

Jan. 6, 2022

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>



- **Legislators approve spending portion of ARPA funds**

The General Assembly approved and the governor immediately signed into law a plan ([2021-H 6494A](#), [2021-S 1006A](#)) for using \$119 million of Rhode Island's \$1.13 billion American Rescue Plan Act State Fiscal Recovery Funds to help children, families, small businesses and the tourism industry, and boost affordable housing and broadband planning. Legislators added \$6 million to further enhance support for child care needs, as well as safeguards and specifics, to the plan that was originally proposed by Gov. Dan McKee.

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- **General Assembly overrides veto of bill to register short-term rentals**

The General Assembly voted to override the governor's veto of legislation ([2021-H 5505A](#), [2021-S 0501B](#)) sponsored by Rep. Lauren H. Carson (D-Dist. 75, Newport) and Sen. Dawn Euer (D-Dist. 13, Newport, Jamestown) to require every short-term rental property listed for rent in Rhode Island on the website of any third-party hosting platform to be registered with the Department of Business Regulation. The bill, which now becomes law, is meant to furnish basic information to ensure compliance with safety and tax regulations and owners' contact information in case of an emergency.

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- **Speaker Shekarchi says affordable housing will top legislative priorities**

Speaker of the House K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick) opened the 2022 session by announcing that affordable housing will continue to be his top legislative priority. He also indicated that a good deal of the chamber's work will focus on the

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health and economic issues related to the pandemic, and that the House would begin a robust hearing process on the legalization of marijuana.

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▪ **President Ruggerio lays out legislative priorities for 2022**

Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) convened the Senate for its 2022 legislative session, laying out the agenda for the year including a goal of 100 percent renewable energy for Rhode Island by the end of the decade, universal access to pre-kindergarten within five years, tuition forgiveness for nurses and teachers, addressing climate change and water infrastructure, building a girls' residential psychiatric treatment facility, and the legalization of marijuana.

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▪ **Senate confirms several judges and magistrates**

The Senate confirmed several new judges and magistrates who were appointed by the governor on the opening day of the 2022 legislative session. The judicial appointments, which require the advice and consent of the Senate, were confirmed to posts within the Rhode Island Superior Court, the Rhode Island Family Court, the Rhode Island District Court and the Rhode Island Worker's Compensation Court. The Senate also approved two magistrate appointments to the Rhode Island Superior Court.

▪ **Legislation seeks to expand investment in Rhode Island school buildings**

Senate Education Committee Chairwoman Sandra Cano (D-Dist. 8, Pawtucket), Senate President Pro Tempore Hanna M. Gallo (D-Dist. 27, Cranston, West Warwick) and Rep. Brandon Potter (D-Dist. 16, Cranston) joined General Treasurer Seth Magaziner in announcing that they will sponsor legislation seeking voter approval this year to expand the ongoing investment in school construction by \$300 million, with incentives for energy efficiency or renewable energy use and the use of Rhode Island based and minority contractors.

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