

State of Rhode Island

JOURNAL

-OF THE-

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY SESSION of the General Assembly begun and held at the State House in the City of Providence on Tuesday, the Second Day of January in the year of Our Lord Two Thousand and Twenty-Four.

Volume 151, No. 22

Tuesday, March 26, 2024

Twenty second-Day

The House of Representatives meets at the State House in Providence on Tuesday, March 26, 2024, and is called to order at 4:14 o'clock P.M. by the Honorable K. Joseph Shekarchi, Speaker.

The roll is called and a quorum is declared present with 69 members present and 6 members absent as follows:

PRESENT – 69: The Honorable Speaker Shekarchi and Representatives Abney, Ackerman, Ajello, Alzate, Azzinaro, Baginski, Batista, Bennett, Biah, Blazejewski, Boylan, Brien, Caldwell, Cardillo, Carson, Casey, Casimiro, Chippendale, Cortvriend, Corvese, Costantino, Cotter, Cruz, Dawson, DeSimone, Diaz, Donovan, Edwards, Felix, Fellela, Fenton-Fung, Finkelman, Fogarty, Giraldo, Handy, Hull, Kazarian, Kennedy, Kislak, Knight, Lima, Lombardi, Marszalkowski, McEntee, McGaw, McNamara, Messier, Morales, Nardone, Newberry, Noret, O'Brien, Perez, Phillips, Place, Potter, Rea, Roberts, Sanchez, Shallcross Smith, Shanley, Slater, Solomon, Speakman, Spears, Stewart, Vella-Wilkinson and Voas.

ABSENT – 6: Representatives Craven, Henries, Morgan, Quattrocchi, Serpa and Tanzi.

INVOCATION

The Honorable Speaker presents Representative Deborah A. Fellela who delivers the Invocation and leads the membership in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

(For Invocation, see Appendix, this Journal.)

APPROVAL OF RECORD

By unanimous consent, the House Journal of Thursday, March 21, 2024, is approved.

COMMUNICATIONS

Representative Brianna E. Henries is unable to attend session today, Tuesday, March 26, 2024.
Representative Robert E. Craven, Sr. is unable to attend session today, Tuesday, March 26, 2024.

CALENDAR

From the Calendar are taken:

IN ORDER FOR TUESDAY, MARCH 26, 2024:

- 1. 2024-H 7509**
BY Finkelman
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO COMMERCIAL LAW--GENERAL
REGULATORY PROVISIONS -- UNFAIR SALES PRACTICES

Committee on Corporations recommends passage.

Chairman Solomon moves passage of the act, seconded by Majority Leader Blazejewski, Representatives Phillips, Finkelman, Morales, Deputy Majority Whip Ackerman, Representative McEntee and Majority Whip Kazarian.

Chairman Solomon discusses the act.

Read and passed, on a roll call vote, 68 members voting in the affirmative and 0 members voting in the negative as follows:

YEAS - 68: The Honorable Speaker Shekarchi and Representatives Abney, Ackerman, Ajello, Alzate, Azzinaro, Baginski, Batista, Bennett, Blazejewski, Boylan, Brien, Caldwell, Cardillo, Carson, Casey, Casimiro, Chippendale, Cortvriend, Corvese, Costantino, Cotter, Cruz, Dawson, DeSimone, Diaz, Donovan, Edwards, Felix, Fellela, Fenton-Fung, Finkelman, Fogarty, Giraldo, Handy, Hull, Kazarian, Kennedy, Kislak, Knight, Lima, Lombardi, Marszalkowski, McEntee, McGaw, McNamara, Messier, Morales, Nardone, Newberry, Noret, O'Brien, Perez, Phillips, Place, Potter, Rea, Roberts, Sanchez, Shallcross Smith, Shanley, Slater, Solomon, Speakman, Spears, Stewart, Vella-Wilkinson, Voas.

