

Jan. 29, 2021

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 OKs bill to ban gender discrimination in health insurance premiums**  
The Senate passed legislation ([2021-S 0003](#)) introduced by Sen. V. Susan Sosnowski (D-Dist. 37, South Kingstown, New Shoreham) that would ban health insurers from utilizing the discriminatory practice known as gender rating, or routinely charging women and men different premiums for individual insurance. The measure now heads to the House of Representatives for consideration.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate approves bill enacting Obamacare consumer protections in state law**  
The Senate approved legislation ([2021-S 0005A](#)) sponsored by Health and Human Services Committee Chairman Joshua Miller (D-Dist. 28, Cranston, Providence) to enact many of the consumer-protection elements of the federal Affordable Care Act — commonly called “Obamacare” — into state law to permanently protect Rhode Islanders, even if the federal law is ever weakened or repealed.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Ruggerio, Shekarchi introduce bill making R.I. Promise program permanent**  
House Speaker K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick) and Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio (D-Dist.4, North Providence, Providence) introduced legislation ([2021-H 5224](#), [2021-S 0079](#)) to permanently enact the Rhode Island Promise program, which provides eligible Rhode Islanders up to two years of free tuition at Community College of Rhode Island.  
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More...

- **House adopts 2021-2022 rules**

The House adopted new rules for the 2021-2022 session, creating provisions allowing the speaker to activate procedures that include remote committee votes and limited proxy voting during emergencies such as the current pandemic. The rules resolution ([2021-H 5002A](#)) was sponsored by Rules Committee Chairman Arthur Corvese (D-Dist. 55, North Providence).  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Sen. Raptakis calls for online registration process for COVID-19 vaccinations**

Senator Leonidas P. Raptakis (D-Dist. 33, Coventry, East Greenwich, West Greenwich) is calling for an online registration process for COVID-19 vaccinations for the general public, similar to what was done with COVID-19 testing in the state, where there is an online portal on the RI Department of Health website to schedule testing. Senator Raptakis, along with several other legislators, are also rejecting the notion that General Assembly members be prioritized for the vaccination.  
[Click here to see news release](#)
- **Morales introduces bills to address prescription drug costs**

Rep. David Morales (D-Dist. 7, Providence) has introduced bills to limit insured persons' costs to \$25 per 30-day supply of insulin ([2021-H 5151](#)) and \$100 for a 30-day supply of any other prescription drug, including specialty drugs ([2021-H 5146](#)).  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Ranglin-Vassell: Order to end prison contracts should inspire R.I. action**

Rep. Marcia Ranglin-Vassell (D-Dist. 5, Providence) is optimistic that an executive order signed by President Joe Biden to end Justice Department contracts with private prisons will serve to build support for legislative action in Rhode Island to address racial inequities in the justice system, including several bills she will introduce to address injustice and poverty.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Legislators, advocates launch RIght Start agenda for children and families**

Legislators joined advocates to kick off the 2021 RIght Start Agenda, a package of legislation and state budget investments designed to ensure all Rhode Island children get off to the right start in life, and that young children and families are able to weather the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and emerge stronger. Senate Majority Leader Michael J. McCaffrey (D-Dist. 29, Warwick), House Majority Whip Christopher R. Blazewski (D-Dist. 2, Providence), Rep. Grace Diaz (D-Dist. 11, Providence) and Sen. Sandra Cano (D-Dist. 8, Providence) are supporting the initiative.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **New Labor and Environment Initiative in Rhode Island announced**

Senate Environment and Agriculture Committee Chairwoman Dawn Euer (D-Dist. 13, Newport, Jamestown), House Environment and Natural Resources Committee Chairman David A. Bennett (D-Dist.20, Warwick, Cranston) and Sen. Meghan E. Kallman (D-Dist. 15, Pawtucket, North Providence) joined Treasurer Seth Magaziner and labor and environmental leaders in launching a campaign for a bold new initiative to transition Rhode Island toward a net-zero emission economy by 2050.

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

- **House Republicans call on governor to set date for transference of power**  
Members of the House Republican caucus sent a letter to Gov. Gina Raimondo asking her to set a specific date when she will resign to become U.S. Commerce Secretary and allow Lt. Gov. Daniel McKee to take her place. “Given the magnitude of the health, economic and social crises Rhode Island grapples with, we must have a defined leadership timetable, so that we may all plan accordingly,” they wrote.  
[Click her to see news release.](#)
  
- **Senate Education Committee passes new charter school moratorium bill**  
The Senate Education Committee passed legislation that would place a moratorium on the approval of any new or expanded charter schools in Rhode Island. The bill ([2021-S 0013](#)), sponsored by Senate Majority Whip Maryellen Goodwin (D-Dist. 1, Providence), provides that the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education would not grant approval for the creation or expansion of any new charter school until after the 2023-2024 school year. The legislation now heads to the full Senate for consideration.

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