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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/>



- **House holds economic workshop; Senate sets summit next week**  
The House presented an economic workshop for members this week, focusing on ways to make Rhode Island a more business-friendly state. Presenters were Aaron Renn, publisher of the Urbanophile.com website, and John Kennedy, senior vice president of CVS Caremark. The Senate has scheduled its annual Economic Summit next week (Monday, March 10, 5 p.m. at CCRI, Lincoln), focusing on workforce development and career and technical education. Dr. Brenda Dann-Messier, assistant secretary, Career and Adult Education for the U.S. Department of Education, will be keynote speaker.  
[Click here to see House news release.](#)  
[Click here to see Senate news release.](#)
- **House passes bills allowing drivers to show proof of insurance on mobile devices**  
The House passed two bills ([2014-H 7098](#), [2014-H 7125A](#)) – sponsored by Representatives Gregg Amore (D-Dist. 65, East Providence) and Brian Patrick Kennedy (D-Dist. 38, Hopkinton, Westerly) respectively – giving motorists the freedom to travel without a paper insurance card as long as they have a form of digital proof of insurance.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Edwards introduces bill to protect private information on public roadways**  
Rep. John G. Edwards (D-Dist. 70, Portsmouth, Tiverton) introduced legislation ([2014-H 7867](#)) to prohibit collection of personal data through surveillance – with

More...

certain exceptions – on any public highway in the state, unless specifically authorized by statute or court order.

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

▪ **Felag proposes 5-cent cut in gasoline tax**

Hoping to level the playing field with neighboring Massachusetts and encourage more motorists to purchase their gasoline at Rhode Island service stations, Sen. Walter S. Felag Jr. (D-Dist. 10, Warren, Bristol, Tiverton) has introduced legislation ([2014-S 2027](#)) to reduce the state's gasoline tax from its current 32 cents per gallon to 27 cents. Rhode Island's gas tax is about 6 cents per gallon higher than the Bay State's. [Click here to see news release.](#)

▪ **Sosnowski introduces bill to add wine, beer to farmers' markets**

Sen. V. Susan Sosnowski (D-Dist. 37, South Kingstown, New Shoreham) has introduced legislation ([2014-S 2112](#)) to amend current law so that a farmer-winery and a farmer-brewery may, under certain conditions, be licensed to sell wine and beer for off-premises consumption at farmers' markets, similar to what is permitted in Massachusetts.

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

▪ **Jabour urges police chiefs to equip officers with Narcan**

As Rhode Island reels from an epidemic of fatal drug overdoses, Sen. Paul V. Jabour (D-Dist. 5, Providence) is urging police chiefs across the state to support a proposal to arm all officers with Narcan, a drug that halts opioid overdoses.

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

▪ **McCaffrey legislation would allow for state income tax refunds exemption**

Sen. Michael J. McCaffrey (D-Dist. 29, Warwick) introduced legislation that would allow individuals to subtract state income tax refunds included in their federal adjusted gross income (AGI) where the refund was originally claimed as an itemized deduction for federal income tax purposes. The bills ([2014-H 2465](#), [2014-H 2466](#)) stem from the Rhode Island Special Legislative Commission to Study Installation and Implications of Itemizing State Income Tax Refunds as Federal Deductions' report.

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

▪ **Marshall bill backs effort to launch rebirth of state's manufacturing industry**

The House passed a resolution ([2014-H 7785](#)) sponsored by Rep. Kenneth Marshall (D-Dist. 68, Bristol, Warren) to support an application by the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation to the federal Economic Development Administration to create a "manufacturing design hub" in the Ocean State. The federally funded initiative would bring together innovative manufacturers, entrepreneurs, institutions of higher education, state agencies, and federal research and development centers in the region to re-establish a successful, modern manufacturing industry.

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

▪ **Morin sworn in to General Assembly**

Rep. Michael Morin was sworn in as a member of the House representing District 49 in Woonsocket. Representative Morin, a Democrat and 26-year member of the

Woonsocket Fire Department, won the special election held Feb. 25 to replace former representative Lisa Baldelli Hunt, who is now Woonsocket's mayor.

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

▪ **Assembly celebrates International Women's Day**

Sen. Donna M. Nesselbush (D-Dist. 15, Pawtucket, North Providence) and House Speaker Pro Tempore Elaine A. Coderre (D-Dist. 60, Pawtucket) hosted a state celebration of the United Nations-recognized International Women's Day. The official theme for this year's International Women's Day event was "Women in Law Enforcement."