

April 7, 2017

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>



- **R.I. leaders pay tribute to former Sen. William A. Walaska, 1945-2017**  
State leaders paid their respect to former Sen. William A. Walaska, who passed away after a two-year battle with leukemia. He served in the Senate from 1994 until January, most recently as president pro tempore and vice chairman of the Commerce Committee. Gov. Gina Raimondo has ordered flags at state facilities to be flown at half-staff in his memory through the weekend.  
[Click here to see statement from Senate President Dominick Ruggerio.](#)
- **House passes Solomon bill protecting dogs from extreme temperatures**  
The House of Representatives has passed legislation ([2017-H 5326](#)) introduced by Rep. Joseph J. Solomon Jr. (D-Dist. 22, Warwick) that would regulate the treatment of dogs kept outside in extreme temperatures, based on the Tufts Animal Care and Condition Weather Safety Scale. The measure now heads to the Senate.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate leaders seek swift response, action from DCYF on child fatalities report**  
In a letter following up on a recent joint meeting of their committees with the state's child advocate, the leaders of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee and the Senate Finance Committee asked the director of the Department of Children, Youth and Families to swiftly respond to a list of recommendations made by the Office of the Child Advocate's Fatality Review Panel following the deaths in the last year of four young children due to abuse or neglect. The letter is signed by Health and Human Services Committee Chairman Joshua Miller (D-Dist. 28, Cranston, Providence) and Vice Chairwoman Gayle L. Goldin (D-Dist. 3, Providence), and Finance Committee Chairman William J. Conley Jr. (D-Dist. 18, East Providence,

More...

Pawtucket) and First Vice Chairman Louis P. DiPalma (D-Dist. 12, Middletown, Newport, Little Compton, Tiverton).

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- **Rep. Morin bill would ban dangerous chemicals in furniture, bedding**  
Rep. Michael Morin (D-Dist. 49, Woonsocket) has introduced legislation ([2017-H 5082](#)) that would prohibit the sale of furniture, bedding and children products that contain certain cancer-causing chemicals. Similar legislation ([2016-S 0166](#)) has been introduced in the Senate by Sen. Adam J. Satchell (D-Dist. 9, West Warwick).  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Leader Shekarchi reintroduces bill to license pet groomers in wake of tragedy**  
House Majority Leader K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick) reintroduced legislation ([2017-H 6054](#)) that would require pet groomers to be licensed with the state following the recent tragedy of a 5-year-old pug named Ollie who suddenly died while being groomed at a Petco in Middletown. The legislation would call for an annual \$100 license in order to perform any kind of pet grooming services.  
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- **Sen. Raptakis bill would protect young children from being left alone in vehicle**  
The Senate Committee on Judiciary heard legislation ([2017-S 0072](#)) introduced by Sen. Leonidas P. Raptakis (D-Dist. 33, Coventry, West Greenwich, East Greenwich) that would make it an offense to leave a child under the age of 7 unattended in a motor vehicle. The bill would make the offense a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of up to \$1,000 and up to one year in jail. Similar legislation ([2017-H 5311](#)) has been introduced in the House by Rep. Patricia Serpa (D-Dist. 27, West Warwick, Coventry, Warwick).  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Ackerman bill would make safe harbor for sexually exploited children**  
Rep. Mia Ackerman (D-Dist. 45, Cumberland, Lincoln) has introduced the Rhode Island Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Children Act. The legislation ([2017-H 5857](#)) would make sex trafficking victims eligible for benefits from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund, establish “safe harbor” provisions for sexually exploited children and designate them as abused and neglected children.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Nardolillo announces ‘Taking Care of Business’ small business package**  
Rep. Robert Nardolillo III (R-Dist. 28, Coventry) introduced a package of legislation aimed at improving Rhode Island’s economy. The package consists of three bills eliminating the estate tax ([2017-H 6029](#)), reducing the sales tax from 7 percent to 3 percent ([2017-H 6005](#)) and eliminating the tangible personal property tax ([2017-H 6074](#)).  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Shanley bill protects internet users from personal information disclosure**  
Rep. Evan P. Shanley (D-Dist. 24, Warwick) has introduced legislation ([2017-H 6087](#)) that would protect Rhode Islanders from disclosure of personally identifiable

information through the internet by operators of commercial websites or online services and would create a right of action for any operator violations.

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▪ **Rep. Serpa bill would protect infants affected by substance abuse**

Rep. Patricia Serpa (D-Dist. 27, West Warwick, Coventry, Warwick) has introduced legislation ([2017-H 5819](#)) that would require physicians, nurses and other health care professionals to report to the Department of Children, Youth and Families when a newborn has been exposed to illegal substance abuse, experiences withdrawal symptoms resulting from prenatal drug exposure, or has fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. Similar legislation ([2017-S 0672](#)) has been introduced in the Senate by Sen. Adam J. Satchell (D-Dist. 9, West Warwick).

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