

May 21, 2021

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>



- **After General Assembly passage, minimum wage bill signed into law**  
Legislation ([2021-H 5130A](#), [2021-S 0001aa](#)) sponsored by Rep. David A. Bennett (D-Dist. 20, Warwick, Cranston) and Sen. Ana B. Quezada (D-Dist. 2, Providence) to gradually raise the minimum wage in Rhode Island from \$11.50 to \$15 over the next four years was signed into law by Gov. Dan McKee, two days after passage by the General Assembly.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Assembly OKs, governor signs changes to unemployment to expand workforce**  
The General Assembly approved and the governor signed into law a bill ([2021-H 6249A](#), [2021-S 0858aa](#)) sponsored by Rep. Carol Hagan McEntee (D-Dist. 33, South Kingstown, Narragansett) and Senate Majority Whip Maryellen Goodwin (D-Dist. 1, Providence) making changes to unemployment benefits to ensure an incentivized workforce that can help Rhode Island's economic recovery while also taking advantage of available federal funding to help Rhode Islanders support themselves and stimulate the economy. The changes take effect May 23.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Assembly approves bill to permanently continue overdose death analysis**  
Following a year of record overdose deaths in Rhode Island, the General Assembly approved legislation sponsored by Senate Majority Whip Maryellen Goodwin (D-Dist. 1, Providence) and Rep. Brandon C. Potter (D-Dist. 16, Cranston) to permanently require the state to analyze overdose deaths to help identify ways to reduce their prevalence. The legislation ([2021-S 0713](#), [2021-H 6014](#)) has been sent to the governor.

More...

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- **General Assembly OKs bill that protects families with parents with disabilities**  
The General Assembly passed legislation ([2021-S 0056](#), [2021-H 5394](#)) introduced by Sen. Louis P. DiPalma (D-Dist. 12, Middletown, Little Compton, Newport, Tiverton) and Rep. Terri Cortvriend (Dist. 72, Portsmouth Middletown) that precludes the disability of a parent from serving as a basis for denial or restriction in matters involving a child's welfare, foster care, family law, guardianship and adoption.  
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- **Assembly OKs bill to exclude chronic pain from medication guidelines**  
The General Assembly approved legislation ([2021-H 5247A](#), [2021-S 0384A](#)) introduced by Rep. Gregg Amore (D-Dist. 65, East Providence) and Sen. Valarie J. Lawson (D-Dist. 14, East Providence) that would exclude chronic intractable pain from the definition of “acute pain management” for the purposes of prescribing opioid medication. Chronic intractable pain is defined as pain that is excruciating, constant, incurable, and of such severity that it dominates virtually every conscious moment.  
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- **House OKs bill requiring non-gender-specific single-user toilets in public places**  
The House of Representatives approved legislation ([2021-H 5741](#)) introduced by Majority Floor Manager John G. Edwards (D-Dist. 70, Tiverton, Portsmouth), that would amend the state building code to require that any single-user toilet facility in a public building or place of public accommodation be available for use by persons of any gender. The measure now moves to the Senate, where similar legislation ([2021-S 0755](#)) has been introduced by Sen. Melissa A. Murray (D-Dist. 24, Woonsocket, North Smithfield).  
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- **House passes bill that bans child marriages in Rhode Island**  
The House of Representatives passed legislation ([2021-H 5387A](#)) introduced by Rep. Julie A. Casimiro (D-Dist. 31, North Kingstown, Exeter) that would ban child marriages in Rhode Island. The legislation eliminates all language in state law that allowed persons under the age of 18 to obtain a marriage license with parental consent. Sen. John P. Burke (D-Dist. 9, West Warwick) sponsored companion legislation ([2021-S 0398aa](#)) that the Senate passed last week.  
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- **Senate OKs bill that licenses 3-wheeled motorcycles through the DMV**  
The Senate passed legislation ([2021-S 0442Aaa](#)) introduced by Sen. Frank Lombardo (D-Dist. 25, Johnston) that would include three-wheeled motorcycles under the licensing requirements of the Rhode Island Division of Motor Vehicles. Three-wheeled motorcycle drivers would have to obtain a special motorcycle license from the DMV. Rep. Julie A. Casimiro (D-Dist. 31, North Kingstown, Exeter) has introduced similar legislation ([2021-H 5380](#)) in the House of Representatives.  
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- **House passes bill to create Genocide and Holocaust Education Commission**  
A month after President Biden became the first American President to recognize the Armenian genocide, the House passed legislation ([2021-H 5650A](#)) sponsored by Rep. Rebecca Kislak to create a permanent commission to promote and continually improve genocide and Holocaust education in schools. The bill now goes to the Senate, where Sen. Gayle L. Goldin (D-Dist. 3, Providence) is sponsoring a companion measure ([2021-S 0840A](#)).  
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- **Senate OKs bill to protect hospital employees from on-the-job abuse**  
The Senate approved legislation ([2021-S 0055A](#)) sponsored by Senate President Dominick J. Ruggiero (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) to establish procedures for hospital employees to file complaints with the hospital or the Department of Health for any assaultive behavior or other violation of law occurring on hospital grounds, and would require hospitals to develop plans to protect and respond to violence and employee safety issues and institute safety training for employees. House Majority Whip Katherine S. Kazarian (D-Dist. 63, East Providence) is sponsoring its companion bill ([2021-H 6018](#)).  
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- **House passes bill to train 911 operators in over-the-phone CPR instructions**  
The House of Representatives approved legislation ([2021-H 5629](#)) introduced by Rep. Mia Ackerman (D-Dist. 45, Cumberland, Lincoln) that would improve over-the-phone CPR instructions by requiring the 911 system to certify and staff individuals trained in telecommunicator CPR. The measure now moves to the Senate, where similar legislation ([2021-S 0385](#)) has been introduced by Senate Majority Whip Maryellen Goodwin (D-Dist. 1, Providence).  
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