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Legislative Press Bureau at (401) 528-1743

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/>



- **Canario introduces bills to make RI business-friendlier**

Rep. Dennis M. Canario (D-Dist. 71, Portsmouth, Tiverton) has introduced two bills to help encourage business growth and spur job creation. One ([2015-H 5108](#)) would eliminate the state's \$500 minimum corporate tax which is paid annually by all businesses beginning the date they incorporate in the state. The other ([2015-H 5101](#)) creates a commission to study and issue findings and recommendations on ways to streamline new business startup procedures and regulations in the state.

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

- **Pearson submits bill to fund school construction**

With the current moratorium on state aid to school construction set to expire in May, Sen. Ryan W. Pearson (D-Dist. 19, Cumberland, Lincoln) has introduced legislation ([2015-S 0100](#)) to reform the process through which school construction projects are approved and provide a designated funding stream to meet the needs of modern public education facilities. Based on the work of a 2014 Senate task force, the bill would allocate funding of annual revenues for projects based on need, priority and cost effectiveness, and establish a dedicated funding stream through the sales tax.

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

- **Serpa bill demands disclosure of executive pay for agencies contracting with RI**

Rep. Patricia Serpa (D-Dist. 27, West Warwick, Coventry, Warwick) has submitted a bill ([2015-H 5110](#)) that would require agencies contracting with the state to provide care for the elderly, youth and developmentally disabled to disclose their executives' compensation and administrative costs.

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More...

- **Sen. Morgan bill would boost sex trafficking penalties**
Sen. Elaine J. Morgan (R-Dist. 34, Hopkinton, Charlestown, Exeter, Richmond, West Greenwich) introduced legislation ([2015-S 0123](#)) increasing penalties for sex trafficking of a minor.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Ackerman bill would ease corporation tax burden for small businesses**
Hoping to make the state's corporation tax less heavy handed for small businesses, Rep. Mia Ackerman (D-Dist. 45, Cumberland, Lincoln) has introduced legislation ([2015-H 5059](#)) that would change the minimum corporation tax for small businesses to be more in line with the income of the business. The new law would change the tax to a sliding scale that depends on the gross receipts for the year.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Ciccone bill would require 90 days of residency for RI Works eligibility**
Sen. Frank A Ciccone III (D-Dist. 7, Providence, North Providence) has submitted legislation ([2015-S 0036](#)) that would require 90 days of residency in Rhode Island before becoming eligible for benefits under the Rhode Island Works program. The RI Works program offers temporary cash assistance, health coverage, child care assistance, and help finding job training or a job. This program is available for pregnant women and adults with children under age 18 (or under age 19 if child is a full-time student).
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Corvese bill would ban fireworks in Rhode Island**
After receiving a petition seeking its introduction, Rep. Arthur J. Corvese (D-Dist. 55, North Providence) has introduced legislation to ban the private use of all fireworks in Rhode Island. The bill ([2015-H 5187](#)) would roll back a 2010 law that allowed the use of some non-aerial fireworks, but which the representative said has also led to an increase in the use of other more dangerous and disruptive fireworks.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Crowley proposes 'economic ambassadors' to help promote state**
To help market the state as a good place to do business, Sen. Elizabeth A. Crowley (D-Dist. 16, Central Falls, Pawtucket) has introduced legislation ([2015-S 0040](#)) calling for the appointment of non-paid "economic ambassadors" to promote business activities and economic investments in Rhode Island. Selected by the governor as individuals who have earned recognition or distinction as business leaders, they would serve for a term of five years.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Gallo bill provides funding for full-day kindergarten**
Senate Education Committee Chairwoman Hanna M. Gallo (D-Dist. 27, Cranston, West Warwick) has submitted legislation to incentivize school districts to implement universal full-day kindergarten programs. The bill would accelerate the implementation of a portion of the education aid formula for funding new full-day programs that begin in the 2015-16 school year at the rate they would be funded when the formula is fully

phased in. The formula is currently three years from full implementation.

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

▪ **Raptakis bill addresses unlawful interference with traffic**

Responding to a recent incident on a highway in Boston during which protestors halted traffic, and a similar incident on Route 95 in Providence late last year, Sen. Leonidas P. Raptakis (D-Dist. 33, Coventry, East Greenwich, West Greenwich) has introduced legislation ([2015-S 0129](#)) creating a felony charge for individuals unlawfully interfering with traffic and those whose interference with traffic results in the death of another individual. The House companion bill ([2015-H 5192](#)) has been introduced by Rep. Raymond A. Hull (D-Dist. 6, Providence, North Providence).

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