

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. 28

Tuesday, April 23, 2024

Twenty-eighth Day

The House of Representatives meets at the State House in Providence on Tuesday, April 23, 2024, and is called to order at 4:15 o'clock P.M. by the Honorable K. Joseph Shekarchi, Speaker.

The roll is called and a quorum is declared present with 70 members present and 5 members absent as follows:

PRESENT – 70: The Honorable Speaker Shekarchi and Representatives Abney, Ajello, Alzate, Azzinaro, Baginski, Batista, Bennett, Biah, Blazejewski, Boylan, Brien, Caldwell, Cardillo, Carson, Casey, Casimiro, Chippendale, Cortvriend, Corvese, Costantino, Cotter, Craven, Cruz, Dawson, DeSimone, Diaz, Donovan, Edwards, Fellela, Fenton-Fung, Finkelman, Fogarty, Giraldo, Handy, Hull, Kazarian, Kennedy, Knight, Lima, Lombardi, Marszalkowski, McEntee, McGaw, McNamara, Messier, Morales, Morgan, Nardone, Newberry, Noret, O'Brien, Perez, Phillips, Place, Potter, Quattrocchi, Rea, Roberts, Sanchez, Serpa, Shallcross Smith, Shanley, Slater, Solomon, Speakman, Spears, Stewart, Tanzi, and Voas.

ABSENT – 5: Representatives Ackerman, Felix, Henries, Kislak and Vella-Wilkinson.

INVOCATION

The Honorable Speaker presents Father Kapriel Nazarian of Saints Vartanantz Armenian Apostolic Church of Providence, who delivers the Invocation, Speaker Shekarchi 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, April 11, 2024, is approved.

COMMUNICATIONS

Representative Rebecca M. Kislak is unable to attend session today, Tuesday, April 23, 2024.
Representative Camille Vella-Wilkinson is unable to attend session today, Tuesday, April 23, 2024.
Representative Leonela Felix is unable to attend session today, Tuesday, April 23, 2024.

ADDRESS

Eduardo Ramos, Consul of Portugal to Providence, addresses the members in recognition of Portugal's 50th Anniversary as a Democracy.

GUESTS

Representatives Noret and Donovan extend a warm welcome to Eduardo Ramos, Consul of Portugal to Providence; Marcia Sousa Da Ponte, Council of Portuguese Communities; Daniel Da Ponte, former Rhode Island State Senator; Al Nunes, Chairman of the Board of Rhode Island Day of Portugal, Liliana Bolarinho, Vice President, Rhode Island Day of Portugal, Ana Isabel dos Reis-Couto, Immediate past President of Rhode Island Day of Portugal, and José Francisco Costa, Veteran of Portugal's Military. They are gathered in the House Chamber today to celebrate Portugal's 50th Anniversary of Transitioning to Democracy.

Speaker Shekarchi recognizes and welcomes Rhode Island Senate Minority Leader Jessica de la Cruz to the House Chamber.

ADDRESS

Majority Whip Kazarian addresses House members in recognition of Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day, a solemn occasion of great significance. To honor the memory of the estimated 1.5 million Armenians who perished in the mass killings and deportations of 1915 in Turkey, it is essential, as members of this esteemed House, that we acknowledge and remember this tragic chapter in history. By doing so, we not only pay tribute to the victims but also reaffirm our commitment to justice, human rights, and the prevention of such atrocities in the future.

GUESTS

Majority Whip Kazarian, in honor of Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day, welcomes to the House Chamber Father Kapriel Nazarian, Ani Haroian, Stephen Elmasian, Fotini Dionisopoulos, Joyce Avedisian, Martha Jamogichian, Garo Tashian, George Varky, Manoog Kapreilian, and her mother, Michele Kazarian. Speaker Shekarchi welcomes them and thanks them for coming to this important event.

CALENDAR

From the Calendar are taken:

IN ORDER FOR TUESDAY, APRIL 23, 2024:

Majority Leader Blazejewski moves item #5 to be placed on tomorrow's Calendar Wednesday, April 24, 2024. There is no objection.