NAYS - 0:

RECUSED - 0:

- 2. 2024-H 7513 SUB A**
BY McNamara
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- CURRICULUM

Committee on Education recommends indefinite postponement of the original bill and passage of Substitute A.

Chairman McNamara moves passage of the act, seconded by Majority Leader Blazejewski, Deputy Majority Whip Ackerman, Representatives Bennett, Phillips and Voas.

Chairman McNamara and Representative Sanchez discuss the act.

The bill marked Substitute "A" is read and passed, and the original bill indefinitely postponed, on a roll call vote, 68 members voting in the affirmative and 1 member voting in the negative as follows:

YEAS - 68: The Honorable Speaker Shekarchi and Representatives Abney, Ackerman, Ajello, Alzate, Azzinaro, Baginski, Batista, Bennett, Biah, Blazejewski, Boylan, Brien, Caldwell, Cardillo, Carson, Casey, Casimiro, Chippendale, Cortvriend, Corvese, Costantino, Cotter, Cruz, Dawson, DeSimone, Diaz, Donovan, Edwards, Felix, Fellela, Fenton-Fung, Finkelman, Fogarty, Giraldo, Handy, Hull, Kazarian, Kennedy, Kislak, Knight, Lima, Lombardi, Marszalkowski, McEntee, McGaw, McNamara, Messier, Morales, Nardone, Newberry, Noret, O'Brien, Perez, Phillips, Place, Potter, Rea, Roberts, Shallcross Smith, Shanley, Slater, Solomon, Speakman, Spears, Stewart, Vella-Wilkinson, Voas.

NAYS - 1: Representative Sanchez.

RECUSED - 0:

3. 2024-H 7559

BY Voas

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- DISTRICT CHARTER SCHOOL

Committee on Education recommends passage.

Chairman McNamara moves passage of the act, seconded by Majority Leader Blazejewski, Floor Manager Edwards, Representatives Voas and Carson.

Chairman McNamara and Representative Sanchez discuss the act.

Read and passed, on a roll call vote, 67 members voting in the affirmative and 1 member voting in the negative as follows:

YEAS - 67: The Honorable Speaker Shekarchi and Representatives Abney, Ackerman, Ajello, Alzate, Azzinaro, Baginski, Batista, Bennett, Biah, Blazejewski, Boylan, Brien, Caldwell, Cardillo, Carson, Casey, Casimiro, Chippendale, Cortvriend, Corvese, Costantino, Cotter, Cruz, Dawson, DeSimone, Diaz, Donovan, Edwards, Felix, Fellela, Finkelman, Fogarty, Giraldo, Handy, Hull, Kazarian, Kennedy, Kislak, Knight, Lima, Lombardi, Marszalkowski, McEntee, McGaw, McNamara, Messier, Morales, Nardone, Newberry, Noret, O'Brien, Perez, Phillips, Place, Potter, Rea, Roberts, Shallcross Smith, Shanley, Slater, Solomon, Speakman, Spears, Stewart, Vella-Wilkinson, Voas.

NAYS - 1: Representative Sanchez.

RECUSED - 0:

4. 2024-H 7560**BY** McNamara**ENTITLED**, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- SHEILA C. "SKIP" NOWELL
ACADEMY

Committee on Education recommends passage.

Chairman McNamara moves passage of the act, seconded by Majority Leader Blazejewski, Representatives Lima, Biah, Abney, Donovan, Speakman, Carson, Caldwell, Morales, McEntee, Shallcross Smith, Fogarty, Cortvriend, Phillips, Bennett, Floor Manager Edwards, Deputy Majority Whip Ackerman, Representatives Kislak, Felix, Giraldo, Voas, Casimiro, Majority Whip Kazarian, Representatives Alzate, Cruz, Boylan, Finkelman and Deputy Speaker Hull.

Chairman McNamara, Representatives Alzate, O'Brien, Knight and Cruz discuss the act.

