

May 29, 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/>.



- **Assembly leaders, governor announce 10-year plan for highways, bridges**
Flanked by Speaker of the House Nicholas A. Mattiello (D-Dist. 15, Cranston) and President of the Senate M. Teresa Paiva Weed (D-Dist. 13, Newport, Jamestown), Gov. Gina Raimondo announced RhodeWorks, an action plan to address the state's crumbling transportation infrastructure. RhodeWorks funds will be used to fix more than 150 structurally deficient bridges and make repairs to another 500. A \$700 million proposed revenue bond will accelerate the bridge work and a user fee for large commercial trucks will generate the necessary revenue to pay off the bond.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Sen. Ruggerio sponsors bill to establish tax stabilization standards for I-195 land**
Senate Majority Leader Dominick J. Ruggerio (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) introduced legislation to establish tax stabilization standards for land located within the I-195 Redevelopment District. The legislation creates 20-year tax stabilization agreements for organizations located within the district and will allow developers to incrementally pay an increased amount of taxation each year, reaching 100 percent by the end of the agreement period.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate passes bill requiring removal of cesspools at point of sale**
The Senate passed legislation ([2015-S 0369A](#)) introduced by Sen. V. Susan Sosnowski (D-Dist. 37, South Kingstown, New Shoreham) that would amend the Rhode Island Cesspool Act of 2007, including replacing individual sewage disposal systems with onsite wastewater treatment systems and requiring cesspool removal or replacement upon the transfer of the property. Rep. Teresa A. Tanzi (D-Dist. 34,

More...

South Kingstown, Narragansett) is sponsoring similar legislation ([2015-H 5668](#)) in the House.

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▪ **Minimum wage legislation moving ahead**

Legislation to raise Rhode Island's minimum wage is now moving forward in both chambers. The bills ([2015-H 5074 A](#), [2015-S 0194 A](#)) sponsored by Rep. David A. Bennett (D-Dist. 20, Warwick, Cranston) and Sen. Erin P. Lynch (D-Dist. 31, Warwick, Cranston) will raise the state's minimum hourly wage from \$9 to \$9.60 effective Jan. 1, 2016. The legislation, which initially called for an increase to \$10.10 an hour, was amended in the Senate and House Labor Committees and is now headed for votes in each chamber.

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

▪ **Rep. Nardolillo bill calls for seatbelts on new school buses**

Rep. Robert A. Nardolillo (R-Dist. 28, Coventry) has introduced legislation ([2015-H 6217](#)) that would require every new school bus purchased in Rhode Island to be equipped with safety belts for passengers. The bill has been referred to the House Health, Education and Welfare Committee.

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

▪ **Senate passes Sen. Metts' Community - Police Relationship Act**

The Senate passed legislation sponsored by Sen. Harold M. Metts (D-Dist. 6, Providence) to improve relations between the community and police. The Comprehensive Community – Police Relationship Act of 2015 ([2015-S 0269](#)) will require all police departments to compile an annual report indicating actions taken to address any racial disparities in traffic stops and searches documented in previous reports. The legislation also prohibits police searches of juveniles without just cause. Rep. Joseph S. Almeida (D-Dist. 12, Providence) is sponsoring the legislation ([2015-H 5819](#)) in the House.

[Click here to see release.](#)

▪ **House Judiciary Committee takes testimony on driver's license measure**

The House Judiciary Committee heard legislation ([2015-H 6174](#)) sponsored by Rep. Anastasia P. Williams (D-Dist. 9, Providence) to allow the Division of Motor Vehicles to issue driving privilege licenses and permits to applicants who are unable to establish lawful presence in the United States. The license would not be considered a valid identification card for federal purposes or state voting purposes. Similar legislation ([2015-S 0391](#)) has been introduced in the Senate by Sen. Frank A. Ciccone III (D-Dist. 7, Providence, North Providence).

▪ **Senate OKs bill requiring budget office to post fiscal, budget info**

The Senate approved legislation ([2015-S 0317](#)) introduced by Sen. James C. Sheehan (D-Dist. 36, Narragansett, North Kingstown) requiring the state budget office to prepare and post on the Secretary of State's website a comprehensive, easily accessible and easy-to-understand citizen's guide to state budget revenues and expenditures. The material must be posted no later than 60 days after the public

release of the annual state budget office “Budget as Enacted” report.

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

▪ **Case made for student loan forgiveness**

The House Finance Committee heard legislation ([2015-H 5226](#)) sponsored by Rep. K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick) creating the Get On Your Feet Loan Forgiveness program to provide student loan forgiveness for the first two years after graduation to qualified Rhode Islanders who attend college in state and remain here.

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

▪ **House committee hears legislation adding weddings to farm uses**

The House Environment and Natural Resources Committee heard legislation ([2015-H 6100](#)) sponsored by Rep. Eileen S. Naughton’s (D-Dist. 21, Warwick) to add weddings to the list of nonagriculture farm uses protected as “mixed use operations” and to extend the protection against nuisance complaints contained in the state’s general laws. The bill maintains municipal rights to issue regulations regarding aspects such as alcohol sales, hours and police presence.