- 5. 2024-H 7849**
BY Carson
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO ELECTIONS -- MAIL BALLOTS

Committee on State Government & Elections recommends passage.

Read and, by unanimous consent, placed on the Calendar for Wednesday, April 24, 2024.

- 1. 2024-H 8086**
BY Carson
ENTITLED, AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF NEWPORT TO ISSUE NOT TO EXCEED \$98,500,000 GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS AND NOTES TO FINANCE THE DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION, REPAIR, REHABILITATION, REPLACEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND MUNICIPAL FACILITIES IN THE CITY'S NEIGHBORHOODS, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, LAND ACQUISITION, DEMOLITION, LANDFILL REMEDIATION, STREETS, SIDEWALKS, PUBLIC PARKS, BRIDGES, SEWERS, DRAINAGE, CITY BUILDINGS, AND RECREATION, BEACH AND HARBOR FACILITIES

Committee on Municipal Government & Housing recommends passage.

Chairman Casey moves passage of the act, seconded by Majority Leader Blazejewski, Representatives Abney, Carson and Fogarty.

Chairman Casey discusses the act.

Read and passed, on a roll call vote, 70 members voting in the affirmative and 0 members voting in the negative as follows:

YEAS - 70: The Honorable Speaker Shekarchi and Representatives Abney, Ajello, Alzate, Azzinaro, Baginski, Batista, Bennett, Biah, Blazejewski, Boylan, Brien, Caldwell, Cardillo, Carson, Casey, Casimiro, Chippendale, Cortvriend, Corvese, Costantino, Cotter, Craven, Cruz, Dawson, DeSimone, Diaz, Donovan, Edwards, Fellela, Fenton-Fung, Finkelman, Fogarty, Giraldo, Handy, Hull, Kazarian, Kennedy, Knight, Lima, Lombardi, Marszalkowski, McEntee, McGaw, McNamara, Messier, Morales, Morgan, Nardone, Newberry, Noret, O'Brien, Perez, Phillips, Place, Potter, Quattrocchi, Rea, Roberts, Sanchez, Serpa, Shallcross Smith, Shanley, Slater, Solomon, Speakman, Spears, Stewart, Tanzi, Voas.

NAYS - 0:

RECUSED - 0:

- 2. 2024-H 8060**
BY Kennedy
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO ANIMALS AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY -- DOGS

Committee on Municipal Government & Housing recommends passage.

Chairman Casey moves passage of the act, seconded by Majority Leader Blazejewski, Speaker Pro Tempore Kennedy and Floor Manager Edwards.

Chairman Casey 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, Ajello, Alzate, Azzinaro, Baginski, Batista, Bennett, Biah, Blazejewski, Boylan, Brien, Caldwell, Cardillo, Carson, Casey, Casimiro, Chippendale, Cortvriend, Corvese, Cotter, Craven, Cruz, Dawson, DeSimone, Diaz, Donovan, Edwards, Fellela, Fenton-Fung, Finkelman, Fogarty, Giraldo, Handy, Hull, Kazarian, Kennedy, Knight, Lima, Lombardi, Marszalkowski, McEntee, McGaw, McNamara, Messier, Morales, Morgan, Nardone, Newberry, Noret, O'Brien, Perez, Phillips, Place, Potter, Quattrocchi, Rea, Roberts, Sanchez, Serpa, Shallcross Smith, Shanley, Slater, Solomon, Speakman, Spears, Stewart, Tanzi, Voas.

NAYS - 0:

RECUSED - 0:

- 3. 2024-H 8106**
BY Corvese
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO THE NORTH PROVIDENCE CHARTER -- THE SALVATORE MANCINI CENTER ON AGING

Committee on Municipal Government & Housing recommends passage.

Chairman Casey moves passage of the act, seconded by Majority Leader Blazejewski, Representatives Corvese, Phillips and Cruz.

Chairman Casey discusses the act.

