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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>



- **Legislators announce Working Families Agenda of 2024 legislative priorities**
A diverse group of 25 legislators came together Tuesday to announce their Working Families Agenda, a list of top priorities for the 2024 legislative session. This agenda includes expanding and improving public transit, building more affordable housing, strengthening the rights of renters, a comprehensive reform of LEOBOR, lowering prescription drug prices by legalizing wholesale purchases from Canada, providing free, healthy lunches to all students, expanding paid family leave and taxing the income of Rhode Islanders who make more than \$1 million per year.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Vella-Wilkinson bill requires websites to comply with accessibility standards**
Legislation ([2024-H 7159](#)) proposed by Rep. Camille F.J. Vella-Wilkinson (D-Dist. 21, Warwick) would require that state agencies' websites be accessible to people with disabilities. Companion legislation ([2024-S 2037](#)) is being sponsored in the Senate by Sen. Linda L. Ujifusa (D-Dist. 11, Portsmouth, Bristol).
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Morales introduces bill to fully fund state's libraries**
Rep. David Morales (D-Dist. 7, Providence) sponsored legislation ([2024-H 7335](#)) to fully fund the state's contribution to public libraries in FY2025, covering a shortfall in the governor's proposed budget.
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- **Sen. Acosta, Rep. Sanchez reintroduce bill providing free school meals**

More...

Sen. Jonathon Acosta (D-Dist. 16, Central Falls, Pawtucket) and Rep. Enrique George Sanchez (D-Dist. 9, Providence) have reintroduced legislation ([2024-S 2046](#), [2024-H 7337](#)) to provide free breakfast and lunch to all students of public schools.

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

- **Rep. Stewart proposes bill to increase notice for rent increases**
Rep. Jennifer A. Stewart (D-Dist. 59, Pawtucket) sponsored legislation that would give renters more notice when their landlord plans to raise their rent. The bill ([2024-H 7304](#)) would require that landlords give tenants 90 days' notice of any rent increase, or 120 days if the tenant is over age 62, up from 30 days and 60 days, respectively, under current law.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Cotter, Ujifusa bill would raise tax credit to help seniors, those with disabilities**
Sen. Linda L. Ujifusa (D-Dist. 11, Portsmouth, Bristol) and Rep. Megan L. Cotter (D-Dist. 39, Exeter, Richmond, Hopkinton) are sponsoring a bill raising the eligibility limit and the maximum credit for the "circuit breaker" tax credit, which benefits low-income seniors and individuals with disabilities. Currently, the program is limited to households with annual incomes of \$35,000 or less, and the credit is limited to \$600. This legislation ([2024-H 7208](#), [2024-S 2063](#)) would raise the income limit to \$50,000 and raise the maximum credit to \$850.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Coalition of legislators hold press conference on drunk driving legislation**
Sens. Leonidas P. Raptakis (D-Dist. 33, Coventry, West Greenwich), John P. Burke (D-Dist. 9, West Warwick) and David P. Tikoian (D-Dist. 22, Smithfield, North Providence, Lincoln) and Reps. Patricia A. Serpa (D-Dist. 27, West Warwick, Coventry) and Thomas E. Noret (D-Dist. 25, Coventry, West Warwick) held a press conference at the State House to call attention to several bills that strengthen the penalties for drunk, impaired and reckless driving offenses.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **House Oversight Committee tours St. Mary's Home for Children**
Members of the House Oversight Committee took a tour of the St. Mary's Home for Children this week. St. Mary's Home for Children is a residential treatment center serving youth in state care. The tour comes in the wake of a report from the Office of the Child Advocate that details "significant safety concerns and abusive living conditions" at the facility.
- **Right from the Start meets with lawmakers to announce priorities**
Speaker of the House K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick) and Senate Majority Leader Ryan W. Pearson (D-Dist. 19, Cumberland, Lincoln) joined officials from Right from the Start at a press conference as the education advocacy group announced its legislative priorities for 2024, which include more early intervention and child care support.
- **Legislative leaders welcome cast of 'Ella McKay' to State House**
Speaker of the House K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick), Senate Finance Committee Chairman Louis P. DiPalma (D-Dist. 12, Middletown, Newport, Tiverton,

Little Compton) and other legislative leaders joined the Rhode Island Film and TV Office in the State Room to welcome the cast of ‘Ella McKay,’ including Emma Mackey, Woody Harrelson and Jamie Lee Curtis. The production will take advantage of the state’s Film and TV tax credit, which has been approved annually by the General Assembly. The movie will begin filming soon at the State House and other locations throughout Rhode Island.

-30-

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