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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>



- **Bill to reapportion House, Senate, congressional districts signed into law**
The General Assembly approved and the governor has signed legislation to reapportion House, Senate and congressional districts. The redistricting legislation ([2022-H 7323Aaa](#), [2022-S 2162Aaa](#)) was introduced by Sen. Stephen R. Archambault (D-Dist. 22, Smithfield, North Providence, Johnston) and Rep. Robert D. Phillips (D-Dist. 51, Woonsocket, Cumberland), who chaired a special legislative commission to propose new district maps.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **House OKs Rep. Corvese bill to allow those filing for bankruptcy to keep \$500**
The House approved legislation ([2022-H 6623](#)) sponsored by Rep. Arthur Corvese (D-Dist. 55, North Providence) to allow those who file for bankruptcy to keep \$500 of their personal savings. The bill, which now goes to the Senate, is intended to provide protection for individuals and families experiencing financial difficulties.
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- **Bill would shift away from wasteful packaging**
House Environment and Natural Resources Committee Chairman David A. Bennett (D-Dist. 20, Warwick, Cranston) has introduced legislation ([2022-H 7279](#)) to establish “extended producer responsibility” for packaging to push product manufacturers to reduce wasteful, non-recyclable packaging on products sold in Rhode Island, and assess them fees for the amount disposed of here. Sen. Bridget Valverde (D-Dist. 35, North Kingstown, East Greenwich, Narragansett, South Kingstown) is sponsoring the bill in the Senate ([2022-S 2296](#)).

More...

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- **Bill would require RI's electricity to be 100% renewable by 2030**
Building on last year's enactment of the historic Act on Climate, Senate President Dominick J. Ruggiero (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) has reintroduced legislation ([2022-S 2274](#)) to formalize and accelerate Rhode Island's commitment to a renewable energy future. The bill, which has also been introduced in the House ([2022-H 7277](#)) by Rep. Deborah Ruggiero (D-Dist. 74, Jamestown, Middletown), would require that 100 percent of electricity sold in Rhode Island be generated from renewable sources by 2030.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Sen. Goodwin, Rep. Slater submit pension bond bill for Providence**
Senate Majority Whip Maryellen Goodwin (D-Dist. 1, Providence), House Deputy Majority Leader Scott A. Slater (D-Dist. 10, Providence), Mayor Jorge O. Elorza, City Council President John Igliazzi and other partners announced the introduction of legislation ([2022-S 2321](#), [2022-H 7499](#)) authorizing the City of Providence to issue a 25-year, fixed-rate, pension obligation bond for up to \$515 million. Without corrective action, the city's large and growing unfunded pension liability threatens the security of retirees and employees, pushes the city closer to fiscal instability and imperils city services.
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- **McNamara bill would cease practice of ending speech pathology at 9 years old**
The House Committee on Education heard testimony on legislation ([2022-H 7273](#)) introduced by Rep. Joseph M. McNamara (D-Dist. 19, Warwick, Cranston) that would include speech pathology under the umbrella of special education and cease the practice of ending speech pathology solely because the child has attained 9 years of age.
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- **Phillips bill would lower interest penalties for businesses with delinquent taxes**
Rep. Robert D. Phillips (D-Dist. 51) has introduced legislation that would ease the penalties for those businesses that are behind on their tax payments. The bill ([2022-H 6658](#)) would change the rate of interest for underpayments of tax to prime rate plus six percent. It would also limit the assessment of interest to four calendar years prior to the date on which notice of the delinquent payment is sent. Similar legislation ([2022-S 2263](#)) has been introduced in the Senate by Sen. Roger A. Picard (D-Dist. 20, Woonsocket, Cumberland).
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Vella-Wilkinson bill offers deduction for certain National Guard assignments**
Rep. Camille F.J. Vella-Wilkinson (D-Dist. 21, Warwick) has introduced legislation that would offer deductions for taxpayers serving in the National Guard for health-related assignments. The bill ([2022-H 7382](#)) would provide for an income tax deduction for a taxpayer serving in the National Guard at an amount up to 50 percent of the taxpayer's income earned for medically related service during a pandemic.
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- **Sen. Lawson introduces bill to use ARPA funds to address hunger crisis**
Sen. Valarie J. Lawson (D-Dist. 14, East Providence) has introduced legislation ([2022-S 2310](#)) that proposes allowing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients to receive a minimum 50 cent credit for each dollar spent on fruits and vegetables in retail settings. The program would be paid for using federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds and would be administered by the Rhode Island Department of Human Services. Similar legislation ([2022-H 7490](#)) has been introduced in the House by Rep. Jean Philippe Barros (D-Dist. 59, Pawtucket).
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- **Black and Latino Caucus holds Black History Month celebration**
The Rhode Island Legislative Black and Latino Caucus held its annual Black History Month celebration in the State Library of the State House. The caucus honored the National Pan-Hellenic Council, also known as the Divine 9, which are nine historically Black fraternities and sororities that came together in the 1930s at Howard University to foster brotherhood and sisterhood in the pursuit of bringing about social change. Rep. Karen Alzate (D-Dist. 60, Pawtucket), chairwoman of the caucus, presided over the event.
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