Read and passed, on a roll call vote, 70 members voting in the affirmative and 0 members voting in the negative as follows:

YEAS - 70: The Honorable Speaker Shekarchi and Representatives Abney, Ajello, Alzate, Azzinaro, Baginski, Batista, Bennett, Biah, Blazejewski, Boylan, Brien, Caldwell, Cardillo, Carson, Casey, Casimiro, Chippendale, Cortvriend, Corvese, Costantino, Cotter, Craven, Cruz, Dawson, DeSimone, Diaz, Donovan, Edwards, Fellela, Fenton-Fung, Finkelman, Fogarty, Giraldo, Handy, Hull, Kazarian, Kennedy, Knight, Lima, Lombardi, Marszalkowski, McEntee, McGaw, McNamara, Messier, Morales, Morgan, Nardone, Newberry, Noret, O'Brien, Perez, Phillips, Place, Potter, Quattrocchi, Rea, Roberts, Sanchez, Serpa, Shallcross Smith, Shanley, Slater, Solomon, Speakman, Spears, Stewart, Tanzi, Voas.

NAYS - 0:

RECUSED - 0:

4. 2024-H 7662

BY Serpa

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO ELECTIONS -- REGISTRATION OF VOTERS

Committee on State Government & Elections recommends passage.

Chairman Shanley moves passage of the act, seconded by Representatives Abney, Ajello, Bennett, Biah, Blazejewski, Brien, Cardillo, Carson, Casimiro, Cortvriend, Corvese, Costantino, Cotter, Craven, Cruz, Dawson, DeSimone, Diaz, Donovan, Edwards, Fellela, Fenton-Fung, Finkelman, Fogarty, Giraldo, Hull, Kazarian, Lima, Lombardi, McEntee, McGaw, McNamara, Messier, Noret, Phillips, Serpa, Shallcross Smith, Voas.

Chairman Shanley and Representative Brien discuss the act.

Read and passed, on a roll call vote, 70 members voting in the affirmative and 0 members voting in the negative as follows:

YEAS - 70: The Honorable Speaker Shekarchi and Representatives Abney, Ajello, Alzate, Azzinaro, Baginski, Batista, Bennett, Biah, Blazejewski, Boylan, Brien, Caldwell, Cardillo, Carson, Casey, Casimiro, Chippendale, Cortvriend, Corvese, Costantino, Cotter, Craven, Cruz, Dawson, DeSimone, Diaz, Donovan, Edwards, Fellela, Fenton-Fung, Finkelman, Fogarty, Giraldo, Handy, Hull, Kazarian, Kennedy, Knight, Lima, Lombardi, Marszalkowski, McEntee, McGaw, McNamara, Messier, Morales, Morgan, Nardone, Newberry, Noret, O'Brien, Perez, Phillips, Place, Potter, Quattrocchi, Rea, Roberts, Sanchez, Serpa, Shallcross Smith, Shanley, Slater, Solomon, Speakman, Spears, Stewart, Tanzi, Voas.

NAYS - 0:

RECUSED - 0:

By unanimous consent, the House returns to:

GUESTS

Chairman Casey welcomes and extends his heartfelt congratulations to Robert Batchelor on his retirement after an impressive 54 years of service to the Rhode Island Society of Certified Public Accountants; also in attendance are his beloved wife, Ruth, and their three children, Lynee Seidenberg, Lauren Cayer, and John Batchelor, Ned McCrory, member of PKF O'Connor Davies, LLP, and Melissa Travis, President and CEO of the RI Society of Certified Public Accountants/RI Business Forum to the House Chamber. Speaker Shekarchi congratulates Robert on his retirement and welcomes his guest to the House Chamber.

NOW PRESIDING

At 4:43 o'clock P.M., the Honorable Speaker Shekarchi yields the rostrum to the Honorable Deputy Speaker Hull.

By unanimous consent, the House returns to:

GUESTS

Representative Sanchez welcomes to the House Chamber and commends Fatima Tobar, a SNAP Nutrition Educator at the University of Rhode Island, for her hard work. He introduces his intern, Nathan Tovas, who will assist him during the 2024 legislative session.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Representative Fellela wishes her son Kyle a Happy Birthday! Deputy Speaker Hull wishes Kyle a Happy Birthday.

