

May 27, 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>



- **House, Senate passes lobbying reform legislation**

The House and the Senate both passed legislation ([2016-H 7388A](#) / [2016-S 2361A](#)) that reforms the state's general laws on lobbying this week. Sponsored by Rep. Robert B. Jacquard (D-Dist. 17, Cranston) and Sen. Erin Lynch Prata (D-Dist. 31, Warwick, Cranston), the legislation was developed with Secretary of State Nellie M. Gorbea, with the intent to simplify and clarify the rules governing lobbying, to maximize transparency without imposing unnecessary burdens on the process, to promote a more user-friendly registration and reporting system, and to strengthen the investigation and enforcement scheme of the state's lobbying rules and regulations. Each bill now heads to the opposite chamber for approval.

[Click here for Jacquard release.](#) [Click here for Lynch Prata release.](#)

- **Senate OKs Archambault bill mandating mental health training for police**

The Senate passed legislation ([2016-S 2401](#)) introduced by Sen. Stephen R. Archambault (D-Dist. 22, Smithfield, North Providence, Johnston) that would require training and instructions for police officers and trainees in order to more accurately identify complaints involving mental health or substance abuse emergencies and to develop law enforcement responses to such emergencies. Similar legislation ([2016-H 7259](#)) has been introduced in the House by Rep. K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick).

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- **Senate passes Sosnowski's Household Hazardous Waste Management Act**

The Senate passed legislation ([2016-S 2526A](#)) sponsored by Sen. V. Susan Sosnowski (D-Dist. 37, South Kingstown, New Shoreham) that would authorize the

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Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation to conduct a permanent and continuous program to control and remove hard-to-dispose materials and to recover and recycle waste materials related to household hard-to-dispose material.

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- **Sen. Crowley’s rape-kit procedures legislation passes Senate**

The Senate passed Sen. Elizabeth A. Crowley’s (D-Dist. 16, Central Falls, Pawtucket) legislation ([2016-S 2063](#)) that would require law enforcement agencies in the state to inventory all untested sexual assault evidence collection kits in their possession, and report to the General Assembly on how they plan on dealing with the backlog of untested kits.

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- **Senate passes Goodwin, Doyle legislation taking aim at child abuse**

The Senate passed two bills that deal with child abuse in the state. The first bill ([2016-S 2947aa](#)), sponsored by Sen. Maryellen Goodwin (D-Dist. 1, Providence), closes a loophole in abuse reporting laws to ensure that schools report allegations of sexual abuse of children to the Department of Children, Youth and Families. The second bill ([2016-S 2368aa](#)), sponsored by Sen. James E. Doyle II (D-Dist. 8, Pawtucket), requires every public and private school in Rhode Island, including charter schools, to post a clear and visible sign for students that provides the state’s child abuse hotline number. Similar legislation ([2016-H 7516](#)) was introduced in the House by Rep. Raymond H. Johnston Jr. (D-Dist. 61, Pawtucket).

[Click here for Goodwin release.](#) [Click here for Doyle release.](#)
- **Senate passes Lynch Prata bill prohibiting revenge porn**

Legislation ([2016-S 2540](#)) sponsored by Sen. Erin Lynch Prata (D-Dist. 31, Warwick, Cranston) that would prohibit the posting of “revenge porn” without the consent of the individual in the images passed the Senate. Similar legislation ([2016-H 7537](#)) has been introduced in the House by Rep. Robert E. Craven (D-Dist. 32, North Kingstown).

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- **Senate approves Goodwin bill on domestic violence prevention fund**

The Senate approved legislation ([2016-S 2900A](#)) sponsored by Majority Whip Maryellen Goodwin (D-Dist. 1, Providence) that would create a new fund through a \$46 surcharge on marriage licenses that would be used to pay for evidence-based programs designed to prevent domestic and dating violence throughout Rhode Island. Similar legislation ([2016-H 7683](#)) has been introduced in the House by Rep. Christopher R. Blazewski (D-Dist. 2, Providence).

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- **Senate approves bill to phase in seat belts on school buses**

The Senate approved legislation ([2016-S 2256](#)) sponsored by Sen. Adam J. Satchell (D-Dist. 9, West Warwick) that would require all new school buses purchased or leased in Rhode Island to be equipped with seat belts for the driver and every passenger seat, and require school districts to adopt implementation plans that include bus evacuation drills. Rep. Robert A. Nardolillo III (R-Dist. 28, Coventry) is

sponsoring companion legislation ([2016-H 7155](#)) in the House.
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▪ **Power plant bill heard in House; related rally draws crowd**

The House Environment and Natural Resources Committee held a hearing on legislation ([2016-H 8240](#)) sponsored by Rep. Cale P. Keable (D-Dist. 47, Burrillville, Gloucester) to 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. Sen. Paul W. Fogarty (D-Dist. 23, Gloucester, Burrillville, North Smithfield) has introduced the legislation ([2016-S 3037](#)) in the Senate. Before the hearing, both Representative Keable and Senator Fogarty spoke at a State House rally organized by townspeople opposed to Invenergy's pending proposal to build a 1,000-megawatt, fracked gas power plant in the village of Pascoag in Burrillville.

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

Legislation ([2016-H 7572](#), [2016-S 2841](#)) sponsored by Rep. Jeremiah T. O'Grady (D-Dist. 46, Lincoln, Pawtucket) and Sen. Gayle L. Goldin (D-Dist. 3, Providence) will remove a roadblock to enable lenders and loan servicers to sell foreclosed properties to nonprofit buyers that will sell them back to their owners with more affordable mortgages. The nonprofit SUN Initiative, which is financed by private investors, is already working in Rhode Island to do just that, and would be able to help more homeowners under the bill.

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