

Jan. 29, 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/>



- **Federal funding strengthens RhodeWorks legislation**

House Speaker Nicholas A. Mattiello (D-Dist. 15, Cranston), President of the Senate M. Teresa Paiva Weed (D-Dist. 13, Newport, Jamestown) and Gov. Gina M. Raimondo announced revised RhodeWorks legislation ([2016-H 7409](#), [2016-H 2246](#)) that takes into account new federal funding. 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. The bill also prohibits future tolling of other motor vehicles unless approved by the voters.

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- **Senate action plan promotes green sector job growth**

President of the Senate M. Teresa Paiva Weed (D-Dist. 13, Newport, Jamestown) hosted a roundtable discussion of a [legislative action plan](#) and corresponding legislation intended to promote job growth in green industries in Rhode Island. Entitled "Grow Green Jobs RI," the action plan focuses on a wide spectrum of industries, including renewable energy, home energy conservation, constructing environmentally sound infrastructure, agriculture, seafood and recycling.

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- **Carbon pricing bill to steer RI toward cleaner energy, boost local economy**

Backed by a coalition of advocates from the business, environmental and faith communities, Rep. Aaron Regunberg (D-Dist. 4, Providence) introduced legislation to reduce Rhode Island's reliance on fossil fuels and bolster the state's clean energy and green business sector. The Energize Rhode Island Act ([2016-H 7325](#)) is designed to provide incentives for energy users to reduce their reliance on carbon-emitting fuels and encourage the development of cleaner renewable energy projects that keep

More...

Rhode Islanders' dollars in the state and create jobs locally.

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▪ **Governor signs Good Samaritan Overdose Prevention Act**

Gov. Gina M. Raimondo signed the Good Samaritan Act of 2016 ([2015-S 2002/ 2016-H 7003](#)) into law. The act reinstates and expands important legal protections for those who seek medical assistance for individuals experiencing a drug overdose. Bill sponsors Rep. Robert E. Craven (D-Dist. 32, North Kingstown) and Sen. Michael J. McCaffrey (D-Dist. 29, Warwick), members of the General Assembly, and members of the recovery community joined Raimondo for the ceremonial signing at Anchor Recovery Community Center in Pawtucket.

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▪ **House passes Serpa, O'Grady bills relating to charter schools**

The House of Representatives passed legislation sponsored by Rep. Patricia Serpa (D-Dist. 27-West Warwick, Warwick, Coventry) that would require the approval of a city or town council to establish or expand a charter school. The bill ([2016-H 7051](#)), which passed the House, now heads to the Senate, where a companion bill ([2016-S 2019](#)) has been introduced by Sen. Adam J. Satchell (D-Dist. 9, West Warwick). The House also passed legislation ([2016-H 7066](#)) sponsored by Rep. Jeremiah T. O'Grady (D-Dist. 46, Lincoln, Pawtucket) would require the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education to consider the financial impact on sending districts before any new charter school, mayoral academy or an expansion of one can be approved.

[Click here to see Serpa release.](#) [Click here to see O'Grady release.](#)

▪ **House passes Kennedy's Electric Supplier Consumer Bill of Rights**

The House of Representatives unanimously approved a bill introduced by Rep. Brian Patrick Kennedy (D-Dist. 38, Hopkinton, Westerly), the Electric Supplier Consumer Bill of Rights ([2016-H 7040](#)), that would give electric suppliers new guidelines to follow in their dealings with customers and potential customers. The measure now heads to the Senate for consideration.

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▪ **Sen. Lombardi bill would require adults trained in concussions at youth events**

Sen. Frank S. Lombardi (D-Dist. 26, Cranston) has submitted legislation ([2016-S 2091](#)) that would refine the law on guidelines for concussions at school and youth programs. The new law would require that an adult trained in recognizing the symptoms of a concussion be present during all events.

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• **Rep. Amore's bill would deny guns for domestic abusers**

Rep. Gregg Amore (D-Dist. 65, East Providence) has introduced legislation ([2016-H 7283](#)) that would deny convicted misdemeanor domestic abusers from purchasing, owning, transporting, carrying or possessing any firearm. The legislation provides exemption from the law for people who were convicted of a minor petty offense, who have had their convictions expunged, set aside, or who have had their civil rights restored through the judicial process.

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• **Rep. O'Brien introduces bill to increase animal abuse penalties**

Rep. William W. O'Brien (D-Dist. 54, North Providence) submitted legislation ([2016-H 7317](#)) this week that would stiffen the penalties for animal abusers in response to a case last fall in North Providence in which a dog named Moses was ultimately euthanized after neighbors alerted police to the dog's horrific malnourished condition. The proposed legislation would increase the punishment of animal abusers from two years to five years of possible imprisonment and from 10 hours of community service to 50 hours of community service.

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- **Rep. Canario introduces GMO labeling act**

Rep. Dennis M. Canario (D-Dist. 71, Portsmouth, Little Compton, Tiverton) has again this year introduced a bill calling for labeling of food products that contain genetically modified organisms (GMOs). The legislation ([2016-H 7274](#)) would add a definition to state law relative to genetically engineered products and would also set rules for labeling such products.

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-30-

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