Chairman Casey announces that the Committee on Municipal Government & Housing will meet today, at the rise of the House, in the House Lounge of the State House.

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

Chairwoman Diaz reminds all members that tomorrow is National Administrative Professionals' Day.

Chairman Abney announces that the Committee on Finance will meet today, at the rise of the House, in Room 35 of the State House.

Majority Leader Blazejewski announces that the next House session will be held tomorrow, April 24, 2024, at 4:00 p.m. Members are reminded to arrive at 3:50 p.m. to take the House of Representative Class photo. There will be no session this Thursday, April 25, 2024. He reminds all the members that today is the deadline to return all Legislative Priorities Forms. The annual Financial Disclosure Statement must be submitted to the Ethics Commission by Friday, April 26, 2024.

IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION**House Resolution No. 8184**

BY McEntee, Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Chippendale, Morales, Caldwell, Craven, Dawson, O'Brien, Finkelman

ENTITLED, HOUSE RESOLUTION COMMEMORATING "NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMS' WEEK" ON APRIL 21ST THROUGH APRIL 27TH, 2024, IN THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND {LC5770/1}

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

There is no objection.

Chairwoman McEntee discusses the resolution.

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

House Resolution No. 8185

BY McNamara, Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Chippendale, Tanzi, Potter, Ajello, Shallcross Smith, Voas, Boylan

ENTITLED, HOUSE RESOLUTION COMMEMORATING "NATIONAL INFERTILITY AWARENESS WEEK

With the agreement of the majority and the minority, Chairman McNamara requests unanimous consent for immediate consideration.

There is no objection.

Chairman McNamara discusses the resolution.

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

House Resolution No. 8186

BY Azzinaro, Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Chippendale, Kennedy, Costantino, Ajello, Shallcross Smith, Voas, Boylan

ENTITLED, HOUSE RESOLUTION EXPRESSING CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF WALTER R. BIENIEKI {LC6002/1}

With the agreement of the majority and the minority, Chairman Azzinaro requests unanimous consent for immediate consideration.

There is no objection.

Chairman Azzinaro discusses the resolution.

Read and passed, on a motion of Chairman Azzinaro, seconded by many others, by unanimous consent, on a rising vote.

House Resolution No. 8187

BY Casey, Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Chippendale, Caldwell, Finkelman, Solomon, Costantino, Edwards, Ajello

ENTITLED, HOUSE RESOLUTION HONORING ROBERT L. G. BATCHELOR, CPA, ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT {LC5654/1}

With the agreement of the majority and the minority, Chairman Casey requests unanimous consent for immediate consideration.

There is no objection.

Chairman Casey and Speaker Shekarchi discuss the resolution.

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

House Resolution No. 8188

BY Kazarian, Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Corvese, Chippendale, Fenton-Fung, Baginski, Donovan, Ajello, Shallcross Smith

ENTITLED, HOUSE RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING APRIL 24, 2024, AS "ARMENIAN GENOCIDE REMEMBRANCE DAY" TO COMMEMORATE THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE OF 1915 TO 1923, AND IN HONOR OF ARMENIAN-AMERICANS {LC4881/1}

With the agreement of the majority and the minority, Majority Whip Kazarian requests unanimous consent for immediate consideration.

There is no objection.

Majority Whip Kazarian and Speaker Shekarchi discuss the resolution.

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

House Resolution No. 8189

BY Noret, Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Craven, Donovan, Fellela, Solomon, Cruz, Kazarian, Chippendale

ENTITLED, HOUSE RESOLUTION CELEBRATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PORTUGUESE CARNATION REVOLUTION WHICH TRANSFORMED PORTUGAL INTO A DEMOCRATIC NATION {LC5890/1}

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

There is no objection.

Representatives Noret, Donovan and Speaker Shekarchi discuss the resolution.

