

Feb. 4, 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>



- **Speaker Shekarchi, Senate President Ruggerio help launch RIght Start agenda**
Speaker of the House K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick), Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) and other legislative leaders, advocates and families came together to launch the 2022 RIght Start Agenda, a package of legislation and state budget investments designed to ensure that all Rhode Island children get off to the right start in life and are able to weather the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Speaker Shekarchi, Senator Kallman announce affordable housing funds**
Speaker K. Joseph Shekarchi and Sen. Meghan E. Kallman (D-Dist. 15, Pawtucket, North Providence), along with Governor Daniel McKee and other state leaders, announced the availability of new funding to support the creation of affordable and supportive housing. Funded with federal Fiscal Recovery Funds, the Site Acquisition Program will provide grants for the acquisition of affordable housing properties.
[Click here to see news release](#)
- **Sen. DiMario bills seek to strengthen hospitality industry in Rhode Island**
Sen. Alana M. DiMario (D-Dist. 36, Narragansett, North Kingstown) has introduced legislation to assist and strengthen the state's hospitality industry. The first bill ([2022-S 2134](#)) would allow restaurants to continue approved outdoor dining during the pandemic. Similar legislation ([2022-H 7095](#)) has been introduced in the House by Rep. Carol Hagan McEntee (D-Dist. 33, Narragansett, South Kingstown). The second bill ([2022-S 2139](#)) would allow happy hour drink specials served in conjunction with

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food prepared on the premises sufficient to constitute breakfast, lunch or dinner, excluding snacks. Similar legislation ([2022-H 7060](#)) has been introduced in the House by Rep. Karen Alzate (D-Dist. 60, Pawtucket).

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- **Rep. McNamara bill would stop insurers from using data to discriminate**
Rep. Joseph M. McNamara (D-Dist. 19, Warwick, Cranston) has introduced legislation ([2022-H 7230](#)) that would prohibit insurance companies from using personal data or algorithms in a way that unfairly discriminates based on race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity, or gender expression, by an insurer in regard to any insurance practice.
[Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Legislation introduced to reapportion House, Senate, congressional districts**
Both the House and Senate have introduced legislation that would reapportion House, Senate and congressional districts. The bills ([2022-S 2162](#), [2022-H 7323](#)), which are the culmination of numerous meetings of the Special Legislative Commission on Reapportionment, were introduced by commission cochairmen Sen. Stephen R. Archambault (D-Dist. 22, Smithfield, North Providence, Johnston) and Rep. Robert D. Phillips (D-Dist. 51, Woonsocket, Cumberland) in their respective chambers.

- **House Finance Committee meets to hear FY 2023 budget briefing**
The House Finance Committee, chaired by Rep. Marvin L. Abney (D-Dist. 73, Newport, Middletown), received its first staff briefing on the governor's proposed FY 2023 state budget ([2022-H 7123](#)). The committee will meet several times over the coming months to further analyze and hear testimony on the budget proposal.

- **Senate Finance Committee hears update on federal COVID-19 relief programs**
The Senate Finance Committee, which is chaired by Sen. Ryan W. Pearson (D-Dist. 19, Cumberland, Lincoln), received an update from the governor's administration on federal COVID-19 relief programs and appropriations, including a spending summary update on the Coronavirus Relief Fund.

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