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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>



- **Senate names new committee chairs**

Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) announced the new committee chairs for the 2023-24 term. They are Sen. Louis P. DiPalma (D-Dist. 12, Middletown, Newport, Tiverton, Little Compton), Finance Committee; Sen. Dawn Euer (D-Dist. 13, Newport, Jamestown), Judiciary Committee; Sen. Alana DiMario (D-Dist. 36, North Kingstown, Narragansett, New Shoreham), Environment and Agriculture Committee; and Sen. Mark P. McKenney (D-Dist. 30, Warwick), Rules, Government Ethics and Oversight Committee.

[Click here to see DiPalma release.](#)

[Click here to see Euer release.](#)

[Click here to see DiMario release.](#)

[Click here to see McKenney release.](#)

- **New senators given committee assignments**

Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) announced the committee assignments for the new senators who were elected in November. They include Sen. Robert Britto (D-Dist. 18, East Providence, Pawtucket), Sen. Anthony P. DeLuca II (R-Dist. 29, Warwick), Sen. Victoria Gu (D-Dist. 38, Charlestown, Westerly, South Kingstown), Sen. Matthew L. LaMountain (D-Dist. 31, Warwick, Cranston), Sen. Pamela J. Lauria (D-Dist. 32, Barrington, Bristol, East Providence), Sen. Mark P. McKenney (D-Dist. 30, Warwick), Sen. David P. Tikoian (D-Dist. 22, Smithfield, Lincoln, North Providence) and Sen. Linda L. Ujifusa (D-Dist. 11, Portsmouth, Bristol).

More...

- **Senators elected, appointed to leadership positions**

Sen. Hanna M. Gallo (D-Dist. 27, Cranston, West Warwick) was elected president pro tempore of the Senate, where she will be responsible for presiding over the Senate in the absence of the president. Sen. Roger A. Picard (D-Dist. 20, Woonsocket, Cumberland) was elected deputy president pro tempore. Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) appointed Sen. John Burke (D-Dist. 9 West Warwick) to serve as a deputy majority leader.

[Click here to see Gallo release.](#)
[Click here to see Picard release.](#)
[Click here to see Burke release.](#)
- **Sen. Valverde introduces Equality in Abortion Coverage Act**

Sen. Bridget Valverde (D-Dist. 35, East Greenwich, North Kingstown, South Kingstown) has introduced the Equality in Abortion Coverage Act to ensure that individuals on Medicaid and state health insurance plans have coverage for abortion procedures. The House companion bill ([2023-H 5006](#)) was introduced by House Majority Whip Katherine S. Kazarian (D-Dist. 63, East Providence).

[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. O'Brien, President Ruggerio introduce lead pipe replacement bill**

Rep. William W. O'Brien (D-Dist. 54, North Providence) and Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) introduced legislation ([2023-H 5007](#), [2023-S 0002](#)) to address lead pipes in Rhode Island's water supply system. The Lead Poisoning Prevention Act would create a lead water supply replacement program for both public and private service lines, with a requirement that all affected lines are replaced within 10 years.

[Click here to see O'Brien release.](#)
[Click here to see Ruggerio release.](#)
- **Senate Finance Committee reviews ARPA spending**

The Senate Finance Committee received an update from the governor's administration on previously authorized federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) State Fiscal Recovery Fund (SFRF) programs and appropriations. The committee heard testimony from the R.I. Pandemic Recovery Office and the Executive Office of Commerce.
- **Pell Bridge ramp signs improve following Rep. Carson's request**

One day after Rep. Lauren H. Carson (D-Dist. 75, Newport) hand-delivered a letter to the Department of Transportation seeking better signage and communication about the ongoing Pell Bridge ramp realignment project, new signs went up clarifying the temporary traffic patterns. When the ramps were rerouted for the major construction project in December, a lack of signs resulted in many drivers accidentally crossing the bridge and others struggling to find their way to it, snarling traffic on the main route connecting Newport to the mainland.

[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Housing panel hears United Way plan to speed affordable housing creation**

The same week that the state's first Housing Secretary Josh Saal resigned amid

criticism of slow implementation of new housing programs, the Special Commission to Study the Low and Moderate Income Housing Act, led by Rep. June S. Speakman (D-Dist. 68, Warren, Bristol), met with United Way of Rhode Island leaders to hear their proposals to encourage swifter affordable housing development.

[Click here to see Speaker Shekarchi's statement on Secretary Saal's resignation.](#)

[Click here to see news advisory on commission meeting.](#)

- **Ackerman, Goodwin honored by Cancer Action Network, Brown Cancer Center**
The American Cancer Society's Cancer Action Network and Brown University's Legoretta Cancer Center have honored Senate Majority Whip Maryellen Goodwin (D-Dist. 1, Providence) and House Deputy Majority Whip Mia A. Ackerman (D-Dist. 45, Cumberland, Lincoln) for their legislative contributions to cancer prevention and treatment.

[Click here to see Ackerman release.](#)

[Click here to see Goodwin release.](#)

- **Representatives join together to condemn antisemitism, racism**
House Deputy Majority Whip Mia A. Ackerman (D-Dist. 45, Cumberland, Lincoln) introduced a resolution ([2023-H 5031](#)) urging all Rhode Islanders to join together to strongly condemn antisemitism. Rep. Raymond A. Hull (D-Dist. 6 Providence, North Providence) introduced a resolution ([2023-H 5066](#)) commemorating the life and work of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. The resolutions come as incidents of antisemitism are on the rise in Rhode Island and nationally, and as the country is set to celebrate King's birthday on Monday.

[Click here to see media release.](#)

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