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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>



- **Senate passes Sosnowski bill to address mental health of college students**
The Senate has approved legislation introduced by Sen. V. Susan Sosnowski (D-Dist. 37, South Kingstown, New Shoreham), that would require each public institution of postsecondary education to establish a plan for addressing the mental health needs of its students. The bill ([2018-S 2346](#)) would require each institution to develop policies aimed at identifying a student exhibiting suicidal behavior or tendencies. The measure now moves to the House of Representatives for consideration.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **House creates panel to study workplace sexual harassment laws**
The House approved a new legislative study commission tasked with reviewing existing state laws and recent federal policy recommendations meant to protect individuals against sexual harassment in the workplace. The bill ([2018-H 7678](#)), sponsored by Rep. Teresa Tanzi (D-Dist. 34, South Kingstown, Narragansett), is a response to the national public discussion about the prevalence of sexual harassment prompted by the #metoo movement.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate passes Ruggerio bill to facilitate I-195 project**
The Rhode Island Senate passed legislation to alter the boundaries of a parcel within the I-195 Redevelopment District. The change is necessary in order for a potential construction project to move forward. President of the Senate Dominick J. Ruggerio (D – Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) sponsored the legislation ([2018 S-2556](#)) which passed the Senate unanimously. The measure now moves to the House.
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More...

- **Sen. Crowley's bill that raises jurors' pay passes Senate**
The Rhode Island Senate has passed Sen. Elizabeth A. Crowley's legislation ([2018-S 2153](#)) that raises the pay jurors receive for serving in the Rhode Island Superior Court. The legislation raises the jurors' daily pay while serving in the Superior Court from \$15 per day to \$25 per day starting on July 1, 2019. The pay would then increase to \$35 per day commencing on July 1, 2020. The measure now moves to the House, where Rep. Shelby Maldonado (D-Dist. 56, Central Falls) has introduced similar legislation ([2018-H 7404](#)).
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Speaker Mattiello, Sen. Gallo bill would improve safety at public schools**
Speaker of the House Nicholas A. Mattiello (D-Dist. 15, Cranston) and Sen. Hanna M. Gallo (D-Dist. 27, Cranston, West Warwick) have introduced legislation to examine the safety of Rhode Island's schools and to ensure that safety plans are adopted in each school department. To ensure that the assessments are being completed in a timely fashion, the bill ([2018-H 7694](#), [2018-S 2639](#)) would require that school districts provide the safety assessments to the Rhode Island School Safety Committee every three years for review and recommendations.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. McNamara, Sen. Felag announce R.I. Livable Home Modification Act**
Rep. Joseph M. McNamara (D-Dist. 19, Warwick, Cranston) and Sen. Walter S. Felag Jr. (D-Dist. 10, Bristol, Tiverton, Warren) joined with representatives of AARP Rhode Island at a press conference to announce the introduction of the Rhode Island Livable Home Modification Grant Act. The legislation ([2018-H 7880](#), [2018-S 2554](#)) would allow eligible homeowners and renters to retrofit their residence to nationally recognized accessibility standards and receive 50 percent of the total sum spent, up to \$5,000, to retrofit their existing residence.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Maldonado, Sen. McCaffrey bill would protect DACA Dreamers**
Rep. Shelby Maldonado (D-Dist. 56, Central Falls) and Senate Majority Leader Michael J. McCaffrey (D-Dist. 29, Warwick) have introduced legislation that would continue to protect undocumented immigrants who came to the United States as minors. The legislation ([2018-H 7982](#), [2018-S 2678](#)) would continue the status quo relating to operator and chauffeur's licenses and limited work authorization to approved recipients under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Sen. Algieri again introduces '911 account' legislation**
Senate Minority Leader Dennis L. Algieri, (R-Dist. 38, Westerly, Charlestown, South Kingstown), has again introduced legislation ([2018-S 2197](#)) that would create a restricted receipt account for all 911 funds collected by telephone service providers for both landline and cell phones. The bill includes a caveat that would empower the Public Utilities Commission to reduce 911 fees should the amount collected exceed the amount they need to fund 911 services. Similar legislation ([2018-H 7289](#)) has been introduced in the House by Rep. Robert B. Lancia (R-Dist. 16, Cranston).
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- **Bill would ban death-in-prison sentences for children**

Sen. Harold M. Metts (D-Dist. 6, Providence) and Rep. Marcia Ranglin-Vassell (D-Dist. 5, Providence) have introduced legislation ([2018-S 2272](#), [2018-H 7596](#)) to enable those serving lengthy sentences for crimes they committed as juveniles to be eligible for parole after serving 15 years, effectively eliminating life without parole for juvenile offenders and ensuring the state complies with recent U.S. Supreme Court rulings.

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- **Rep. Winfield proposes bill on fraudulent service animals**

Rep. Thomas Winfield (D-Dist. 53, Smithfield, Gloucester) has introduced legislation ([2018-H 7612](#)) meant to prevent the misrepresentation of pets as service animals.

Representative Winfield said he introduced the legislation at the request of the restaurant and hospitality industry, which often grapples with health codes that ban animals from their premises and pet owners who try to skirt those codes by claiming their pet is a service animal. The bill ([2018-S 2432](#)) is being sponsored in the Senate by Sen. Roger A. Picard (D-Dist. 20, Woonsocket, Cumberland).

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-30-

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