

May 8, 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/>



- **Bill sponsors, speaker, governor tout job creation proposal**

Speaker of the House Nicholas A. Mattiello (D-Dist. 15, Cranston) was joined by Gov. Gina M. Raimondo and bill sponsors to promote job creation legislation before the General Assembly this session. Rep. K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick) introduced the House bill ([2015-H 5116](#)) and Sen. James C. Sheehan (D-Dist. 36, North Kingstown, Narragansett) sponsored the Senate bill ([2015-S 0222](#)). During a news conference at the InterLink Transportation Hub garage in Warwick, the four discussed the Qualified Jobs Incentive Act, which encourages new and existing companies to grow and add new jobs through a number of personal and business tax incentives.

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- **Governor, Senate President open new state pier at Fort Adams**

Gov. Gina M. Raimondo and President of the Senate M. Teresa Paiva Weed (D-Dist. 13, Newport, Jamestown), along with Department of Environmental Management Director Janet Coit, officially opened the new public pier at Fort Adams State Park in Newport. Construction on the pier began in April 2014 to improve public access to Narragansett Bay. The 240-foot long pier — with seven rows of floating docks and a public pump-out station — was funded through the state's annual capital improvement program. The new North Pier is one of several capital improvements at Fort Adams, and the opening of the pier coincided with the arrival of the Volvo Ocean Race yachts, their crews and race enthusiasts. The Volvo teams are expected to stay in Newport until mid-May, and then head out on the next leg of the race that began last October.

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More...

- **Legislation enacting proposed pension settlement introduced**
Rep. Raymond E. Gallison Jr. (D-Dist. 69, Bristol, Portsmouth) and Sen. Daniel Da Ponte (D-Dist. 14, East Providence) introduced legislation ([2015-H 6181](#), [2015-S 876](#)) to enact the terms proposed in a potential settlement of unions' lawsuit over the state's 2011 changes to the state employee pension system. The settlement, which would provide small cost-of-living increases and changes to retirement-age requirements, must be approved by the General Assembly to take effect.
- **Racial profiling bills heard, headed for Senate vote**
The House and Senate Judiciary Committees took testimony on legislation aimed at addressing police racial profiling by requiring data collection on police stops and prohibiting police searches of juveniles without probable cause. The legislation ([2015-H 5819](#), [2015-S 0669](#)), sponsored by Rep. Joseph S. Almeida (D-Dist. 12, Providence) and Sen. Harold M. Metts (D-Dist. 6, Providence), was recommended for full passage in the Senate and held for further study by the House committee.
- **Sen. Nesselbush bill would increase sex assault minimum penalty to 20 years**
Sen. Donna M. Nesselbush (D-Dist. 15, Pawtucket, North Providence) has submitted legislation ([2015-S 0882](#)) that would increase the minimum penalty for first degree sexual assault from 10 to 20 years. The bill would also create a category of aggravating circumstances wherein the first 10 years of any sentence for first degree sexual assault would be ineligible for the benefits of deferment or suspension.
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- **Sen. Morgan's sex trafficking bill heads to governor's desk**
Both houses of the General Assembly have passed a bill ([2015-S 0123](#)) introduced by Sen. Elaine J. Morgan (R-Dist. 34, Charlestown, Exeter, Hopkinton, Richmond, West Greenwich) that would increase the penalties for criminal offenses involving the sex trafficking of a minor. The bill now heads to the governor. A similar bill ([2015-H 5070](#)) sponsored by Rep. Doreen M. Costa (R-Dist. 31, North Kingstown, Exeter) was passed by the House and is scheduled for a vote in the Senate.
- **Three election mail ballot reform bills pass House**
The House passed three bills reforming the mail ballot process during state elections. [2015-H 5951](#), sponsored by Rep. Robert E. Craven (D-Dist. 32, North Kingstown), changes the time period in which mail ballots must be securely stored. [2015-H 5934](#), sponsored by Rep. Jeremiah T. O'Grady (D-Dist. 46, Lincoln, Pawtucket), changes the procedure for counting mail ballots. [2015-H 5930](#), sponsored by Rep. Carlos E. Tobon (D-Dist. 58, Pawtucket), allows mail ballot applications and emergency mail ballot applications to also serve as an affirmation form for inactive voters, as long as the voter's application address is where the voter is currently registered.
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- **Defense Economy Planning Commission holds meeting on cyber security**
The Joint Defense Economy Planning Commission held a meeting regarding cyber security and its potential threats and positive opportunities for Rhode Island. The commission is co-chaired by Sen. Louis P DiPalma (D-Dist. 12, Middletown,

Newport, Tiverton, Little Compton) and Rep. Raymond E. Gallison Jr. (D-Dist. 69, Bristol, Portsmouth). The meeting featured a wide variety of attendees, including Dr. Victor Fay-Wolfe from URI, the State Police Cyber Disruption Team and the RING 102nd Information Warfare Squadron.

[Click here to watch meeting on Capitol TV.](#)

- **Third graders make the case for the American burying beetle as state insect**
Third-grade students from St. Michael's Country Day School in Newport gave an entomology lesson to legislators as their civics project aimed at designating the American burying beetle the state insect brought them to the State House to testify on bills ([2015-H 6093](#), [2015-S 448](#)) introduced on their behalf by Rep. Lauren Carson (D-Dist. 75, Newport) and Sen. V. Susan Sosnowski (D-Dist. 37, South Kingstown, New Shoreham).

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- **Assembly welcomes 8-year-old Hasbro Children's Hospital Champion**
Both chambers of the General Assembly welcomed Jeannette Finch, 8, of Coventry, recently named by Hasbro Children's Hospital as the 2015 Children's Network Hospitals Rhode Island Champion. The Senate adopted a resolution honoring Jeannette ([2015-S 0878](#)), introduced by Sen. Leonidas P. Raptakis (D-Dist. 33, Coventry, East Greenwich, West Greenwich). Jeannette and her parents, John and Carol, were accompanied to the House by Rep. Robert A. Nardolillo III (R-Dist. 28, Coventry). Jeannette suffers from osteogenesis, also known as brittle bone disease.

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