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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 passes bill to increase minimum wage to \$15 by 2025**
The Senate passed legislation ([2021-S 0001aa](#)) introduced by Sen. Ana B. Quezada (D-Dist. 2, Providence) that would increase Rhode Island’s minimum wage from \$11.50 to \$15 over a four-year period. The measure now moves to the House of Representatives, where similar legislation ([2021-H 5130](#)) has been introduced by Rep. David A. Bennett (D-Dist. 20, Warwick, Cranston).
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate passes charter school moratorium**
The Senate approved legislation ([2021-S 0013Aaa](#)) sponsored by Senate Majority Whip Maryellen Goodwin (D-Dist. 1, Providence) to place a three-year moratorium on the expansion or creation of charter schools in Rhode Island to allow the General Assembly to review the charter funding structure. Rep. William W. O’Brien (D-Dist. 54, North Providence) is sponsoring similar legislation ([2021-H 5193](#)) in the House.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Measures to curb gun violence introduced in House**
House Majority Whip Katherine S. Kazarian (D-Dist. 63, East Providence) and Rep. Justine Caldwell (D-Dist. 30, East Greenwich, West Greenwich) introduced a package of bills to prohibit the possession of firearms on school grounds and ban the sale and possession of assault weapons and high-capacity magazines. In the Senate, President Dominick J. Ruggerio (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) has introduced the bill banning firearms in schools ([2021-S 0073](#)).
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More...

- **Senate OKs bill providing for Senate confirmation of education commissioners**
The Senate approved legislation ([2021-S 0063aa](#)) sponsored by Sen. Hanna M. Gallo (D-Dist. 27, Cranston, West Warwick) to require appointments to the offices of Elementary and Secondary Education commissioner and Postsecondary Education commissioner to be subject to the advice and consent of the Senate, just as other high-level state government appointments are. Rep. William W. O'Brien (D-Dist. 54, North Providence) is sponsoring companion legislation ([2021-H 5423](#)) in the House. [Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Ruggerio, McEntee introduce Plastic Waste Reduction Act**
Senate President Dominick Ruggerio (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) and Rep. Carol Hagan McEntee (D-Dist. 33, South Kingstown, Narragansett) have introduced the Plastic Waste Reduction Act ([2021-S 0037](#), [2021-H 5358](#)) to prohibit single-use plastic checkout bags at retail establishments. [Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Bennett bills take aim at waste, litter from food packaging**
House Environment and Natural Resources Committee Chairman David A. Bennett (D-Dist. 20, Warwick, Cranston) has introduced several bills aimed at reducing waste and litter from single-use food containers. The bills would ban food service establishments from using disposable polystyrene foam containers and plastic stirrers ([2021-H 5138](#)), limit the distribution of single-use plastic straws ([2021-H 5131](#)), put a 50-cent deposit on “nips” miniature alcoholic beverage bottles ([2021-H 5113](#)) and provide for the sanitary use of multi-use food and beverage containers owned by consumers ([2021-H 5152](#)). In the Senate, Majority Leader Michael J. McCaffrey (D-Dist. 29, Warwick) has introduced the straw bill ([2021-S 0155](#)), and Sen. Joshua Miller (D-Dist. 28, Cranston, Providence) has introduced the polystyrene foam bill ([2021-S 0036](#)). [Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. O'Brien bill would raise earned income tax credit to 50 percent by 2022**
Rep. William W. O'Brien (D-Dist. 54, North Providence) has introduced legislation ([2021-H 5366](#)) that would raise the state's earned income tax credit to 50 percent by Jan. 1, 2022. Currently, the state's earned income tax credit is 15 percent. Under Representative O'Brien's legislation, for the tax years beginning on or after Jan. 1, 2022, a taxpayer entitled to a federal earned-income credit will be allowed a Rhode Island earned-income credit equal to 50 percent of the federal earned-income credit. [Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Slater introduces bill to ban captive hunting in RI**
Rep. Scott A. Slater (D-Dist. 10, Providence) has introduced legislation ([2021-H 5329](#)) that would prohibit captive hunting in Rhode Island. “Captive hunting” is defined as a hunt that occurs within a structure designed to restrict the free movement of animals and prevents the animal from escaping. The bill describes the structures used as fences, manmade structures, or natural barriers used to prevent animals from escaping or fleeing the confined area of the hunt. [Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Alzate elected chairwoman of R.I. Legislative Black and Latino Caucus**

Rep. Karen Alzate (D-Dist. 60, Pawtucket) has been elected as the chairwoman of the Rhode Island Legislative Black and Latino Caucus by her fellow caucus members. The previous chairman was Rep. Jean Philippe Barros (D-Dist. 59, Pawtucket). The caucus represents and advocates for the interests of disadvantaged people throughout Rhode Island. It seeks to increase a diverse participation and representation in all levels of government. The goal is to close, and ultimately to eliminate, disparities that still exist between white and non-white Americans in every aspect of life.

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

▪ **Rep. Place and Sen. Bell bill would limit corporate giveaways**

Rep. David J. Place (R-Dist. 47, Burrillville, Glocester) and Sen. Samuel W. Bell (D-Dist. 5, Providence) have introduced legislation ([2021-H 5316](#), [2021-S 0046](#)) that would limit corporate giveaways used to lure companies from neighboring states. They are seeking to enlist Rhode Island in an interstate compact that protects public investments now and in the future.

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