

April 21, 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>



- **Sen. Miller bill would use Medicaid funds for housing to improve health**  
Modeled after an innovative bill introduced this year in Hawaii, legislation ([2017-S 0745](#)) sponsored by Senate Health and Human Services Committee Chairman Joshua Miller (D-Dist. 28, Cranston, Providence) would launch a pilot program to test the use of Medicaid funds to treat chronic homelessness.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Walsh bill would raise tipped wage, link it to standard minimum wage**  
Rep. Moira Walsh (D-Dist. 3, Providence) is sponsoring legislation ([2017-H 5315](#)) to increase the minimum wage for tipped workers by 50 cents a year until it reaches a level that is at least two-thirds of the standard minimum wage, then ensure that it increases proportionately along with the standard minimum wage.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Minority Whip Filippi introduces constitutional reforms**  
House Minority Whip Blake Filippi (R-Dist. 36, New Shoreham, Charlestown, South Kingstown, Westerly) introduced three constitutional amendments. House resolution ([2017-H 5401](#)) would empower the people of Rhode Island to take the government to court over unlawful spending. House resolution ([2017-H 5541](#)) would require all substantive executive branch regulations to be approved by the General Assembly before going into effect. House resolution ([2017-H 5513](#)) would create a system of instant run-off elections for all general officers and members of the General Assembly. This will ensure that candidates are elected with a majority vote, rather than plurality vote.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)

More...

- **Rep. Ucci, Rep. Winfield target taxes on car and truck owners**  
Rep. Stephen R. Ucci (D-Dist. 42, Johnston, Cranston) and Rep. Thomas Winfield (D-Dist. 53, Smithfield, Gloucester) have introduced bills taking aim at automobile taxes that they believe are unjust. The bills would require cities and towns to use the National Automobile Dealers Association (NADA) trade-in value for motor vehicles for purposes of the excise tax ([2017-H 5250](#)); treat pickup trucks the same as other passenger vehicles for the purposes of reducing sales tax liability by the trade-in value ([2017-H 5328](#)); and prohibit the collection of sales tax on any portion of a lease payment that is charged to pay for excise taxes. Companion legislation ([2017-S 0254](#), [2017-S 0121](#)) to the pickup truck bill has been filed in the Senate by Sen. James E. Doyle II (D-Dist. 8, Pawtucket) and Sen. Leonidas P. Raptakis (D-Dist. 33, Coventry, West Greenwich, East Greenwich).
  
- **RI to use MCAS test for students after comprehensive study**  
Last legislative session, Rep. Gregg Amore's (D-Dist. 65, East Providence) bill ([2016-H 8308A](#)) that authorized a comprehensive study on a unified approach to statewide education passed the General Assembly. As a result of the study, Rhode Island will now administer the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) test to Rhode Island students in the third through eighth grades.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
  
- **Sen. Nesselbush, Rep. Craven introduce workers' co-op legislation**  
Sen. Donna M. Nesselbush (D-Dist. 15, Pawtucket, North Providence) and Rep. Robert E. Craven (D-Dist. 32, North Kingstown) introduced legislation ([2017-S 0676](#), [2017-H 6001](#)) to create a statutory vehicle for the creation and functioning of workers' cooperatives. Workers' cooperatives are corporations that are owned and democratically governed by their members.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)