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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/>



▪ **Senate, House approve bills aimed at stemming overdose deaths**

The Senate approved three bills supported by its Health and Human Services Committee to address the recent increase in drug overdose deaths in the region. One bill ([2014-S 2801Aaa](#)) sponsored by Sen. Paul V. Jabour (D-Dist. 5, Providence) concerns health insurance coverage for people with opioid substance use disorder and chronic addiction. Another bill ([2014-S 2523A](#)) sponsored by Sen. Christopher Scott Ottiano (R-Dist. 11, Portsmouth, Bristol) addresses prescription drug diversion through electronic prescription drug monitoring. The House approved similar legislation ([2014-H 7574A](#)) sponsored by Rep. William O'Brien (D-Dist.54, North Providence). The third ([2014-S 2561](#)) sponsored by Senate Majority Whip Maryellen Goodwin (D-Dist. 1, Providence) would require the Department of Health to create regulations for a system of electronic data transmissions of prescriptions for controlled substances. Rep. Joseph M. McNamara is sponsoring the bill ([2014-H 8142](#)) in the House.

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

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

▪ **Senate gives OK to three regulatory reform bills**

The Senate approved three pieces of legislation designed to enhance the efforts of the Office of Regulatory Reform to make it easier to do business in Rhode Island. One bill ([2014-S 2858](#)), introduced by Sen. Erin P. Lynch (D-Dist. 31, Warwick, Cranston), directs to ORR to develop online maps, flow charts and other visualizations to help business through all steps of the regulatory and permitting process. A companion House bill ([2014-H 8135](#)) has been introduced by Rep. Patricia A. Serpa (D-Dist. 27, West Warwick, Coventry, Warwick). Another bill OK'd by the Senate ([2014-S 2480A](#)), sponsored by Senator Lynch, amends the process for submission of economic impact

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statements and eliminates a number of exclusions in existing statute. The companion House bill ([2014-H 7520](#)) was introduced by Rep. John G. Edwards (D-Dist. 70, Tiverton, Portsmouth). The third bill passed by the Senate ([2014-S 2457](#)) will synchronize the review processes of the ORR and Office of Secretary of State. That bill was sponsored by Sen. Walter S. Felag Jr (D-Dist. 10, Bristol, Tiverton, Warren). The companion House bill ([2014-H 7703](#)) was introduced by Representative Serpa. [Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Da Ponte submits plan to lower corporate tax, improve competitiveness**
Senate Finance Committee Chairman Daniel Da Ponte (D-Dist. 14, East Providence) introduced legislation to lower the rate and amend the way corporate income is taxed to improve Rhode Island’s economic competitiveness. The bill ([2014-S 2988](#)) would also change the apportionment formula, which presently could be seen as a drawback for businesses investing in Rhode Island. [Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Walaska bill would reinstate jobs development, tax exemption program**
Legislation ([2013-S 2579](#)) sponsored by Sen. William A. Walaska (D-Dist. 30, Warwick) would reinstate a jobs development and sales and use tax exemption program that expired three years ago. The “Sales Tax Development Initiative” would allow companies a sales tax exemption for materials used in the construction, reconstruction or rehabilitation of a business expansion or relocation project in return for the creation of full-time, quality jobs. A similar House bill ([2014-H 7415](#)) was introduced by Rep. K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick). [Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate committee approves bill to revoke East Bay tolls, create infrastructure fund**
The Senate Finance Committee approved a bill ([2014-S 2335A](#)) sponsored by Sen. Louis P. DiPalma (D-Dist. 12, Middletown, Newport, Little Compton, Tiverton) to establish the Rhode Island Transportation Infrastructure Fund as a restricted-receipt account within the Rhode Island Intermodal Surface Transportation Fund. Additionally, ownership of the Sakonnet River and Mount Hope bridges would be transferred to the Rhode Island Department of Transportation and the ability to toll those bridges would be revoked. Rep. John G. Edwards (D-Dist. 70, Portsmouth, Tiverton) is sponsoring similar legislation ([2014-H 7432](#)) in the House.
- **House OKs O’Grady bill removing roadblock for unemployed drivers**
The House approved legislation ([2014-H 7229](#)) introduced by Rep. Jeremiah T. O’Grady (D-Dist. 46, Lincoln, Pawtucket) to protect unemployed Rhode Islanders from a provision of state law that can prevent them from renewing their driver’s licenses or vehicle registrations if they fall behind on income taxes. The bill is aimed at eliminating a potential roadblock to employment for unemployed people who are struggling to pay their bills and find a job. Sen. Gayle L. Goldin (D-Dist. 3, Providence) is sponsoring companion legislation ([2014-S 2727](#)) in the Senate. [Click here to see news release.](#)
- **House supports Corvese bill to seize pimps’ profits**
The House approved legislation ([2014-H 7620](#)) sponsored by Rep. Arthur Corvese (D-

Dist. 55, North Providence) to help law enforcement target pimps and others who derive proceeds from pandering or permitting prostitution in the state. The bill changes a current law that allows police to seize money made on prostitution from prostitutes, but not pimps. The Senate has approved similar legislation ([2014-S 2820](#)) sponsored by Sen. Frank S. Lombardi (D-Dist. 26, Cranston).

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- **Senate approve bill to license lactation consultants**

The Senate passed legislation ([2014-S 2519](#)) sponsored by Sen. Gayle L. Goldin (D-Dist. 1, Providence) to establish a licensing process for lactation consultants, thereby facilitating insurance coverage of their service to assist nursing mothers and infants. Rep. Teresa Tanzi (D-Dist. 34, South Kingstown, Narragansett) is sponsoring similar legislation ([2014-H 7914](#)) in the House.

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- **House OKs bill requiring breast density information for mammography patients**

The House approved legislation ([2014-H 7341A](#)) requiring mammography exam facilities to provide their patients with information about breast density, a physical characteristic that the American Cancer Society says can put women with high density levels at a greater risk of developing breast cancer. Rep. Elaine A. Coderre (D-Dist. 60, Pawtucket) sponsored the bill. The Senate earlier this session passed a companion bill ([2014-S 2522Aaa](#)) that was introduced by Sen. James E. Doyle II (D-Dist. 8, Pawtucket).

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- **Senate resolution supports country of origin labeling on pharmaceuticals**

The Senate approved a resolution ([2014-S 2225](#)) introduced by Senate Majority Leader Dominick J. Ruggerio (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) supporting federal legislative and regulatory efforts to increase country-of-origin labeling on pharmaceuticals sold in the United States, recognizing that more than 80 percent of the active ingredients in drugs sold in the United States are made abroad.

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- **House OKs commission to study Desert Storm/Desert Shield memorial**

The House approved legislation ([2014-H 7704A](#)) to create a commission to study the establishment of a Desert Storm/Desert Shield memorial at the Veterans' Cemetery in Exeter. The legislation was sponsored by Rep. Marvin L. Abney (D-Dist. 73, Newport, Middletown), who serves on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee. The Senate has already approved its companion bill ([2014-S 2425A](#)) sponsored by Sen. Walter S. Felag Jr. (D-Dist. 10, Warren, Bristol, Tiverton).

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