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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>



- **Speaker lists housing, environment, health care access as top priorities**
Speaker of the House K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick) began the 2024 term by outlining a legislative agenda that will continue last session’s work to combat the state’s affordable housing crisis and safeguard the Rhode Island’s environment. He also highlighted access to healthcare as a primary focus of the upcoming session, and commended his fellow house members for their decorum and hard work, especially the chairs of the 12 house commissions who continued to work while the legislature was out of session.
- **Senate President includes health care, TCI expansion among top priorities**
As the Senate began its 2024 legislative session, Senate President Dominick J. Ruggiero (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) pledged that strengthening health care — including attracting qualified primary care physicians, bolstering community hospitals and addressing Medicaid rates — reforming the Law Enforcement Officers Bill of Rights and expanding Temporary Caregiver Insurance will be among his leadership team’s highest priorities this year.
- **General Assembly launches refurbished website**
The General Assembly launched a newly refurbished website this week. Several frequently used portions, including the home page, have been redesigned to create a better organized and easier to navigate website. This update improves the website’s functionality while continuing to be informative, useful and transparent. A longer-term overhaul to further improve the site will be done in stages with additional improvements emerging in 2024.
[Click here to see news release.](#)

More...

- **Sen. Bissaillon assigned to three Senate committees**
Newly inaugurated Sen. Jacob Bissaillon (D-Dist. 1, Providence) will serve on the Senate Judiciary Committee as well as the Special Legislation and Veterans' Affairs Committee and the Committee on Oversight, Rules and Ethics, Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) announced as the Senate began its 2024 session. Senator Bissaillon was elected in November in a special election following the death of Senator Majority Whip Maryellen Goodwin. [Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Sens. Raptakis, Tikoian reintroduce DUI bills on first day of legislative session**
Senators Leonidas P. Raptakis (D-Dist. 33, Coventry, West Greenwich) and David P. Tikoian (D-Dist. 22, Smithfield, Lincoln, North Providence) reintroduced three pieces of legislation that address DUI offenses on the first day of the 2024 legislative session. Both senators note that more bills addressing the serious problem of driving under the influence will be introduced later in the legislative session. [Click here to see news release.](#)

- **House Speaker addresses Interfaith Coalition poverty vigil at State House**
Speaker of the House K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick) spoke to a gathering of the Rhode Island Interfaith Coalition to Reduce Poverty as the organization marked its 16th annual vigil at the State House Thursday. Speaker Shekarchi told those present that “the issues you care about are the issues we care about in the General Assembly: housing insecurity, food insecurity, economic stability, health care, equity, and justice.”

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