

May 19, 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>



- **Senate passes President Ruggerio’s unpaid wages bill**
The Senate passed legislation ([2017-S-0192A](#)) sponsored by Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) that would establish a procedure for employees to secure liens against employers for unpaid wages. Contested claims would be decided by the Superior Court. Similar legislation ([2017-H 5847](#)) has been introduced in the House by Rep. Shelby Maldonado (D-Dist. 56, Central Falls).
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **House OKs Shekarchi bill to create course for parents of teens in driver’s ed**
The House approved legislation sponsored by House Majority Leader K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick) to establish a free educational course for parents of students in driver’s education classes. Under the bill ([2017-H 5457A](#)), the course would be available online and at various times and locations around the state, and parental participation would be a requirement for the issuance of a graduated license for a driver under 18, unless a parent has taken the course for a sibling within five years. Sen. Stephen R. Archambault (D-Dist. 22, Smithfield, Johnston, North Providence) is sponsoring similar legislation ([2017-S 0102](#)) in the Senate.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate approves requirement for defibrillators in large public gathering spots**
The Senate approved legislation ([2017-S 0777](#)) sponsored by Senate Majority Whip Maryellen Goodwin (D-Dist. 1, Providence) to require an automated external defibrillator and a qualified person to administer it at all public places that hold 300 or more people.

More...

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- **House approves bill for flooding and sea rise training for planning boards**
The House approved legislation ([2017-H 5042aa](#)) sponsored by Rep. Lauren H. Carson (D-Dist. 75, Newport) requiring all members of municipal planning boards or commissions in Rhode Island to participate in a free two-hour training program on the effects of rising sea levels and the effects of development in flood plains.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Fogarty bill creating DEM freshwater overseer gets Senate nod**
The Senate has approved legislation sponsored by Sen. Paul W. Fogarty (D-Dist. 23, Glocester, Burrillville, North Smithfield) to create a new position within the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) to coordinate the stewardship of freshwater lakes, ponds, rivers and streams in Rhode Island. Rep. Cale P. Keable (D-Dist. 47, Burrillville, Glocester) is sponsoring the legislation ([2017-H 5174](#)) in the House.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **House passes McNamara bill to ban advertising of unhealthy foods in school**
The House passed legislation ([2017-H 5580](#)) sponsored by Rep. Joseph M. McNamara (D-Dist. 19, Warwick, Cranston) that would prohibit the advertising of unhealthy food and beverage products in schools, particularly those that may not be sold on the school campus during the school day, since they do not meet minimum federal governmental nutrition standards. Similar legislation ([2017-S 0304](#)) has been introduced in the Senate by Sen. V. Susan Sosnowski (D-Dist. 37, South Kingstown, New Shoreham).
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Sen. Lynch Prata's Gaspee Days license plate bill passes Senate**
Sen. Erin Lynch Prata's (D-Dist. 31, Warwick, Cranston) legislation ([2017-S 0363A](#)) to create a special fundraising license plate to benefit the Gaspee Days Committee passed the Senate. The plate would include a \$40 surcharge for those individuals ordering them, with \$20 of that going to the Gaspee Days Committee and the other \$20 going to the state's general fund. Similar legislation ([2017-H 5424](#)) has been introduced in the House by Rep. Joseph M. McNamara (D-Dist. 19, Warwick, Cranston).
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Morin bill would create student loan forgiveness program**
The House Finance Committee heard legislation ([2017-H 5169](#)) introduced by Rep. Michael Morin (D-Dist. 49, Woonsocket) that would establish the "Get on Your Feet" student loan forgiveness program targeted at helping middle-income students afford the high cost of college by providing a grace period for the first two years after graduation. For those who meet the requirements, the state would pay the difference between what the federal government covers and the individual's total loan payment.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Vella-Wilkinson wants panel to study military sexual trauma**
Rep. Camille F.J. Vella-Wilkinson (D-Dist. 21, Warwick) has introduced legislation

([2017-H 6218](#)) that would create a five-member special legislative study commission whose purpose it would be to study and provide recommendations on potential policy, training, and/or preventative measures involving occurrences of military sexual trauma and harassment in the Rhode Island National Guard.

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- **Rep. Phillips bill would mandate 15 percent markup on cigarette retail price**
Rep. Robert D. Phillips (D-Dist. 51, Woonsocket, Cumberland) has introduced legislation ([2017-H 5506](#)) that would amend the existing Unfair Sales Practices law, which currently mandates a 6-percent markup on all retail costs, by requiring a 15-percent markup in the sale of cigarettes. Similar legislation ([2017-S 0470](#)) has been introduced in the Senate by Sen. Frank S. Lombardo III (D-Dist. 25, Johnston).
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