

May 6, 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>



- **Speaker appoints Reps. Abney, Serpa, Ruggiero as committee chairs**
House Speaker Nicholas A. Mattiello (D-Dist. 15, Cranston) announced the appointment of Rep. Marvin L. Abney (D-Dist. 73, Newport, Middletown) as chairman of the House Finance Committee. He also appointed Rep. Patricia A. Serpa (D-Dist. 27, West Warwick, Warwick, Coventry) as the new Oversight Committee chairwoman and Rep. Deborah Ruggiero (D-Dist. 74, Jamestown, Middletown) as the new Small Business Committee chairwoman.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **House passes Diaz bill to curtail racial disparities in school discipline**
The House of Representatives has passed legislation ([2016-H 7056](#)) introduced by Rep. Grace Diaz (D-Dist. 11, Providence) that would direct all school superintendents to review discipline data for their school districts, to decide whether there is an unequal impact on students based on race, ethnicity, or disability status, and to respond to any disparity. Similar legislation ([2016-S 2168](#)) has been introduced in the Senate by Sen. Juan M. Pichardo (D-Dist. 2, Providence).
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **House passes Maldonado measure to create Affordable Housing Commission**
The House of Representatives has passed a resolution ([2016-H 7989A](#)) introduced by Rep. Shelby Maldonado (D-Dist. 56, Central Falls) to establish a 14-member special legislative study commission for the purpose of making a comprehensive study on implementation of the Low and Moderate Income Housing Act.
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More...

- **Senate OKs Sosnowski bill forbidding sale, possession of shark fins**
The Rhode Island Senate today passed legislation ([2016-S 2676A](#)) sponsored by Sen. V. Susan Sosnowski (D-Dist. 37, New Shoreham, South Kingstown) that would forbid the sale and possession of shark fins in Rhode Island. Similar legislation ([2016-H 7440](#)) has been introduced in the House of Representatives by Rep. K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick).
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **House passes Fogarty bill to prevent unauthorized payroll deductions**
The House of Representatives has passed legislation ([2016-H 7254A](#)) introduced by Rep. Kathleen A. Fogarty (D-Dist. 35, South Kingstown) that would prevent employers from withholding from an employee any monies not authorized by federal or state law or by court order, without first getting written or electronic approval from the employee.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Kazarian’s ‘Holocaust and Genocide Education’ legislation passes House**
Rep. Katherine S. Kazarian’s (D-Dist. 63, East Providence) legislation ([2016-H 7488](#)) that would require the inclusion of holocaust and genocide studies in the educational curriculum for all middle and high school students in Rhode Island passed the House of Representatives. Sen. Gayle L. Goldin (D-Dist. 3, Providence) has sponsored companion legislation ([2016-S 2396](#)) in the Senate.
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- **Senate passes bill including kindergartners in compulsory attendance law**
The Senate approved legislation ([2016-S 2022](#)) sponsored by Sen. Roger A. Picard (D-Dist. 20, Woonsocket, Cumberland) to require children who are enrolled in kindergarten to attend on a daily basis, just as children in all other grades are required to do. The state’s compulsory attendance law currently excludes 5-year-olds, sending an inaccurate message to parents about the importance of regular attendance to their child’s education and development.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate OKs bill allowing online application for hunting and fishing licenses**
The Senate approved legislation ([2016-S 2799](#)) sponsored by Sen. Cynthia A. Coyne (D-Dist. 32, Barrington, Bristol, East Providence) on behalf of the Department of Environmental Management that would facilitate the creation of a system to allow Rhode Islanders to apply for hunting and freshwater fishing licenses online. Identical legislation ([2016-H 7895](#)) has been introduced in the House by Rep. Cale P. Keable (D-Dist. 47, Burrillville, Gloucester).
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Wavemaker Fellowship opens for student loan reimbursement**
State officials opened up applications for the Wavemaker Fellowship, a student loan reimbursement program for recent graduates working in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) and certain design fields. The program was initiated by legislation ([2015-S 0122](#), [2015-H 6089](#)) sponsored last year by Rep. Christopher R. Blazejewski (D-Dist. 2, Providence) and Sen. Ryan W. Pearson (D-

Dist. 19, Cumberland, Lincoln).

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▪ **House tourism marketing commission meets with Pryor**

A House commission studying a statewide approach to tourism branding and marketing, led by Rep. Lauren H. Carson (D-Dist. 75, Newport), met with Commerce Secretary Stefan Pryor and Seth Goldenberg, founder and CEO of Epic Decade, one of the three firms contracted to develop the state's tourism campaign. The commission received an update on the Commerce Corporation's tourism campaign development and implementation.

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