

April 14, 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>



- **House passes Rep. McNamara's Right to Try Act**

The House of Representatives has approved legislation ([2017-H 5676](#)) submitted by Rep. Joseph M. McNamara (D-Dist. 19, Warwick, Cranston) that would create the Rhode Island Terminally Ill Patients Right to Try Act, which allows terminally ill patients to obtain experimental drugs that have not yet been federally approved but are in the final stages of FDA testing. The measure now heads to the Senate for consideration.

[Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Senate passes Sosnowski bill banning handheld cell phones for drivers**

The Senate has approved legislation ([2017-S 0175](#)) introduced 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. The measure now heads to the House of Representatives, where similar legislation ([2017-H 5182](#)) has been introduced by Rep. Kathleen A. Fogarty (D-Dist. 35, South Kingstown).

[Click here to see news release.](#)

- **House passes two pro-business bills sponsored by Rep. Ackerman**

The House of Representatives passed two pro-business bills introduced by Rep. Mia Ackerman (D-Dist. 45, Cumberland, Lincoln). The first bill ([2017-H 5817](#)) would include certain federal requirements within the selection criteria for cities or towns hiring architects or engineers. The second bill ([2017-H 5647Aaa](#)) would simplify the application process of a foreign corporation to obtain a certificate of authority. Similar legislation ([2017-S 0618](#)) has been introduced in the Senate by Sen. Frank S.

More...

Lombardo III (D-Dist. 25, Johnston). Both measures now head to the Senate for consideration.

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▪ **Marijuana bills bring out advocates for and against legalization**

Proponents and opponents of legalization of marijuana testified as the House Judiciary Committee heard several bills pertaining to marijuana. Among them were one ([2017-H 5555](#)) sponsored by Rep. Scott A. Slater (D-Dist. 10, Providence) to legalize, regulate and tax adult use and cultivation of marijuana; and another ([2017-H 5551](#)) sponsored by Rep. Dennis M. Canario (D-Dist. 71, Portsmouth, Tiverton, Little Compton) creating a study commission to review and make recommendations on the effects of legalizing marijuana. Companion legislation to the regulation bill ([2017-S 0420](#)) has been filed in the Senate by Sen. Joshua Miller (D-Dist. 28, Cranston, Providence). Companion legislation to the study commission bill ([2017-S 0277](#)) has been filed in the Senate by Sen. Cynthia A. Coyne (D-Dist. 32, Barrington, Bristol, East Providence).

▪ **Paid sick leave legislation heard**

The Senate Labor Committee held a hearing on legislation ([2017-S 0290](#)) sponsored by Senate Majority Whip Maryellen Goodwin (D-Dist. 1, Providence) to require all employers to provide their employees with a minimum level of paid sick and safe leave, including time to care for the employee's family members. Companion legislation ([2017-H 5413](#)) is sponsored in the House by Rep. Aaron Regunberg (D-Dist. 4, Providence).

▪ **House Republicans seek General Assembly approval of any stadium deal**

Rep. Kenneth J. Mendonça (R-Dist. 72, Portsmouth, Middletown), with the backing of the House Republican Caucus, introduced legislation ([2017-H 6128](#)) to require the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation to submit any financial arrangement it may negotiate with any sports entity seeking to build or renovate a stadium in Rhode Island to the General Assembly for approval before it can be finalized. The legislation comes as the PawSox are considering two potential plans for a new stadium in Pawtucket.

[Click here to see news release.](#)

▪ **Rep. Nunes bill would create Rhode Island Pension Prudent Investor Act**

Rep. Jared R. Nunes (D-Dist. 25, Coventry, West Warwick) has introduced the Rhode Island Pension Prudent Investor Act ([2017-H 5877](#)), which would guarantee that a trustee, director or retirement system employee must comply with certain prudent investor guidelines including risk and return objectives, diversification, loyalty, investment costs, compliance and delegation of management functions.

[Click here to see news release.](#)

• **Rep. Canario announces State House will participate in 'Good Night Lights'**

Rep. Dennis M. Canario (D-Dist. 71, Portsmouth, Little Compton, Tiverton) announced that the Rhode Island State House will be participating in the "Good Night Lights" program. Buildings within the sightline of Hasbro Children's Hospital will

blink their lights on and off for one minute at 8:30 p.m. every night for three nights. Blinking room lights can be seen in the hospital as reciprocation to the nightly ritual. [Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Rep. McEntee bill for same-sex birth certificates heard in House Judiciary**
Rep. Carol Hagan McEntee's (D-Dist. 33, South Kingstown, Narragansett) legislation ([2017-H 5929](#)) that would permit a parenting partner of a mother, with the mother's written consent, to be included on a birth certificate as a parent to the child was heard before the House Committee on Judiciary. According to the legislation, the child's surname would be determined by the mother.

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