

Feb. 26, 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 bills to protect domestic violence victims from armed abusers submitted**
On the same day a report was issued by the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence on the 54 domestic homicide victims in Rhode Island between 2006 and 2015, Senators Cynthia A. Coyne (D-Dist. 32, Barrington, Bristol, East Providence) and Maryellen Goodwin (D-Dist. 1, Providence) submitted a package of legislation ([2016-S 2491](#), [2016-S 2492](#), [2016-S 2517](#)) to ban abusers from possession of a firearm. Both senators have been involved in working to protect victims of domestic violence. In the House, bills ([2016-H 7575](#), [2016-H 7283](#)) designed to keep guns away from abusers have been filed by Rep. Teresa Tanzi (D-Dist. 34, South Kingstown, Narragansett) and Rep. Gregg Amore (D-Dist. 65, East Providence). [Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Reps. Coughlin, Blazejewski bills would enhance crime victim compensation**
Rep. David A. Coughlin Jr. (D-Dist. 60, Pawtucket) and Rep. Christopher R. Blazejewski (D-Dist. 2, Providence) have introduced legislation to enhance compensation for victims of violence. The first bill ([2016-H 7538](#)), sponsored by Representative Coughlin, would clear up conflicting language in the law to allow victims of domestic terrorism that occurs outside of Rhode Island, but within the United States, to be eligible for compensation. The second bill ([2016-H 7533](#)), sponsored by Representative Blazejewski, would enhance compensation for victims of domestic violence by raising the cap on relocation expenses from \$2,500 to \$5,000, and increasing compensation for burial expenses from \$8,000 to \$10,000. [Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Green Jobs RI bills heard in Senate committees**
Numerous bills introduced as part of the Senate’s “Grow Green Jobs RI” [action plan](#) to promote the growth of green industries in Rhode Island were heard in Senate

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committees. The bills address a wide spectrum of industries, including renewable energy, home energy conservation, constructing environmentally sound infrastructure, agriculture, seafood and recycling.

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- **Rep. Maldonado bill would ban prisoner restraint in third pregnancy trimester**
Rep. Shelby Maldonado (D-Dist. 56, Central Falls) has introduced legislation ([2016-H 7613](#)) that would prohibit the use of restraints on female prisoners during transport to court during the third trimester of pregnancy. Similar legislation ([2016-S 2317](#)) has been introduced in the Senate by Sen. Erin P. Lynch Prata (D-Dist. 31, Warwick, Cranston). The bill would also require the Department of Corrections to submit annual reports to the General Assembly regarding the number of pregnant women at the Adult Correctional Institution.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Legislation would give driving privileges to undocumented residents**
Sen. Frank A. Ciccone III (D-Dist. 7, Providence, North Providence) held a press conference concerning legislation ([2016-S 2333](#)) he sponsored that would allow the Department of Motor Vehicles to issue driving privilege licenses and permits to applicants unable to establish lawful presence in the United States. Similar legislation ([2016-H 7610](#)) has been introduced in the House by Rep. Anastasia P. Williams (D-Dist. 9, Providence). The licenses and permit would not be valid for identification purposes.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Ackerman bill gives AG power to subpoena internet service providers**
Rep. Mia Ackerman (D-Dist. 45, Cumberland, Lincoln) has introduced legislation ([2016-H 7542](#)) that would add online impersonation and electronic dissemination of indecent materials to minors to the group of offenses for which an internet service provider must provide subscriber account information to the attorney general or to the State Police upon proper service and with certification that the information is necessary for an official criminal investigation or prosecution.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Malik bill that bans pets at Veterans' Cemetery to be heard in committee**
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Chairman Jan P. Malik's legislation ([2016-H 7441](#)) that bans pets from the grounds of the state Veterans' Memorial Cemetery was heard in the House Veterans' Affairs Committee. The legislation would prohibit the walking of any domestic animal on the grounds of the Veterans' Memorial Cemetery in Exeter. An exception would be made for service dogs. Violations would be punished by a fine of not less than five hundred dollars (\$500).
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate committee briefed on progress toward improving services for disabled**
The Senate Health and Human Services Committee received a briefing this week on the state's progress in implementing the federal consent decree addressing the statewide day activity service system for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The briefing was provided by the United States District Court monitor, Charles Moseley, who reported slow progress toward the goal of

moving developmentally disabled people out of segregated work environments and into community-based jobs.

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▪ **Bill introduced to raise tobacco purchase age to 21**

Saying the state must do more to address smoking as the serious threat to public health that it is, Rep. Teresa Tanzi (D-Dist. 34, South Kingstown, Narragansett) and Sen. Cynthia A. Coyne (D-Dist. 32, Barrington, Bristol, East Providence) have introduced legislation ([2016-H 7737](#), [2016-S 2410](#)) to raise the minimum age to purchase any tobacco products in Rhode Island from 18 to 21.

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▪ **General Assembly celebrates Black History Month**

The seventh annual Joint Legislative Black History Month Celebration was held in the House chamber. Rep. Anastasia P. Williams (D-Dist. 9, Providence), chairwoman of the Legislative Black & Latino Caucus, led the event. 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) spoke during the program. The program also included musical performances and a remembrance of former Black and Latino General Assembly members.

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