

June 29, 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 late last week. For more information on any of these items visit

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- **Assembly approves legislation allowing public funding of PawSox stadium**  
The General Assembly passed enabling legislation to allow public support for a new baseball stadium in downtown Pawtucket. The stadium would be the future home of the Pawtucket Red Sox. The legislation ([2018-H 7290A](#)), sponsored by Rep. Mary Duffy Messier (D-Dist. 62, Pawtucket), allows the Pawtucket Redevelopment Agency to enter into lease and financing agreements in connection with a ballpark. The measure now moves to the governor's office.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Legislature adds electronic smoking, vaping to workplace smoking ban**  
The General Assembly passed legislation ([2018-S 2228Aaa](#), [2018-H 8357](#)) sponsored by Senate President Dominick J. Ruggiero (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) and Rep. Camille F.J. Vella-Wilkinson (D-Dist. 21, Warwick) adding the use of electronic tobacco delivery products and vaping to the activities prohibited by Rhode Island's workplace smoking ban. The bill, which will now go to the governor, takes effect July 1.  
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- **Assembly extends foreclosure mediation law**  
The General Assembly approved legislation sponsored by Sen. Harold M. Metts (D-Dist. 6, Providence) and Rep. Mary Duffy Messier (D-Dist. 62, Pawtucket) on behalf of Attorney General Peter F. Kilmartin to add five years to the life of an expiring law that keeps families in their homes and avoids foreclosure. The bill extends the law, which would have expired July 1, until 2023. The legislation ([2018-S 2270A](#), [2018-H](#)

More...

[7385A](#)) now goes to the governor.

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▪ **Assembly requires insurers to cover mastectomies**

Lawmakers approved legislation ([2018-H 7002A](#), [2018-S 2224](#)) sponsored by House Majority Leader K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick) and Sen. Hanna M. Gallo (D-Dist. 27, Cranston, West Warwick) to ensure that mastectomies are covered by insurance in Rhode Island.

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▪ **Legislators allow expungement for subsequently decriminalized crimes**

The General Assembly gave its approval to legislation sponsored by Sen. Harold M. Metts (D-Dist. 6, Providence) and Rep. Scott Slater (D-Dist. 10, Providence) to allow people to petition to expunge their criminal records for crimes that were subsequently decriminalized, such as possession of small amounts of marijuana. The legislation ([2018-S 2447](#), [2018-H 8355](#)) now goes to the governor.

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▪ **Lawmakers OK bill to provide new home-based care option**

Legislators approved legislation sponsored by Senate Majority Whip Maryellen Goodwin (D-Dist. 1, Providence) and Rep. Christopher R. Blazejewski (D-Dist. 2, Providence) to create a new long-term care option for seniors and people with disabilities. The legislation ([2018-S 2734Baa](#), [2018-H 7803Aaa](#)), which will now go to the governor, establishes an “independent provider” model of at-home care, which allows consumers to hire and manage caregivers of their choice while the state takes on responsibilities such as setting wages, qualification standards and hours.

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▪ **Assembly updates explosives laws to include IEDs**

The General Assembly approved legislation ([2018-H 8156A](#), [2018-S 2952](#)) sponsored by House Speaker Nicholas A. Mattiello (D-Dist. 15, Cranston) and Sen. Erin Lynch Prata (D-Dist. 31, Warwick, Cranston) to strengthen Rhode Island’s outdated law on bombs and other explosive devices. The legislation, which will now be sent to the governor, addresses loopholes that have hindered the filing of charges following incidents involving explosive devices.

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▪ **Legislature empowers patients to curb possibility of opioid addiction**

The General Assembly passed two pieces of legislation introduced by Speaker of the House Nicholas A. Mattiello (D-Dist. 15, Cranston) and Sen. Joshua Miller (D-Dist. 28, Cranston, Providence) that would empower patients to curb the possibility of opioid addiction. Both bills now head to the governor’s office. The first bill ([2018-H 7416](#), [2018-S 2541](#)) would give patients the option of only partially filling their prescription for painkillers. The second bill ([2018-H 7496A](#), [2018-S 2539](#)) would establish a procedure for individuals to file a revocable voluntary non-opiate directive form with the patient’s licensed health care practitioner.

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- **General Assembly outlaws battery cages for egg-laying hens**

The General Assembly has passed legislation introduced by Rep. Patricia A. Serpa (D-Dist. 27, West Warwick, Coventry, Warwick) that would prohibit the confinement of certain farm animals in a manner that prevents the animal from turning around freely, lying down, standing up or fully extending the animal's limbs. The measure ([2018-H 7456A](#)), which would make changes in the definitions of what constitutes unlawful confinement of any sow during gestation, calf raised for veal or egg-laying hen kept on a farm, now moves to the governor's office.

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- **Bill amending speed camera legislation passes the General Assembly**

Sen. Ana B. Quezada (D-Dist. 2, Providence) and Rep. Robert E. Craven's (D-Dist. 32, North Kingstown) legislation ([2018-S 2688Aaa](#), [2018-H 7956Baa](#)) that amends the authorization for municipalities to use speed cameras in school zones passed the General Assembly. The bill would mandate more signage for automated school-zone-speed-enforcement system locations and it would change the initial violation ticket cost from \$95 to \$50 for each offense. The cameras can only be used Monday through Friday between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m., and the cameras would only operate during the 180-day school year.

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