

June 3, 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>



- **General Assembly passes lobbying reform act**

The General Assembly passed legislation ([2016-H 7388A](#), [2016-S 2361A](#)) sponsored by Rep. Robert B. Jacquard (D-Dist. 17, Cranston) and Sen. Erin Lynch Prata (D-Dist. 31, Warwick, Cranston) that reforms the state’s general laws on lobbying. The bill will simplify and clarify the rules governing lobbying to maximize transparency without imposing unnecessary burdens on the process, promote a more user-friendly registration and reporting system, and strengthen the investigation and enforcement scheme of the state’s lobbying rules and regulations. Representative Jacquard’s bill passed the Senate and heads to the governor’s office for action, while Senator Lynch Prata’s bill awaits consideration in the House.

- **House, Senate approve bills to create biliteracy seal for high school diplomas**

The House and the Senate each approved separate bills ([2016-H 8178](#), [2016-S 2735](#)) sponsored by Rep. Teresa Tanzi (D-Dist. 34, South Kingstown, Narragansett) and Sen. Juan M. Pichardo (D-Dist. 2, Providence) to create a “biliteracy seal” that school districts could affix to the diplomas and transcripts of high school graduates who demonstrate proficiency in another language in addition to English. Each bill will now proceed to the other chamber.

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- **Senate OKs Gallo bill allowing Student Loan Authority to refinance loans**

The Senate passed legislation ([2016-S 2453](#)) sponsored by Sen. Hanna M. Gallo (D-Dist. 27, Cranston, West Warwick) that would empower the Rhode Island Student Loan Authority to refinance and consolidate existing eligible loans as well as purchase and invest in its own bonds and notes. Similar legislation ([2016-H 7370](#)) has

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been introduced in the House by Rep. Michael J. Marcello (D-Dist. 41, Scituate, Cranston).

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▪ **Senate approves Pichardo bill authorizing YouthBuild Academy**

The Senate has passed legislation ([2016-S 2867A](#)) introduced by Sen. Juan M. Pichardo (D-Dist. 2, Providence) that would authorize the creation of a YouthBuild Preparatory Academy in Pawtucket and Central Falls. Similar legislation ([2016-H 8113](#)) has been introduced in the House by Rep. Jean Philippe Barros (D-Dist. 59, Pawtucket).

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▪ **House approves Kennedy bill authorizing GAP waivers for car dealers**

The House passed legislation ([2016-H 7712A](#)) introduced by Rep. Brian Patrick Kennedy (D-Dist. 38, Hopkinton, Westerly) that would authorize motor vehicle dealers to issue guaranteed asset protection waivers to consumers while providing consumer protections. A GAP waiver is a contractual agreement wherein a creditor agrees to a separate charge to cancel or waive all or part of amounts due on a borrower's finance agreement in the event of a total physical damage loss or unrecovered theft of the motor vehicle. Similar legislation ([2016-S 2424](#)) has been introduced in the Senate by Sen. Roger A. Picard (D-Dist. 20, Woonsocket, Cumberland)

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▪ **Rep. Ucci bill to regulate drones passes House**

The House has passed legislation ([2016-H 7511A](#)) sponsored by Rep. Stephen R. Ucci (D-Dist. 42, Johnston, Cranston) to give the Rhode Island Airport Corporation the exclusive legal authority to regulate the use of unmanned aerial vehicles, also called drones, in Rhode Island.

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▪ **Senate OKs bill to let students make up lost school days at home**

Schools may have the opportunity to make up lost school days through the use of at-home learning plans under a bill sponsored by Sen. Roger A. Picard (D-Dist. 20, Woonsocket, Cumberland) that has been approved by the Senate. The legislation ([2016-S 2018](#)) would require the Department of Education to create a policy to allow school districts to submit plans to provide students with lessons they can complete at home to replace a school day canceled due to inclement weather or an emergency.

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▪ **House approves legislation to allow limited retail sales by breweries**

The House approved legislation ([2016-H 8100Aaa](#)) sponsored by Rep. Michael A. Morin (D-Dist. 49, Woonsocket) to allow breweries, distilleries and wineries to sell limited amounts of their products to visitors for sampling and off-site consumption. The bill is meant to assist microbreweries, in particular, which are banned entirely from selling their products at retail at their plants under current law, but would like to do so to be part of the growing "beer tourism" industry. Sen. V. Susan Sosnowski has introduced similar legislation ([2016-S 3053](#)) in the Senate.

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- **Rep. Corvese bill approved by House would aid resolution of condo disputes**
The House approved legislation sponsored by Rep. Arthur J. Corvese (D-Dist. 55, North Providence) to create a less-costly process for resolving minor disputes involving condominium associations and owners. The bill ([2016-H 7204](#)) would allow the parties in such disputes to use the existing court annexed arbitration program in Superior Court to come to a legally binding resolution, with some caveats. [Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Senate Finance hears testimony on ProvPort bond legislation**
The Senate Finance Committee heard testimony on legislation ([2016-S 3043](#)) sponsored by Senate Majority Leader Dominick J. Ruggerio (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) that would create a bond referendum which would authorize the issuance of bonds, refunding bonds, and temporary notes of the state in the aggregate amount of \$20 million to fund the acquisition, expansion and infrastructure improvement of up to 25 acres of land and facilities located between Allens Avenue in Providence and the Providence River by ProvPort Inc. at the general election on Nov. 8.

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