

March 6, 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 legislation would tighten up campaign expenditure reporting**
House Majority Leader John J. DeSimone (D-Dist. 5, Providence) has submitted legislation ([2015 H-5789](#)) that would require candidates and political action committees to file a copy of the next bank statement from their campaign account that is issued after they file their final ongoing quarterly campaign finance report to the Board of Elections.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Legislation introduced to legalize, regulate, tax marijuana**
Senate Health and Human Services Committee Chairman Joshua Miller (D-Dist. 28, Cranston, Providence) and House Finance Committee member Rep. Scott A. Slater (D-Dist. 10, Providence) have introduced bills to make marijuana legal for adults 21 and older and to establish a system in which marijuana is regulated and taxed. The bills ([2015-S 0510](#) and [2015-H 5777](#)) could generate millions in tax revenue, a portion of which would be directed toward programs that treat and prevent alcohol and other substance abuse.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Bills would establish performance-based funding for RI colleges**
President of the Senate M. Teresa Paiva Weed (D-Dist. 13, Newport, Jamestown) and House Health, Education and Welfare Committee Chairman Rep. Joseph M. McNamara (D-Dist. 19, Warwick, Cranston) have introduced legislation ([2015-S 0603](#) and [2015-H 5792](#)) to establish a performance-based funding component to state aid for Rhode Island's institutions of higher learning. The bills would make all new state higher education funding contingent upon achievement of certain goals, such as

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on-time graduation rates.

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- **Rep. Solomon bill would institute Lean Government Initiative in Rhode Island**
Rep. Joseph J. Solomon Jr. (D-Dist. 22, Warwick) has introduced Lean Government legislation ([2015-H 5749](#)) that would streamline how state government work gets done by eliminating or drastically reducing backlog, reducing lead times, simplifying processes, improving the suitability of applicants and consistency of reviews and inspections, freeing up more time for mission-critical work, and improving staff morale and process transparency.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Sen. Fogarty bill would exempt portion of retirement income from tax**
Sen. Paul W. Fogarty (D-Dist. 23, Burrillville, Glocester, North Smithfield) has submitted legislation ([2015-S 0210](#)) that would ease the tax burden on retirees by exempting Social Security as well as \$25,000 of income received from public and private pensions, interest income, 401K plans and individual retirement accounts.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. O’Grady bill opens door for hotel at Twin River Casino**
Legislation has been introduced by Rep. Jeremiah T. O’Grady (D-Dist. 46, Lincoln, Pawtucket) to clear the way for construction of a hotel at or near the Twin River Casino in Lincoln, a plan casino and state officials believe will make the gaming facility a thriving destination location. The legislation ([2015-H 5798](#)) provides that construction of a hotel will remain subject to Town of Lincoln zoning ordinances.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate OKs bill on inmate count for census, redistricting purposes**
The Senate has approved legislation ([2015-S 0239](#)) to require that persons in government custody have their actual residence used for census and redistricting purposes, rather than being counted at their prison address, as is now being done. Sponsored by Sen. Harold M. Metts (D-Dist. 6, Providence), the bill now goes to the House of Representatives, where a companion bill ([2015-H 5155](#)) has been introduced by Rep. Anastasia P. Williams (D-Dist. 9, Providence).
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate OKs bill allowing bake sales at polling places**
The Senate has approved legislation ([2015-S 0058](#)) allowing bake sales to operate near polling places, clearing the way for what’s become a tradition in some communities, a practice that was barred last year by the election board. Sponsored by Sen. Frank S. Lombardi (D-Dist. 26, Cranston), the bill now goes to the House, where a companion bill ([2015-H 5261](#)) was introduced by Rep. Stephen R. Ucci (D-Dist. 42, Johnston, Cranston).
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Legislation provides school choice option for all school children**
Rep. Raymond A. Hull (D-Dist. 6, Providence, North Providence) and Rep. Michael W. Chippendale (R-Dist. 40, Foster, Glocester, Coventry) have introduced legislation

([2015-H 5790](#)) to provide parents of K-12 students an opportunity to enroll their child in an educational program of their choosing, via open enrollment in their own school district or any other public school district, or with designated public money to follow the student to a participating private school.

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▪ **General Assembly celebrates International Women’s Day**

To honor the service of Rhode Island women who choose to make the military their career, Sen. Donna M. Nesselbush (D-Dist. 15, Pawtucket, North Providence) and Rep. Deborah Ruggiero (D-Dist 74, Jamestown, Middletown) hosted a celebration in the State Room to recognize International Women’s Day. The official theme for this year’s event was “Women in the Military.”

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