

March 11, 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 OKs Paiva Weed bill for performance-based funding for colleges**  
The Senate approved legislation ([2016-S-2392](#)) sponsored by President of the Senate M. Teresa Paiva Weed (D-Dist. 13, Newport, Jamestown) to establish a performance-based incentive funding component to state aid for Rhode Island's public colleges, linking funding to achievement of certain goals, such as improved on-time graduation rates and increasing the number of students completing programs in high-demand fields. Rep. Joseph M. McNamara (D-Dist. 19, Warwick, Cranston) is sponsoring the bill ([2016-H-7428](#)) in the House.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **House OKs Naughton bill to make cell phones available to the deaf**  
The House of Representatives has passed a bill ([2016-H 7014](#)) introduced by Rep. Eileen S. Naughton (D-Dist 21, Warwick) that would add cell phones to the list of devices available through Rhode Island's Adaptive Telephone Equipment Loan Program. Similar legislation ([2016-S 2051](#)) has been introduced by Sen. Cynthia A. Coyne (D-Dist. 32, Barrington, Bristol, East Providence) in the Senate.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate approves Sosnowski bill that bans cell phone use by drivers**  
The Senate approved a bill ([2016-S 2255](#)) sponsored by Sen. V. Susan Sosnowski (D-Dist. 37, South Kingstown, New Shoreham), that would outlaw the use of any non-hands-free personal wireless communication device while operating a motor vehicle, except for public safety personnel or in emergency situations. Similar legislation ([2016-H 7168](#)) is being sponsored by Rep. Kathleen A. Fogarty (D-Dist. 35, South

More...

Kingstown) in the House.

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- **Sen. Ruggiero’s non-trade apprentice incentive bill passes Senate**  
 The Senate has passed legislation ([2016-S-2069A](#)) sponsored by Senate Majority Leader Dominick J. Ruggiero (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) that seeks to move apprenticeship training beyond typical building trades such as construction and plumbing and into more non-traditional sectors of the workforce and economy, such as manufacturing, information technology, design and management. Similar legislation ([2016-H 7097](#)) has been introduced in the House by Rep. Christopher R. Blazejewski (D-Dist. 2, Providence).  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **House passes pair of victim compensation bills**  
 The House passed Rep. David A. Coughlin Jr.’s (D-Dist. 60, Pawtucket) legislation ([2016-H 7538](#)) that would make Rhode Island residents who are victims of a domestic terrorist attack outside of Rhode Island, but still within the United States, eligible to receive victim’s compensation payments from Rhode Island’s Crime Victim Compensation Fund. Also passed this week by the House was Rep. Christopher R. Blazejewski’s (D-Dist. 2, Providence) bill ([2016-H 7533A](#)) that 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 for Coughlin release.](#) [Click here for Blazejewski release.](#)
- **Rep. McNamara bill would fund purchase of Narcan for cities, towns**  
 Rep. Joseph M. McNamara (D-Dist. 19, Warwick, Cranston) has introduced a bill ([2016-H 7368](#)) that would create a restricted receipt account for the purchase and distribution of the naloxone overdose treatment drug — known by the trade name Narcan — to cities and towns, and to fund medication-assisted treatment delivery, including the use of methadone, buprenorphine and naltrexone.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Committee hears Rep. Kazarian’s bill requiring trainers at high school events**  
 Rep. Katherine S. Kazarian’s (D-Dist. 63, East Providence) legislation ([2016-H 7639](#)) that aims to protect high school athletes from concussions and other serious injuries by requiring all school districts to have an athletic trainer present for all high school athletic practices and games was heard before the House Committee on Health, Education and Welfare this past week.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Sen. Miller, Rep. Bennett sponsor legislative initiatives to combat opioid crisis**  
 Senate Health and Human Services Committee Chairman Joshua Miller (D-Dist. 28, Cranston, Providence) and Rep. David A. Bennett (D-Dist. 20, Warwick, Cranston) have introduced a package of legislation taking aim at the opioid overdose epidemic that has gripped Rhode Island and the region. The bills push post-hospital follow-up care for those suffering from addiction ([2016-S 2356](#), [2016-H 7616](#)), foster the use of abuse-deterrent formulations for prescriptions ([2016-S 2461](#), [2016-H 7617](#)), require all prescription insurance providers that provide prescription coverage to cover opioid

antagonists ([2016-S 2460](#), [2016-H 7710](#)) and establish an opioid treatment fund through a fee on third-party administrators of pharmacy benefit plans ([2016-S 2509](#), [2016-H 7921](#)).

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▪ **Rep. Ucci bill would direct lottery funds to education**

A bill ([2016-H 7881](#)) sponsored by Rep. Stephen R. Ucci (D-Dist. 42, Johnston, Cranston) would create a restricted-receipt account into which revenue from the state lottery would be placed for use as education aid. The legislator is sponsoring the bill because, although it is not actually the case, many Rhode Islanders believe the lottery's original purpose was to fund education.

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▪ **Rep. Ajello, Sen. Goldin bill curbs restrictive covenants for physicians**

Rep. Edith H. Ajello (D-Dist. 1, Providence) and Sen. Gayle L. Goldin (D-Dist. 3, Providence) have introduced legislation ([2016-H 7586](#), [2016-S 2578](#)) to enhance physician recruiting and retention in Rhode Island by limiting restrictive covenants in physician employment contracts. Restrictive covenants are intended to prevent a physician leaving an employer from continuing to treat his or her patients or establishing a new practice within a defined geographic area.

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**-30-**

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