode Island New Qualified Jobs Incentive Act of 2014,” making tax incentives available to companies that hire full-time employees. If enacted, the legislation provides a savings against the net income tax of large firms and against the personal income tax of owners of smaller companies. Rep. K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick) has introduced the House bill ([2014-H 7090](#)) and Sen. James C. Sheehan (D-Dist. 36, Narragansett, North Kingstown) will sponsor the Senate companion bill.
[Click here to see news release.](#)

More...

- **Social media privacy legislation introduced in both chambers**

Legislation has been introduced in the House and Senate that would establish two new chapters in state law setting provisions for social media privacy – one covering students or prospective students, the other covering employees and job applicants. The House bill ([2014-H 7124](#)) was introduced by Rep. Brian Patrick Kennedy (D-Dist. 38, Hopkinton, Westerly) and the Senate bill ([2014-S 2095](#)) is sponsored by Majority Leader Dominick J. Ruggerio (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence). [Click here to see news release.](#)
- **‘Erin’s Law’ aims to educate children about sexual exploitation, abuse**

Bills will be introduced in both legislative chambers to create “Erin’s Law” in Rhode Island, to establish a comprehensive program to provide an age-appropriate course of instruction in Rhode Island schools in the prevention of child abduction, child sexual exploitation and child sexual abuse. Sen. James E. Doyle (D-Dist. 8, Pawtucket) has introduced the Senate bill ([2014-S 2058](#)); Rep. Raymond H. Johnston Jr. (D-Dist. 61, Pawtucket) will sponsor the House bill. [Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Costa, Sosnowski push for repeal of taxi cab tax**

Rep. Doreen Costa (R-Dist. 31, North Kingstown, Exeter) filed legislation ([2014-H 7185](#)) to repeal the sales tax on taxi cab fares. Members of the Taxi Owners Association of Rhode Island are slated to join her for a press conference on this issue next week. Sen. V. Susan Sosnowski (D-Dist. 37, South Kingstown, New Shoreham) has introduced the Senate companion bill ([2014-S 2082](#)). [Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Fellela introduces bill to help veterans create economic opportunities**

Rep. Deborah A. Fellela (D-Dist. 43, Johnston) introduced legislation ([2014-H 7074](#)) that would push the state to ensure that at least 3 percent of the total value of all contracts available to businesses in each fiscal year goes to veteran-owned businesses. The state Department of Administration, in consultation with the Division of Veterans’ Affairs, would be responsible for establishing related rules and regulation formulas for giving veteran-owned small businesses a preference in contract and subcontract awards. [Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Several legislators call for lowering corporate tax rate**

Sen. James C. Sheehan (D-Dist. 36, North Kingstown, Narragansett), Sen. William A. Walaska (D-Dist. 30, Warwick) and Rep. Gregory J. Costantino (D-Dist. 44, Lincoln, Johnston, Smithfield) have introduced legislation ([2014-S 2075](#), [2014-S 2067](#), [2014-H 7061](#)) to reduce Rhode Island’s corporate tax rate from its current 9 percent to 7 percent. [Click here to see news release.](#)
- **McNamara introduces benevolent gestures bill**

Rep. Joseph McNamara (D-Dist. 19, Warwick, Cranston) has filed legislation ([2014-H 7072](#)) to allow medical professionals to express sympathy to patients and their

families without risk of that statement being used as evidence of wrongdoing in any lawsuit.

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

▪ **Newberry files bill expanding requirement for fiscal notes**

House Minority Leader Brian C. Newberry (R-Dist. 48, North Smithfield, Burrillville) has put in a bill aimed at strengthening the requirement for fiscal notes, making them mandatory prior to committee consideration of bills before the Rhode Island House or Senate. The legislation is the first of a series of bills to be introduced as part of the House Republican Caucus' "Getting To 25" initiative, and is one of its Spend Smarter proposals.

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

▪ **Naval Station Newport commander briefs Assembly**

Capt. Douglas W. Mikatarian, commanding officer of Naval Station Newport, provided legislators an update on the Navy's presence in the Ocean State. Arranged by Speaker of the House Gordon D. Fox and President of the Senate M. Teresa Paiva Weed, the briefing provided a look at the Navy's economic impact on the state, the services it provides and how the Navy can be of assistance to legislators and their constituents.

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