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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 receives budget, State of the State address**
Members of the House and the Senate assembled to receive Gov. Gina M. Raimondo's State of the State address as well as her \$9 billion 2017 budget proposal, which includes \$30 million in unemployment system savings for businesses, funding for school districts most affected by students attending charter schools, \$39 million in Medicaid savings and an increase in the minimum wage, from \$9.60 to \$10.10. House Finance Committee Chairman Raymond E. Gallison Jr. (D-Dist. 69, Bristol, Portsmouth) has introduced the bill ([2016-H 7454](#)) on the governor's behalf, and his committee and the Senate Finance Committee will begin hearings on the plan soon.
- **Hearings held on RhodeWorks legislation**
The House and Senate Finance committees held public hearings on the new iterations of the RhodeWorks legislation ([2016-H 7409](#), [2016-H 2246](#)) sponsored by House Majority Leader John J. DeSimone (D-Dist. 5, Providence) and Senate Majority Leader Dominick J. Ruggerio (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence). The legislation puts people back to work repairing crumbling infrastructure and provides the reliable, sustainable source of revenue necessary to rebuild the state's bridges, which are ranked the worst in the country.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Legislative leaders speak at Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce event**
House Speaker Nicholas A. Mattiello (D-Dist. 15, Cranston), President of the Senate M. Teresa Paiva Weed (D-Dist. 13, Newport, Jamestown) and other legislative leaders addressed reducing regulatory burdens for businesses, the RhodeWorks bridge and road repair plan, redevelopment of the land formerly occupied by Route 195 in Providence and more at the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce annual

More...

legislative luncheon.

- **Rep. Gallison introduces bill to regulate fantasy sports**
On the eve of Super Bowl weekend and the same day that the attorney general declared them legal, Rep. Raymond E. Gallison Jr. (D-Dist. 69, Bristol, Portsmouth) introduced legislation to allow the Department of Business Regulation to license online daily fantasy sports involving the exchange of money.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Regunberg, Sen. Metts introduce bill curbing use of solitary confinement**
Rep. Aaron Regunberg (D-Dist. 4, Providence) and Sen. Harold M. Metts (D-Dist. 6, Providence) have introduced legislation ([2016-H 7481](#)) to reform the use of solitary confinement in the Rhode Island prison system, saying the practice causes psychological damage and often exacerbates the very problems it is intended to address. The bill sets limits on the length an inmate can be held in solitary confinement; bans its use on inmates who are 21 or younger, 55 or older or have a physical, mental or developmental disability; and sets parameters for humane treatment of those in solitary confinement.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Melo bill would stiffen penalties for home invasions**
Rep. Helio Melo (D-Dist. 64, East Providence) has introduced legislation ([2016-H 7173](#)) to impose stricter penalties on people who commit home invasions. Current law makes little differentiation between invading an occupied home and breaking into an empty one. The bill ensures all home-invasion crimes are punished more severely than regular break-ins and provides even stronger penalties if a victim is assaulted during the ordeal.
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- **Rep. Solomon, Sen. Walaska reintroduce Rocky Point license plate legislation**
As the Rocky Point Foundation continues to preserve and protect the natural and historic heritage and environment of the land formerly occupied by the Rocky Point Amusement Park in Warwick, Rep. Joseph J. Solomon Jr. (D-Dist. 22, Warwick) has reintroduced legislation ([2016-H 7011](#)) to create a special Rocky Point license plate. A companion bill ([2016-S 2076](#)) has been introduced in the Senate by Sen. William A. Walaska (D-Dist. 30, Warwick).
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. McNamara bill would establish fund to support solar panel installation**
Rep. Joseph M. McNamara (D-Dist. 19, Warwick, Cranston) has introduced legislation ([2016-H 7262](#)) that would establish a revolving fund to provide low interest loans and grants to support the installation of solar energy panels. The act would also establish a tax credit for companies involved in solar energy production.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Marcello aims to ease student debt with Student Loan Authority legislation**
Rep. Michael J. Marcello (D-Dist. 41, Scituate, Cranston) has introduced legislation ([2016-H 7370](#)) that would empower the Rhode Island Student Loan Authority (RISLA) to issue bonds to allow the refinancing and consolidation of existing eligible

loans. The bill would also authorize RISLA to purchase and invest in its own bonds and notes.

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- **Rep. Azzinaro, Sen. Algieri announce CCRI Jobs Skills Training Center**
Rep. Samuel A. Azzinaro (D-Dist. 37, Westerly), Senate Minority Leader Dennis L. Algieri (R-Dist. 38, Westerly, Charlestown, North Kingstown) and Gov. Gina Raimondo joined to announce plans for a new CCRI Jobs Skills Training Center in downtown Westerly. Permits for the project have been obtained and construction will commence soon on the site near the Westerly train station. The center will be dedicated to enrolling and training high-skill, high-wage workers in electrical, maritime pipefitting, maritime sheet metal, and carpentry.
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