

April 22, 2016

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.rilegislature.gov/pressrelease>



- **Senate OKs Archambault bill for hardship licenses with ignition interlock**
The Senate passed legislation ([2016-S 2370A](#)) introduced by Sen. Stephen R. Archambault (D-Dist. 22, Smithfield, North Providence, Johnston) that would require a judge or magistrate to immediately grant a hardship license upon a finding or admission of guilt to a first offense of driving under the influence or refusal to submit to a breathalyzer or other chemical test, subject to a finding of need.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate approves Gallo bill allowing for annual unlimited wine sampling events**
The Senate passed legislation ([2016-S 2772](#)) sponsored by Sen. Hanna M. Gallo (D-Dist. 27, Cranston, West Warwick) that would permit Class A liquor retail license holders to elect on one occasion annually, during the month of November only, to serve unlimited samples of wine products that are available for purchase from the licensee's outlet. Similar legislation ([2016-H 7499](#)) introduced by Rep. John M. Carnevale (D-Dist. 13, Providence, Johnston) has been passed by the House of Representatives.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Serpa bill would allow pharmacies to dispense biological products**
Rep. Patricia Serpa (D-Dist. 27, West Warwick, Coventry, Warwick) has introduced legislation ([2016-H 7816](#)) that would allow pharmacies to dispense biological products, which are used to treat high-risk patients who don't respond to traditional medication. Similar legislation ([2016-S 2755](#)) has been introduced in the Senate by Sen. Cynthia A. Coyne (D-Dist. 32, Barrington, Bristol, East Providence).
[Click here to see news release.](#)

More...

- **Rep. McLaughlin bill would make school bus transportation more cost-efficient**
Rep. James N. McLaughlin (D-Dist. 57, Cumberland, Central Falls) has introduced legislation ([2016-H 8005](#)) that would allow school districts to maintain an annual registry for students requiring bus transportation to school. The purpose of this registration would be to assist each district's bus transportation plan to be more cost-efficient.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Sen. Goldin, Rep. Slater legislation raises wages for nursing home workers**
Sen. Gayle L. Goldin (D-Dist. 3, Providence) and Rep. Scott A. Slater (D-Dist.10, Providence) have introduced bills ([2016-S 2521](#), [2016-H 7547](#)) that would begin to address low pay in the nursing home industry by restoring the nursing home inflationary index and directly targeting those funds to increase wages for nursing home workers.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Prescription coverage bill a personal battle for Sen. Walaska**
Sen. William A. Walaska (D-Dist. 30, Warwick) is sponsoring legislation ([2016-S 2499](#)) to provide Rhode Islanders expanded coverage for experimental uses of prescription drugs. The bill's importance is one he knows all too well, since he is currently recuperating from a bout with leukemia thanks to an experimental new use of a drug. Companion legislation ([2016-H 7512](#)) has been introduced in the House by Rep. K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick).
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Azzinaro bill prohibits caregivers from producing butane hash oil products**
Rep. Samuel A. Azzinaro's (D-Dist. 37, Westerly) legislation ([2016-H 7802](#)) that would outlaw medical marijuana patients and caregivers from producing butane hash oil products was heard in the House Committee on Judiciary. The legislation would allow the state's compassion centers to produce the product if the compassion center manufactures it in accordance with the Department of Health's rules and regulations.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Filippi wants voters to decide if state officials should be elected by majority**
Rep. Blake Filippi (I-Dist. 36, New Shoreham, Charlestown, South Kingstown, Westerly) has introduced a resolution ([2016-H 7311](#)) to provide voters the opportunity in the next election to amend the state constitution to require candidates for statewide office and the General Assembly to be elected by a majority vote through instant runoff elections rather than through the current plurality vote.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Malik introduces bill that sends more meal tax money to cities and towns**
Rep. Jan P. Malik (D-Dist. 67, Warren, Barrington) has introduced legislation ([2016-H 7795](#)) that would increase the amount of funds distributed to cities and towns that result from the meals and beverage tax. Currently, there is a 1 percent meals and beverage tax, on top of the 7 percent sales tax, that all eating and drinking establishments are required to collect. The Department of Taxation then keeps the 7 percent sales tax for the state and sends the 1 percent meals and beverage tax back to

the originating city or town. Representative Malik's bill would incrementally start to give back cities and towns a portion of the sales tax collected by the cities and towns. [Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Majority Leader Ruggiero bill would pave way for Sunday simulcast betting**
At the request of the employees at Twin River's gaming facilities, Senate Majority Leader Dominick J. Ruggiero (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) has submitted legislation ([2016-S 2894](#)) that would effectively open the door for simulcast wagering on Sundays at Rhode Island's licensed gaming facilities. [Click here to see news release.](#)

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