

June 8, 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>



- **House Finance Committee poised to consider state budget bill**
The House Finance Committee was slated to vote late Friday on the state's \$9.3 billion budget for the fiscal year that begins July 1. A vote by the entire House of Representatives is expected next week, followed by consideration by the Senate.

- **Governor signs legislation banning advertising of junk food in schools**
A bill sponsored by Sen. V. Susan Sosnowski (D-Dist. 37, South Kingstown, New Shoreham) and Rep. Joseph M. McNamara (D-Dist. 19, Warwick, Cranston) that forbids the advertising of unhealthy foods to children in schools has been signed into law by Gov. Gina Raimondo. The law ([2018-S 2350A](#), [2018-H 7419A](#)), which takes effect immediately, prohibits 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 the minimum nutrition standards.
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- **Mattiello, Gallo bill to improve safety in public schools becomes law**
Gov. Gina Raimondo signed legislation introduced by Speaker of the House Nicholas A. Mattiello (D-Dist. 15, Cranston) and Sen. Hanna M. Gallo (D-Dist. 27, Cranston, West Warwick) to examine the safety of Rhode Island's schools and to ensure that school safety plans are adopted in each school department. The measure ([2018-H 7694A](#), [2018-S 2639A](#)) codifies the existence of the Rhode Island School Safety Committee into state law, and requires that school districts provide the committee with safety assessments every three years for review and recommendations.
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More...

- **Revenge porn and sextortion legislation signed into law by governor**
Rep. Robert E. Craven (D-Dist. 32, North Kingstown) and Sen. Erin Lynch Prata's (D-Dist. 31, Warwick, Cranston) legislation ([2018-H 7452A](#), [2018-S 2581A](#)) that criminalizes revenge porn and sextortion was signed into law. The statute applies to those who knew that the image was created under circumstances where a reasonable person would know or understand that the image is to remain private. The legislation also creates criminal penalties for those who engage in "sextortion," a cybercrime that occurs when offenders use personal images — often stolen or obtained by hacking — to force victims to engage in sending more sexually explicit photos or videos under threat the images will be made public.
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- **Senate OKs Archambault bill to curb surprise medical billing**
The Senate passed legislation ([2018-S 2077Aaa](#)) introduced by Sen. Stephen R. Archambault (D-Dist. 22, Smithfield, North Providence, Johnston) that would change the way out-of-network health care professionals are paid after rendering services to patients who didn't have the opportunity to select such health care services from in-network professionals, curbing surprise medical billing. The measure now moves to the House of Representatives for consideration.
[Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Senate passes bills to protect individual health insurance costs, quality**
The Senate passed two measures sponsored by Senate Health and Human Services Committee Chairman Joshua Miller (D-Dist. 28, Cranston, Providence) to protect consumers who purchase their health insurance in the individual market. The first bill ([2018-S 2934](#)), the Rhode Island Market Stability and Reinsurance Act, is meant to help stabilize health insurance rates and premiums in the individual market and to provide greater financial certainty to consumers. The other bill ([2018-S 2931](#)) would require short-term limited duration health insurance policies to comply with consumer protection standards that apply to all plans in the individual market.
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- **House approves Kennedy bill on rights of life insurance policyholders**
The House of Representatives passed legislation ([2018-H 7124](#)) introduced by Rep. Brian Patrick Kennedy (D-Dist. 38, Hopkinton, Westerly) that would keep life insurance policyholders informed of their rights and alternatives when they decide to let a policy lapse. The measure now moves to the Senate, where similar legislation ([2018-S 2048](#)) has been introduced by Sen. Roger A. Picard (D-Dist. 20, Woonsocket, Cumberland).
[Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Senate OKs McCaffrey bill to allow fentanyl test strips to curb overdose deaths**
The Senate passed legislation ([2018-S 2896](#)) introduced by Majority Leader Michael J. McCaffrey (D-Dist. 29, Warwick) to codify the legality of fentanyl testing strips. Fentanyl is a powerful opioid that is the leading driver of overdose deaths in Rhode Island. The measure now moves to the House of Representatives, where similar legislation ([2018-H 8132](#)) has been introduced by Rep. Aaron Regunberg (D-Dist. 4, Providence).
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- **Kazarian bill to safeguard access to contraception in R.I. passes House**
Rep. Katherine S. Kazarian's (D-Dist. 63, East Providence) legislation ([2018-H 7625A](#)) that would require health insurance plans to provide coverage for a 12-month supply of birth control to all those who are insured was passed by the House of Representatives. If passed by the Senate, health care providers would be able to prescribe birth control up to a full year at a time and health insurance providers would be unable to restrict reimbursement for dispensing a covered prescription contraceptive.
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- **Sexual harassment bills introduced, heard in House**
The House Labor Committee held a hearing on eight bills to address sexual harassment in the workplace introduced by members of the House commission studying sexual harassment laws, led by Rep. Teresa Tanzi (D-Dist. 34, South Kingstown, Narragansett).
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