

June 5, 2015

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/>



- **House, Senate approve minimum wage increase**

The House and the Senate approved separate bills ([2015-H 5074A](#), [2015-S 0194A](#)) sponsored by Rep. David A. Bennett (D-Dist. 20, Warwick, Cranston) and Sen. Erin P. Lynch (D-Dist. 31, Warwick, Cranston) to raise the minimum wage from \$9.00 to \$9.60 effective Jan. 1, 2016. Each bill will now go to the other chamber for approval. [Click here to see House news release.](#)
[Click here to see Senate news release.](#)

- **Senate passes bill to ban gender ratings in health insurance premiums**

The Senate passed legislation ([2015-S 0318](#)) introduced by Sen. V. Susan Sosnowski (D-Dist. 37, South Kingstown, New Shoreham) that would ban health insurers from utilizing the discriminatory practice known as gender rating, or routinely charging women and men different premiums for individual insurance. The bill now moves to the House of Representatives for consideration. [Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Senate OKs bill banning job discrimination based on pregnancy, childbirth**

The Senate passed legislation ([2015-S 0276](#)) introduced by Sen. Hanna M. Gallo (D-Dist. 27, Cranston, West Warwick) that would prohibit employers, employment agencies and labor organizations from discriminating based on pregnancy, childbirth or a related medical condition. The measure now heads to the House, where a companion bill ([2015-H 5674](#)) is sponsored by Rep. Shelby Maldonado (D-Dist. 56, Central Falls). [Click here to see news release.](#)

More...

- **Senate approves legislation giving housing priority to veterans**

The Senate has passed legislation ([2015 S-0646](#)) introduced by Sen. Juan M. Pichardo (D-Dist. 2, Providence) that would give homeless veterans a priority for housing rental subsidy and housing retention assistance by amending the Rhode Island Housing Resource Act. The measure now heads to the House of Representatives, where a similar bill ([2015-H 5917](#)) has been introduced by Rep. Jan P. Malik (D-Dist. 67, Warren, Barrington).

[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Finance Committees vet pension settlement bill**

The House and Senate finance committees held hearings on legislation ([2015-H 6181](#), [2015-S 0876](#)) introduced by their chairmen, Rep. Raymond E. Gallison Jr. (D-Dist. 69, Bristol, Portsmouth) and Sen. Daniel Da Ponte (D-Dist. 14, East Providence) to enact the changes to the state retirement system proposed in the pension settlement negotiated between the state and labor unions.
- **Committees pass charter school bills**

Committees in the House and Senate approved separate measures to limit the expansion of charter schools and mayoral academies to provide lawmakers time to address concerns about how charter tuition is calculated under the state education funding formula. The House bill ([2015-H 5160A](#)) sponsored by Rep. Patricia A. Serpa (D-Dist. 27, West Warwick, Coventry, Warwick) would impose a one-year moratorium on new charter schools or expansions, and would make new charter schools subject to approval of local school committees and town councils. The Senate bill ([2015-S 0087Aaa](#)) sponsored by Sen. Adam J. Satchell (D-Dist. 9, West Warwick) would freeze public school districts' contributions to charter schools at the current level and would require local council and school committee approval for new charter schools or expansion through June 30, 2016.
- **Senate passes Da Ponte's legislation regarding campaign eligibility**

The Senate approved Senate Finance Chairman Daniel Da Ponte's (D-Dist. 14, East Providence) legislation ([2015-S 0384](#)) that would prohibit any candidate with unresolved campaign finance reports or fines that are more than 90 days overdue from taking elected office until all such reports are filed and/or all fines are paid. Rep. Helio Melo (D-Dist. 64, East Providence) is sponsoring similar legislation ([2015-H 5124](#)) in the House.

[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate OKs bill lifting sunset on child-care aid for parents in work training**

The Senate approved legislation ([2015-S 0099](#)) sponsored by Sen. Gayle Goldin (D-Dist. 3, Providence) to make permanent a provision of a program that provides child-care assistance to low-income parents while they participate in training and work-readiness programs. Rep. Deborah Ruggiero (D-Dist. 74, Jamestown, Middletown) is sponsoring similar legislation ([2015-H 5348](#)) in the House.

[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate passes DiPalma's ID Theft Protection legislation**

The Rhode Island Senate passed Sen. Louis P. DiPalma's (D-Dist.12, Middletown,

Newport, Little Compton, Tiverton) ‘Identity Theft Protection Act of 2015’ ([2015-S 0134](#)). Under the bill, anyone who stores, collects, processes, maintains, acquires, uses, licenses or owns personal information about a Rhode Island resident would be required to implement reasonable security procedures and practices appropriate to the nature of the information and to protect personal information from unauthorized access, use, modification, destruction or disclosure of that personal information. [Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Governor’s truck toll proposal heard in House, Senate finance committees**
Both the House and Senate finance committees heard testimony regarding Gov. Gina Raimondo’s proposal to toll commercial trucks on Rhode Island roadways. The purpose of the tolling proposal, which includes commercial truck classes 8-13, is to fund a \$700 million infrastructure bond to fix the state’s roads and bridges.

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