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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 Oversight Chairwoman Serpa wants auditor general to review UHIP**
House Oversight Committee Chairwoman Patricia A. Serpa (D-Dist. 27, West Warwick, Coventry, Warwick) has requested the Office of the Auditor General to conduct an independent audit of the expenditures involving contractors and vendors linked to the failed United Healthcare Infrastructure Project public benefits computer system. Rhode Island Auditor General Dennis Hoyle has accepted her request to have his office expand the scope of his office’s audit functions involving the troubled UHIP system.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Sen. Quezada bill would protect employees from wrongful discharge**
Sen. Ana B. Quezada (D-Dist. 2, Providence) has introduced legislation intended to protect employees from wrongful termination. The bill ([2017-S 0169](#)) would end Rhode Island’s adoption of the “employment-at-will” legal doctrine, and would provide some job protection for employees that satisfactorily perform their duties. The act would also provide specific remedies for wrongful discharge.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Sen. Seveney bill would require certification of software engineers**
Sen. James A. Seveney (D-Dist. 11, Portsmouth, Bristol, Tiverton) plans to introduce legislation that would require certification of software engineers. The legislation would create a professional designation and registration criteria for professional software engineers with the subsequent purpose of requiring professional certification as a condition of participating in software development-related public works projects.
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More...

- **Sen. Archambault, Rep. Maldonado bills would require municipal court counsel**
Sen. Stephen R. Archambault (D-Dist. 22, Smithfield, North Providence, Johnston) and Rep. Shelby Maldonado (D-Dist. 56, Central Falls) have introduced legislation that would change the way Rhode Island cities and towns prosecute defendants in municipal court. The bills ([2017-S 0071/2017-H 5187](#)) would require that cities and towns comply with certain procedures when prosecuting defendants such as the right to counsel, and would amend the penalties imposed for ordinance violations.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Regunberg bill would push back against Trump border wall**
Rep. Aaron Regunberg (D-Dist. 4, Providence) has introduced legislation to prohibit the state of Rhode Island from investing in companies that contract with the federal government to build President Trump's proposed border wall. The legislation ([2017-H 5505](#)) would require the State Investment Commission to make its best efforts to identify all businesses that contract to build a border wall and include those names in the state's list of restricted companies.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Slater introduces bill to legalize, regulate, and tax recreational cannabis**
Rep. Scott A. Slater (D-Dist. 10, Providence) introduced legislation ([2017-H 5555](#)) that would establish a system for the regulation and taxation for adult use and cultivation of cannabis in Rhode Island. The legislation would allow Rhode Islanders 21 years and older to possess up to five ounces of cannabis in their homes. The bill would also allow a minimum of 40 retail stores and only state-licensed growers would be able to supply the retail stores with cannabis. Sen. Joshua Miller (D-Dist. 28, Cranston, Providence) will be introducing companion legislation in the Senate.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Casimiro, Sen. Sheehan introduce 'Honor and Remember Flag' legislation**
Rep. Julie A. Casimiro (D-Dist. 31, North Kingstown, Exeter) and Sen. James C. Sheehan (D-Dist. 36, North Kingstown, Narragansett) have introduced legislation ([2017-H 5051](#) / [2017-S 0196](#)) that would make Rhode Island the 23rd state to recognize the Honor and Remember Flag as the state's symbol of her sons and daughters who have made the ultimate sacrifice in all our nation's wars.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Sen. Kettle introduces bill to combat food stamp fraud**
In an effort to reduce fraud within the state's food stamp program, Sen. Nicholas D. Kettle (R-Dist. 21, Coventry, Foster, Scituate, West Greenwich) has introduced legislation that would require anyone using the food stamp program to show photo identification. The legislation ([2017-S 0279](#)) would require retailers to examine a photo ID to verify that a buyer presenting an EBT card is the person entitled to use the card.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Speaker Mattiello, President Paiva Weed welcome Norwegian Air to T.F. Green**
Speaker of the House Nicholas A. Mattiello (D-Dist. 15, Cranston) and President of the Senate M. Teresa Paiva Weed (D-Dist. 13, Newport, Jamestown) joined the

Rhode Island Airport Corporation to announce that Norwegian Airlines will begin service this summer from T. F. Green Airport (PVD) to Belfast, Cork, Dublin, Edinburgh and Shannon. These will be the first-ever year-round European routes for Rhode Island's largest airport. Norwegian already has more U.S.-based cabin crews than any other foreign airline, and these two new bases will create another 150 American jobs.

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▪ **Rep. Diaz hosts Dominican Independence Day at the State House**

Rep. Grace Diaz (D – Dist. 11, Providence) hosted the Dominican Republic Independence Anniversary and Heritage Celebration at the State House. The celebration commemorates the anniversary of the Dominican Republic's independence from Haiti on Feb. 27, 1844. This year's ceremony recognized outstanding individuals who represent the best of the Dominican-American community's efforts to make Rhode Island a better place.

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