

Jan. 8, 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.rilin.state.ri.us/News/>



- **General Assembly convenes 2016 session**

The Rhode Island Senate and House of Representatives opened their respective chambers Tuesday, kicking off the 2016 legislative session. Speaker of the House Nicholas A. Mattiello (D-Dist. 15, Cranston) laid out the goals of the session, saying “This year we will continue the theme of improving Rhode Island’s economic climate and making us more competitive with our neighboring states.” President of the Senate M. Teresa Paiva Weed (D-Dist. 13, Newport, Jamestown) said, “Our single greatest priority is the economy. And we will continue to work with the governor, Speaker Mattiello and our colleagues in the House to position Rhode Island for economic prosperity.”

- **House, Senate work to reinstate Good Samaritan Overdose Prevention Act**

Both chambers of the Rhode Island General Assembly are working to reinstate the Good Samaritan Overdose Prevention Act, which expired last year. The Senate approved the bill ([2016-S 2002](#)) introduced by Sen. Michael J. McCaffrey (D-Dist. 29, Warwick). Identical legislation ([2016-H 7003](#)) submitted by Rep. Robert E. Craven (D-Dist. 32, North Kingstown) will be taken up by the House Judiciary Committee on Tuesday.

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

- **Reps. Ruggiero, Solomon introduce sales tax holiday legislation**

Representatives Deborah Ruggiero (D-Dist. 74, Jamestown, Middletown) and Joseph J. Solomon Jr. (D-Dist. 22, Warwick) have introduced separate bills ([2016-H 7010](#), [2016-H 7068](#)) to establish a one-time sales tax holiday in August 2016. The bills, similar to tax holidays in other states, are intended to stimulate the economy by generating revenue for local businesses.

[Click here for Ruggiero release.](#) [Click here for Solomon release.](#)

More...

- **Raptakis bill would make it offense to leave child under 7 unattended in car**
For the second year in a row, Sen. Leonidas P. Raptakis (D-Dist. 33, Coventry, West Greenwich, East Greenwich) has introduced legislation that would make it an offense to leave a child under the age of seven unattended in a motor vehicle. The bill — which is similar to last year’s proposed legislation ([2015-S 0822](#)) — would provide a punishment of a fine of up to \$1,000 and possible license suspension of up to three years.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Speaker Mattiello, Sen. Da Ponte speak at SBA summit**
Speaker of the House Nicholas A. Mattiello (D-Dist. 15, Cranston) and Senate Finance Committee Chairman Daniel Da Ponte (D-Dist. 14, East Providence) spoke at the U.S. Small Business Administration and Center for Women & Enterprise’s 9th annual Small Business Economic Summit at Bryant University. More than 240 small-business owners and advocates, along with several members of the Senate and House of Representatives, participated in the summit. The forum discussed and recommended solutions in seven key small-business areas including taxes and budget, health care, regulations, education/workforce development, economic development, emerging markets and Main Street issues.
- **Rep. Tobon sponsors bill for cities, towns to regulate massage parlors**
Rep. Carlos E. Tobon (D-Dist. 58, Pawtucket) filed legislation ([2016-H 7007](#)) to explicitly authorize cities and towns to license and regulate massage parlors. This enabling legislation will close loopholes in municipalities regarding the operation of “body-works spas” that frequently operate as underground brothels. It will allow city enforcement of local ordinances and protect cities and towns against future lawsuits resulting from closing such establishments.
- **Magaziner meets with House Oversight Committee about tax credits**
General Treasurer Seth Magaziner provided the House Oversight Committee, led by Rep. Karen L. MacBeth (D-Dist. 52, Cumberland), a presentation on the evolution of tax credit programs in Rhode Island as part of the committee’s hearings into the matters leading up to the state’s investment in Curt Schilling’s now-bankrupt video game company 38 Studios.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Bill taps DOT to clear snow from sidewalks on overpasses, pedestrian bridges**
After last winter’s barrage of snow made traversing streets a challenge for pedestrians, Providence legislators Sen. Maryellen Goodwin (D-Dist. 1, Providence) and Rep. Christopher R. Blazejewski (D-Dist. 2, Providence) have reintroduced legislation ([2016-S 2005](#), [2016-H 7008](#)) putting the Department of Transportation in charge of clearing snow from sidewalks on state-controlled highway overpasses and overhead pedestrian walkways with significant traffic.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Legislators join advocates in antipoverty vigil**
House Speaker Nicholas A. Mattiello (D-Dist. 15, Cranston), President of the Senate M. Teresa Paiva Weed (D-Dist. 13, Newport, Jamestown) and Sen. Harold M. Metts

(D-Dist. 6, Providence) were among those who spoke at a State House interfaith vigil in support of efforts to end poverty in Rhode Island. They were joined by numerous legislators, Gov. Gina M. Raimondo and many religious leaders, advocates and members of the public for the 8th annual event to call attention to the needs of the poor at the start of the legislative session.

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