

April 6, 2018

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 OKs Sosnowski bill to ban gender discrimination in insurance premiums**
The Senate passed legislation ([2018-S 2399](#)) introduced by Sen. V. Susan Sosnowski (D-Dist. 37, South Kingstown, New Shoreham) that would ban health insurers from utilizing the discriminatory practice known as gender rating, or routinely charging women and men different premiums for individual insurance. The measure now heads to the House of Representatives, where similar legislation ([2018-H 7363](#)) has been introduced by Rep. Katherine S. Kazarian (D-Dist. 63, East Providence).
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **House passes Serpa bill that would protect dogs from temperature extremes**
The House of Representatives passed legislation ([2018-H 7045A](#)) introduced by Rep. Patricia A. Serpa (D-Dist. 27, West Warwick, Coventry, Warwick) that would prohibit mistreatment of animals — specifically the failure to provide adequate water, shelter or veterinary care. The measure, which would also prevent exposure for a period of more than 15 minutes whenever a weather advisory or warning has been issued, now moves to the Senate.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate approves bill to ban tanning by minors**
The Senate approved legislation ([2018-S 2299A](#)) sponsored by Senate Majority Whip Maryellen Goodwin (D-Dist. 1, Providence) to prohibit those under 18 from using tanning facilities in Rhode Island. Currently, they can use tanning facilities if their parents sign a written consent form. The bill now goes to the House, where Rep. Mia Ackerman (D-Dist. 45, Cumberland, Lincoln) is sponsoring companion legislation ([2018-H 7136](#)).

More...

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- **Senate OKs two bills to use Medicaid funds to house homeless**
The Senate approved two bills ([2018-S 2129](#), [2018-S 2083](#)) sponsored by Sen. Joshua Miller (D-Dist. 28, Cranston, Providence) and Sen. Jeanine Calkin (D-Dist. 30, Warwick) to create innovative programs to use Medicaid waiver funds to provide housing and other services to the homeless to provide stability in their lives and reduce expenses related to the overuse of emergency rooms. Rep. Arthur Handy (D-Dist. 18, Cranston) is sponsoring companion legislation ([2018-H 7953](#)) to Senator Miller's bill.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. McKiernan bill requires Ethics Commission to post financial statements**
Rep. Daniel P. McKiernan (D-Dist. 7, Providence) has introduced legislation ([2018-H 8042](#)) that would give the public easier access to the financial statements of public officials. The bill would require that the Rhode Island Ethics Commission make all financial statements required of certain public officials available online for public inspection.
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- **Rep. Ackerman bill would prohibit fees for security freeze services**
The House Corporations Committee has recommended passage of legislation ([2018-H 7604](#)) introduced by Rep. Mia Ackerman (D-Dist. 45, Cumberland, Lincoln) that would prevent consumer report agencies from charging fees to those who choose to put a security freeze on their credit reports. A consumer report security freeze limits a consumer reporting agency from releasing a credit report or any information from the report without authorization from the consumer. Similar legislation ([2018-S 2562](#)) has been introduced in the Senate by Sen. Cynthia A. Coyne (D-Dist. 32, Barrington, Bristol, East Providence).
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- **Rep. McNamara introduces Neil Fachon Right to Try Act of 2018**
The House Committee on Health, Education and Welfare heard testimony on legislation ([2018-H 7294](#)) submitted by Rep. Joseph M. McNamara (D-Dist. 19, Warwick, Cranston) that would create the Neil Fachon Rhode Island Terminally Ill Patients Right to Try Act of 2018. The bill would allow terminally ill patients to obtain experimental drugs that have not yet been federally approved but which may be in the final stages of FDA testing. The legislation is named for Neil Fachon, a 19-year-old East Greenwich resident who was diagnosed with an aggressive brain tumor. Neil was accepted into a newly opened clinical trial, but because of governmental red tape, he was denied the drug for a period of time. He passed away on Feb. 19, 2017. Sen. Erin Lynch Prata (D-Dist. 31, Warwick, Cranston) is sponsoring companion legislation ([2018-S 2401](#)) in the Senate.
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- **Bill would free pharmacists to help consumers save on prescriptions**
Rep. Teresa Tanzi (D-Dist. 34, South Kingstown, Narragansett) is sponsoring pro-consumer legislation ([2018-H 7700](#)) to prohibit gag clauses in pharmacy benefit manager contracts that prohibit pharmacists from telling consumers about cheaper

ways to purchase prescriptions or more effective alternatives. Sen. V. Susan Sosnowski (D-Dist. 37, South Kingstown, New Shoreham) is sponsoring the bill ([2018-S 2406](#)) in the Senate.

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- **Sen. Goodwin, Rep. Blazejewski bill would strengthen home care options**
Senate Majority Whip Maryellen Goodwin (D-Dist. 1, Providence) and House Deputy Majority Whip Christopher R. Blazejewski (D-Dist. 2, Providence) are sponsoring legislation ([2018-S 2734](#), [2018-H 7803](#)) to provide more options for home-based long-term care services, enhance access to them and establish standards to assure their high quality. The bill, which is supported by a broad coalition of advocacy groups, would establish an “independent provider” option, a successful home care model in several other states including Massachusetts.
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- **Rep. Slater bill would allow school nurses to administer medical marijuana**
Rep. Scott A. Slater (D-Dist. 10, Providence) has introduced legislation ([2018-H 8011](#)) that would allow school nurses to administer nonsmokeable medical marijuana products to students with a medical marijuana prescription on school grounds. The legislation would be particularly helpful to children who suffer from extreme seizures in which medical marijuana products have shown to have great beneficial effects.
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