

May 20, 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>



- **Assembly OKs bill to outlaw use of electronic tracking devices in vehicles**
The General Assembly unanimously voted to make it a crime to electronically track a vehicle without the consent of the owner. The legislation ([2016-H 7002A](#), [2016-S 2596A](#)), sponsored by the House Speaker Nicholas A. Mattiello (D-Dist. 15, Cranston) and Senate Majority Whip Maryellen Goodwin (D-Dist. 1, Providence), is aimed at protecting victims of stalking and domestic violence. It will now be sent to the governor.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate approves bills aimed at opioid crisis**
The Senate approved much of its package of legislation aimed at addressing the opioid overdose crisis. The bills, which now move to the House, aim to better ensure follow-up care for drug-addicted patients after hospital discharge, increase access to the opioid antagonist Narcan, push the use of abuse-deterrent opioid analgesic drug product formulations, and more. Several of the bills are sponsored by Senate Health and Human Services Committee Chairman Joshua Miller (D-Dist. 28, Cranston, Providence). House companion bills have been introduced by Rep. David A. Bennett (D-Dist. 20, Warwick, Cranston).
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate OKs Archambault bill to add PTSD to medical marijuana list**
The Senate voted to approve legislation ([2016-S 2115](#)) introduced by Sen. Stephen R. Archambault (D-Dist. 22, Smithfield, North Providence, Johnston) that would add post-traumatic stress disorder to the definition of “debilitating medical condition” for purposes of qualifying for medical marijuana in the Edward O. Hawkins and Thomas

More...

C. Slater Medical Marijuana Act. Similar legislation ([2016-H 7142](#)) has been introduced in the House by Rep. Scott A. Slater (D-Dist. 10, Providence). [Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Senate OKs Sosnowski bill that would streamline permitting process**

The Senate passed legislation ([2016-S 2844](#)) sponsored by Sen. V. Susan Sosnowski (D-Dist. 37, South Kingstown, New Shoreham) that would streamline the permitting process and specify specific responsibilities of the director of the Office of Regulatory Reform. The bill would also mandate that every city and town designate, in writing, a regulatory liaison with the office. [Click here to see news release.](#)

- **House passes Fogarty bill to update E-911 system**

The House has passed legislation ([2016-H 7748](#)) introduced by Rep. Kathleen A. Fogarty (D-Dist. 35, South Kingstown) that would require the E-911 Uniform Emergency telephone system division to update the system by allowing users to access the system by text, video and other methods. [Click here to see news release.](#)

- **House approves Naughton bill changing makeup of RIPTA board**

The House of Representatives passed legislation ([2016-H 7329](#)) introduced by Rep. Eileen S. Naughton (D-Dist. 21, Warwick) to change the composition of the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority by mandating that the board include a disabled member and a member who regularly uses RIPTA services. Sen. Juan M. Pichardo (D-Dist. 2, Providence) has introduced similar legislation ([2016-S 2373](#)) in the Senate, where the measure will be considered on Wednesday. [Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Keable, Fogarty bill improves power plant siting process, increases local input**

Legislation being introduced by Rep. Cale P. Keable (D-Dist. 47, Burrillville, Glocester) and Sen. Paul W. Fogarty (D-Dist. 23, Glocester, Burrillville, North Smithfield) would require that any tax agreement negotiated between the Burrillville Town Council and the developers of a proposed power plant in town be subject to voter approval. The legislation is in response to citizens' and officials' frustration regarding their lack of input in the approval process for Invenergy's pending proposal to build a 1000-megawatt, fracked-gas power plant in the Burrillville village of Pascoag. [Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Commission: Rhode Island must do more to protect assets from rising sea levels**

Rhode Island can protect itself from some of the economic risks posed by rising sea levels through coordinated statewide planning and awareness programs aimed at policymakers, homeowners, business owners and real estate agents, according to a recent [report](#) issued by a House commission led by Rep. Lauren H. Carson (D-Dist. 75, Newport) that has been studying the issue. [Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Legislation will help Rhode Island homeowners in foreclosure keep their homes**

The House approved legislation ([2016-H 7572](#)) sponsored by Rep. Jeremiah T. O'Grady (D-Dist. 46, Lincoln, Pawtucket) to bar lenders from requiring home sellers

and buyers of foreclosed property to sign an affidavit stating that the homeowner in foreclosure will not be allowed to remain in the home when a nonprofit organization is involved in the transaction. The bill will enable lenders and loan servicers to sell a foreclosed property to a nonprofit buyer who can then sell it back to the homeowners with a mortgage they can afford. Companion legislation ([2016-S 2841](#)) is sponsored in the Senate by Sen. Gayle L. Goldin (D-Dist. 3, Providence).

▪ **Senate committee holds hearing on group home care**

The Senate Health and Human Services Committee met with Executive Office of Health and Human Services Secretary Elizabeth Roberts about a recent review of the quality of care provided in group homes serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

-30-

For an electronic version of this and all press releases published by the Legislative Press and Public Information Bureau, please visit our website at <http://www.rilin.state.ri.us/News>.