Read and passed, on a roll call vote, 69 members voting in the affirmative and 0 members voting in the negative as follows:

YEAS - 69: The Honorable Speaker Shekarchi and Representatives Abney, Ackerman, Ajello, Alzate, Azzinaro, Baginski, Batista, Bennett, Biah, Blazejewski, Boylan, Brien, Caldwell, Cardillo, Carson, Casey, Casimiro, Chippendale, Cortvriend, Corvese, Costantino, Cotter, Cruz, Dawson, DeSimone, Diaz, Donovan, Edwards, Felix, Fellela, Fenton-Fung, Finkelman, Fogarty, Giraldo, Handy, Hull, Kazarian, Kennedy, Kislak, Knight, Lima, Lombardi, Marszalkowski, McEntee, McGaw, McNamara, Messier, Morales, Nardone, Newberry, Noret, O'Brien, Perez, Phillips, Place, Potter, Rea, Roberts, Sanchez, Shallcross Smith, Shanley, Slater, Solomon, Speakman, Spears, Stewart, Vella-Wilkinson, Voas.

NAYS - 0:

RECUSED - 0:

5. 2024-H 7440**BY** Boylan**ENTITLED**, AN ACT RELATING TO FISH AND WILDLIFE -- LOBSTERS AND
OTHER CRUSTACEANS

Committee on Environment and Natural Resources recommends passage.

Chairman Bennett moves passage of the act, seconded by Majority Leader Blazejewski, Representatives Carson, Cotter, Spears, Donovan, Speakman, McGaw, McEntee, Cortvriend, Phillips, Majority Whip Kazarian and Representative Boylan.

Chairman Bennett discusses the act.

Read and passed, on a roll call vote, 69 members voting in the affirmative and 0 members voting in the negative as follows:

YEAS - 69: The Honorable Speaker Shekarchi and Representatives Abney, Ackerman, Ajello, Alzate, Azzinaro, Baginski, Batista, Bennett, Biah, Blazejewski, Boylan, Brien, Caldwell, Cardillo, Carson, Casey, Casimiro, Chippendale, Cortvriend, Corvese, Costantino, Cotter, Cruz, Dawson, DeSimone, Diaz, Donovan, Edwards, Felix, Fellela, Fenton-Fung, Finkelman, Fogarty, Giraldo, Handy, Hull, Kazarian, Kennedy, Kislak, Knight, Lima, Lombardi, Marszalkowski, McEntee, McGaw, McNamara, Messier, Morales, Nardone, Newberry, Noret, O'Brien, Perez, Phillips, Place, Potter, Rea, Roberts, Sanchez, Shallcross Smith, Shanley, Slater, Solomon, Speakman, Spears, Stewart, Vella-Wilkinson, Voas.

NAYS - 0:

RECUSED - 0:

By unanimous consent, the House returns to:

GUESTS

Speaker Shekarchi announces that Rhode Island Attorney General Peter F. Neronha is in the House Chamber and requests that members extend a warm welcome. Attorney General Neronha is here today to provide testimony on a House Bill of significant importance.

Representative Caldwell extends a warm welcome to Jerry Zarrella Jr., along with his wife Jessica and their son Leonidas, to the House Chamber. Representative Caldwell congratulates and celebrates Jerry's remarkable achievement of winning three awards at the 2024 National Association of Homebuilders Best in Living awards ceremony. His dedication and excellence in his field are commendable, and his success is a testament to his hard work and talent.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Solomon announces that the Committee on Corporations will meet today, at the rise of the House, in Room 101 of the State House.

Chairman Casey extends his deepest sympathies to Representative Robert D. Phillips and his wife, Nancy, on the passing of her brother, Douglas Ottman. Speaker Shekarchi also expresses his heartfelt condolences to Representative Phillips, Nancy, and their family during this difficult time.

Chairman Corvese announces that the Committee on Labor will meet tomorrow at 4:00 p.m. in Room 101 of the State House.

Representative Phillips cordially invites all members to the Bell area of the State House for the Annual Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce Coalition's reception at the rise until 6:30 p.m.