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

RULE 7D

The following bills were received pursuant to Rule 7D:

- Representative Dawson-An Act relating to Health and Safety - Licensing of Healthcare Facilities
An Act relating to Public Utilities and Carriers - Operation of Railroads
Generally
- Representative Diaz-An Act relating to Alcoholic Beverages-Licenses Generally
- Representative Donovan-An Act relating to Accident and Sickness-Insurance Policies
- Representative Fellela-An Act relating to Health and Safety Licensing of Healthcare Facilities
- Representative Lima-An Act relating to Municipal Water
- Representative Speakman-An Act relating to Towns and Cities-Indebtedness of Towns and Cities

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.

ADJOURNMENT

At 4:54 o’clock P.M. on motion of Representative Azzinaro, and as a further mark of respect to the memory of Walter R. Bienieki seconded by Leaders Blazejewski and Chippendale the House adjourns, on a unanimous rising vote.

**Diane M. DePina
Recording Clerk**

APPENDIX

INVOCATION

**FATHER KAPRIEL NAZARIAN
SAINT VARTANANTZ ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH**

State House – House of Representatives

Opening Prayer

April 23, 2024

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen. Heavenly Father, as we gather together today at the gracious invitation of the members of the Rhode Island House of Representatives to commemorate the 109th anniversary of the start of the Armenian Genocide, we ask for your blessings on this assembly and all of its members and their staffs. Bless, O Lord, this assembly for being the first government body in the world to recognize the independence of Nagorno-Karabagh / Artsakh in 2012, leading to government bodies throughout the country and the around the world following their righteous lead.

As the Genocide that was begun 109 years ago continues to be perpetuated today, Azerbaijan with the support of Turkey, blockaded, starved, and finally brutally attacked our brothers and sisters last September, forcibly ~~removing~~ ^{deporting} the 120,000 remaining Christians from their ancestral land of Nagorno-Karabagh / Artsakh. And now, cultural Genocide is also taking place, as centuries old churches, monasteries, and monuments are being destroyed in an attempt to erase all evidence of our living on this land for close to three thousand years. The world and all its leaders, occupied by other events and concerns, were deafeningly silent as this Genocide continued and continues today, with their aggression now turning toward our sovereign nation of Armenia. We ask for your mercy, O Lord, and to touch the hearts of this and all government bodies around the world to do their part, no matter how small it might seem, to hold accountable all who perpetuate the hatred that leads to Genocide and the suffering of so many innocent people.

Make each of us beacons of Your light who seek to always to please you. We pray, Lord, guide us all, and especially all the members of this ~~Senate~~ ^{House}, that they might lead us in Your righteousness and truth. Fill our hearts with the desire to defend the sanctity of life in all situations. We ask this in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

APPENDIX**CALENDAR****IN ORDER FOR WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24, 2024:**

1. **2024-H 7849**
BY Carson
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO ELECTIONS -- MAIL BALLOTS

Committee on State Government & Elections recommends passage.
2. **2024-H 7435**
BY Solomon
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO INSURANCE -- PET INSURANCE ACT

Committee on Corporations recommends passage.
3. **2024-H 7431 SUB A**
BY Speakman
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO PUBLIC UTILITIES AND CARRIERS -- NET METERING

Committee on Corporations recommends indefinite postponement of the original bill and passage of Substitute A.
4. **2024-H 8085**
BY Casimiro
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION -- PROPERTY SUBJECT TO TAXATION

Committee on Municipal Government & Housing recommends passage.
5. **2024-S 2092**
BY Sosnowski
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION -- PROPERTY SUBJECT TO TAXATION

Committee on Municipal Government & Housing recommends passage in concurrence.
6. **2024-S 2539**
BY Tikoian
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO ANIMALS AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY -- DOGS

Committee on Municipal Government & Housing recommends passage in concurrence.

7. **2024-S 2878**
BY Pearson
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- GENERAL POWERS

Committee on Municipal Government & Housing recommends passage in concurrence.

8. **2024-S 2881**
BY Pearson
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO ANIMALS AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY -- DOGS

Committee on Municipal Government & Housing recommends passage in concurrence.

Francis McCabe
Clerk of the House

Friday, April 19, 2024
Updated: Tuesday, April 23, 2024