

Feb. 19, 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>



- **Rep. Malik, Sen. Felag applaud appointment of first Director of Veterans Affairs**
House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Jan P. Malik (D-Dist. 67, Warren, Barrington) and Senate Special Legislation and Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Walter S. Felag Jr. (D-Dist. 10, Warren, Bristol, Tiverton) applauded Gov. Gina M. Raimondo's announcement that Navy Lt. Cmdr. Kasim Yarn of Saunderstown will serve as Rhode Island's first Director of Veterans Affairs. The Rhode Island General Assembly created the cabinet-level director position in 2011, but it had been left vacant and unfunded until recently.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Sen. Archambault, Rep. Slater bill would allow medical marijuana for PTSD**
Sen. Stephen R. Archambault (D-Dist. 22, Smithfield, North Providence, Johnston) and Rep. Scott A. Slater (D-Dist. 10, Providence) have introduced legislation that would add post-traumatic stress disorder to the list of conditions that may be treated with medical marijuana. The bills ([2016-S 2115](#), [2016-H 7142](#)) would add post-traumatic stress disorder to the definition of "debilitating medical condition" for purposes of qualifying for medical marijuana in the Edward O. Hawkins and Thomas C. Slater Medical Marijuana Act.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Regunberg introduces earned sick time legislation**
The Healthy and Safe Families and Workplaces Act ([2016-H 7633](#)) introduced by Rep. Aaron Regunberg (D-Dist. 4, Providence) would guarantee all Rhode Island workers the ability to earn paid sick time. The bill would allow Rhode Island workers to earn up to seven job-protected paid sick days each year. Workers would earn at least one hour of paid sick time for every 30 hours worked, up to 56 hours per year.

More...

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- **Rep. Filippi bill would end practice of changing clocks twice a year**
Rep. Blake Filippi (I-Dist. 36, New Shoreham, Charlestown, South Kingstown, Westerly) has introduced legislation ([2016-H 7598](#)) that would have Rhode Island follow Massachusetts' lead if it passes legislation under consideration there to move to the Atlantic Time Zone, which currently includes eastern Canada. The move is designed to eliminate the practice of changing clocks twice a year, and instead effectively leave Rhode Island in a state of daylight saving, but only if Massachusetts does likewise. If adopted, Rhode Islanders would see sunlight later into the evening in the winter.
- **Rep. Malik, Sen. Felag sponsor bills to rename road after fallen military hero**
House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Jan P. Malik (D-Dist. 67, Warren, Barrington) and Senate Special Legislation and Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Walter S. Felag Jr. (D-Dist. 10, Warren, Bristol, Tiverton) have introduced legislation ([2016-H 7086](#), [2016-S 2127](#)) that would rename Route 114 in Bristol to "The 1st Sgt. P. Andrew McKenna Memorial Highway." Sergeant McKenna, a 17-year veteran of the Army and a Bristol resident, was killed in August 2015 while serving his country in Afghanistan.
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- **Rep. Amore bill would stop abusers from disrupting victims' utility services**
Rep. Gregg Amore (D-Dist. 65, East Providence) has introduced legislation ([2016-H 7459](#)) that would prohibit individuals served with protective orders relating to domestic assault from shutting off or disrupting utility services without prior court approval. Violations of the legislation will result in a misdemeanor harassment charge and a fine not exceeding \$500.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Sen. Morgan bill would mandate E-Verify participation for some businesses**
Sen. Elaine J. Morgan (R-Dist. 34, Hopkinton, Charlestown, Exeter, Richmond, West Greenwich) has proposed a bill that would require Rhode Island businesses with three or more employees to participate in the federal E-Verify program. The legislation ([2016-S 2320](#)) would establish the E-Verify Compliance Act and would require all government and non-government employers within the state that have three or more employees to apply to participate in the federal program and agree to participate in the program if they are accepted.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Marcello amendment would give Ethics Commission powers over Assembly**
Rep. Michael J. Marcello (D-Dist. 41, Scituate, Cranston) has introduced legislation that will ask voters to decide — through a constitutional amendment — if the Ethics Commission should maintain jurisdiction over legislators' votes and actions. The bill ([2016-H 7577](#)) would put a question on the next general election ballot asking voters to decide if the Ethics Commission should be allowed an exception in the "speech in debate" clause of the Rhode Island Constitution that shields lawmakers from prosecution or civil suits based on their actions as legislators, such as proposing or voting on a bill.

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