Representative Lima and Speaker Shekarchi wish Representative Anthony DeSimone a Happy Birthday!

Chairwoman Vella-Wilkinson announces that the House Finance Subcommittee on Public Safety will meet today, at the rise of the House, in Room 35 of the State House.

Chairwoman Valla-Wilkinson would like to congratulate her grand-niece, Raina Archer, on being selected for the National Middle School Honor Society.

Representative Carson would like to invite all members to a reception to support the 250th Commission this Friday, March 29, 2024, in the State House Library from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Chairman Casey announced that he was honored to represent the House of Representatives in a ceremony honoring 32 High School Hockey Players who were presented the Hobey Baker High School Character Award. For those who want to watch the ceremony, it can be viewed on the Capitol Television website.

Chairwoman Vella-Wilkinson cordially invites all members to attend a special event commemorating Women's History Month on Thursday, March 28, 2024, at 3:00 p.m. The event guest speaker, Kali Reis, is a member of the Seaconke Wampanoag Tribe and will focus on raising awareness about domestic violence.

Chairwoman Donovan announces that the Committee on Health & Human Services will meet today, at the rise of the House, in Room 135 of the State House.

Majority Leader Blazejewski announces that the next House session will be held this Thursday, March 28, 2024.

IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION

House Resolution No. 8100

BY Alzate, Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Chippendale, Stewart, Cruz, Felix, Shallcross Smith, Ajello, Messier

ENTITLED, HOUSE RESOLUTION CELEBRATING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE GLORIA GEMMA BREAST CANCER RESOURCE FOUNDATION ON JULY 15, 2004 {LC5738/1}

With the agreement of the majority and the minority, Chairwoman Alzate requests unanimous consent for immediate consideration.

There is no objection.

Chairwoman Alzate discusses the resolution.

Read and passed, on a motion of Chairwoman Alzate, seconded by many others, by unanimous consent, on a voice vote.

House Resolution No. 8101

BY Caldwell, Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Shanley, Speakman, Fenton-Fung, Ajello, Fogarty, Ackerman, McGaw

ENTITLED, HOUSE RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING JERRY ZARRELLA JR. ON WINNING THREE AWARDS FROM THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HOMEBUILDERS AT THE PRESTIGIOUS 2024 BEST IN AMERICAN LIVING (BALA) AWARDS CEREMONY {LC5797/1}

With the agreement of the majority and the minority, Representative Caldwell requests unanimous consent for immediate consideration.

There is no objection.

Chairman Caldwell and Speaker Shekarchi discuss the resolution.

Read and passed, on a motion of Caldwell, seconded by many others, by unanimous consent, on a voice vote.

RULE 7D

The following bills were received pursuant to Rule 7D:

Representative Chippendale-An Act relating to Corporations–Limited Liability Company Act
Representative Cortvriend-An Act relating to Motor and Other Vehicles–Low-Speed Vehicles
Representative Cotter-An Act relating to Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals
Representative Kazarian-An Act relating to Elections-Campaigns and Election

By unanimous consent, the House returns to:

TRANSMITTAL

By unanimous consent, all matters on the clerk's desk are ordered to be transmitted to His Excellency, the Governor, to the Honorable Senate and the Honorable Secretary of State forthwith.

(For Transmittals to Governor, see Appendix of this Journal.)

DESK HELD OPEN

The Honorable Speaker Shekarchi announces that the desk will be held open.

NEW BUSINESS

House Bill No. 8102

BY Boylan, McNamara, Stewart, Donovan, Kislak, Carson, Cotter, Caldwell, Casimiro, Tanzi
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- SCHOOL EMERGENCY DRILLS ACT
(Makes revisions to the number, timing, and procedures to be followed when schools grades K through 12 implement fire drills, evacuation drills, and crisis response drills, designed to protect the health and safety of students.) {LC5108/1}
03/27/2024 Introduced, referred to House Education

House Bill No. 8103

(by request)

BY Cotter, Casimiro, Handy, McNamara

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION-- SCHOOL COMMITTEES AND SUPERINTENDENTS (Allows a school district to establish a school year that is the equivalent of one hundred eighty (180) days through the use of longer school days or a combination of longer school days and shorter days in which school is in session.) {LC5760/1}
03/27/2024 Introduced, referred to House Education

House Bill No. 8104

BY Cotter, Casimiro, Handy, McNamara, Speakman, Kislak, Spears

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- SCHOOL AND YOUTH PROGRAM CONCUSSION ACT (Authorizes the sport of skateboarding to be a youth sports program that is part of Rhode Island Interscholastic League Competition.) {LC5737/1}
03/27/2024 Introduced, referred to House Education

House Bill No. 8105

BY Place, Batista, Newberry, Craven, Sanchez, Felix, Lombardi J

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO FOOD AND DRUGS -- UNIFORM CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES ACT-- POWERS OF ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL -- CIVIL FORFEITURE PROCEDURE (Prohibits civil asset forfeiture regarding violations of the controlled substances laws until a criminal conviction is obtained.) {LC5781/1}
03/27/2024 Introduced, referred to House Judiciary

House Bill No. 8106

BY Corvese, O'Brien, Hull

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO THE NORTH PROVIDENCE CHARTER -- THE SALVATORE MANCINI CENTER ON AGING (Amends the charter of the Town of North Providence to create a new department entitled the "Salvatore Mancini Center on Aging.") {LC5743/1}
03/27/2024 Introduced, referred to House Municipal Government & Housing

House Bill No. 8107

(Board of Elections)

BY Shanley, Baginski

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO PUBLIC OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES -- MERIT SYSTEM (Creates separate and distinct employment positions and salaries under the unclassified pay plan for the board of elections employees.) {LC5574/1}

03/27/2024 Introduced, referred to House State Government & Elections

House Bill No. 8108

(Office of Postsecondary Commission)

BY McNamara, Azzinaro, Caldwell, Giraldo, Donovan, Potter, Handy, Fenton-Fung

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- RHODE ISLAND HOPE SCHOLARSHIP PILOT PROGRAM ACT {LC5761/1}

03/27/2024 Introduced, referred to House Finance

House Bill No. 8109

BY Slater, DeSimone, Perez, Batista, Diaz

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION -- STATEWIDE TANGIBLE PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION (Repeals the language that eff. 2025 fiscal year all cities/towns/fire districts would receive a reimbursement equal to the tangible property levy for the 12/31/22 assessment date less the tangible personal property levy for 12/31/25 assessment date.) {LC5783/1}

03/27/2024 Introduced, referred to House Finance

ADJOURNMENT

At 4:48 o'clock P.M. on motion of Representative Casey, and as a further mark of respect to the memory of Douglas Ottman seconded by Leaders Blazejewski and Chippendale the House adjourns, on a unanimous rising vote.

Diane M. DePina
Recording Clerk

APPENDIX

INVOCATION

REPRESENTATIVE DEBORAH A. FELLELA

Gracious God, we ask you today to give strength to all those anxiously waiting to hear about their loved ones still missing in Baltimore. Please also watch over all the first responders putting their own lives at risk, trying to find those still unaccounted for. Amen

APPENDIX

CALENDAR

IN ORDER FOR THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 2024:

1. 2024-H 7568

BY Noret

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES --
MISCELLANEOUS RULES

Committee on Judiciary recommends passage.

2. 2024-H 7432

BY Solomon

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO INSURANCE -- INSURERS' REHABILITATION
AND LIQUIDATION ACT

Committee on Corporations recommends passage.

3. 2024-H 7535

BY Ajello

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION -- PROPERTY SUBJECT TO
TAXATION

Committee on Municipal Government & Housing recommends passage.

4. 2024-H 7657

BY Costantino

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO ANIMALS AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY --
DOGS

Committee on Municipal Government & Housing recommends passage.

Francis McCabe
Clerk of the House

Friday, March 22, 2024