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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>



- **Sen. Frank Lombardo III, 1958-2024**

The Senate honored Sen. Frank Lombardo III, who passed away Feb. 21 after a brave battle with bladder cancer. First elected to the Senate in 2010, Senator Lombardo (D-Dist. 25, Johnston) was chairman of the Housing and Municipal Government Committee and a strong advocate for his community, small business and government accountability. On Thursday, the Senate session was dedicated to honoring him, and colleagues paid tribute to his kindness, dignity and sense of adventure.

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- **Kazarian introduces legislation mandating monthly I-195 bridge updates**

House Majority Whip Katherine S. Kazarian (D-Dist. 63, East Providence, Pawtucket) has introduced legislation ([2024-H 7759](#)) that would require the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) to produce a monthly public report on the status of the I-195 bridge project. The legislation would require RIDOT to submit an updated report on the I-195 bridge that would be made available to the public on the 1st of each month. The East Bay delegation in the Senate plans to introduce a similar proposal next week.

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- **Bill would ensure more dental premium money is being spent on patient care**

Rep. Joseph M. McNamara (D-Dist. 19, Warwick, Cranston) and Sen. Hanna M. Gallo (D-Dist. 27, Cranston, West Warwick) have introduced legislation ([2024-H 7082](#)) to increase transparency in dental insurance and ensure that more of patients' premiums are being spent on patient care. The Fair Share for Dental Care bill would require dental insurers to spend at least 85% of customers' premiums on patient care,

More...

or refund the difference to them.

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- **Potter legislation to ban outdoor gun ranges near schools heard in committee**
The House Judiciary Committee heard testimony on legislation ([2024-H 7051](#)) introduced by Rep. Brandon Potter (D-Dist. 16, Cranston) that would prohibit outdoor gun ranges from operating near schools.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **O'Brien bill would arm campus police at public colleges**
The House Judiciary Committee heard testimony on legislation ([2024-H 7308](#)) introduced by Rep. William W. O'Brien (D-Dist. 54, North Providence) that would mandate the arming of campus police officers at the state's public colleges. Sen. David P. Tikoian (D-Dist. 22, Smithfield, Lincoln, North Providence) will be introducing companion legislation in the Senate.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Raptakis, Noret bill continues advocacy for Johnson's Pond property owners**
Sen. Leonidas P. Raptakis (D-Dist. 33, Coventry, West Greenwich) and Rep. Thomas E. Noret (D-Dist. 25, Coventry, West Warwick) have introduced legislation ([2024-S 2412](#), [2024-H 7653](#)) that would allow property owners whose property on Johnson's Pond extends past the water line to begin waterfront work without authorization from the owner of Johnson's Pond. The legislation also would permit property owners on ponds in Coventry with a capacity in excess of 1,400 normal storage acre feet of water, to alter, repair, modify, or replace a dock on the pond by seeking approval only from the Department of Environmental Management.
[Click here to see news release](#)
- **Kallman, Kislak introduce bill to reduce emissions from buildings**
Rep. Rebecca Kislak (D-Dist. 4, Providence) and Sen. Meghan E. Kallman (D-Dist. 15, Pawtucket, Providence) have introduced legislation to transition the building sector toward meeting the Act on Climate's commitment to reducing Rhode Island's carbon emissions to net-zero by 2050. The Building Decarbonization Act of 2024 ([2024-H 7617](#)) would require large buildings to report their energy usage and emissions, set in motion a process of creating standards to reduce their emissions and phase in requirements that all new construction use only electricity for energy and heating.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Ujifusa, Tanzi bill seeks to protect patients from prior authorizations**
Sen. Linda Ujifusa (D-Dist. 11, Portsmouth, Bristol) and Rep. Teresa A. Tanzi (D-Dist. 34, South Kingstown, Narragansett) are sponsoring legislation to require study and improved control of health insurers' use of prior authorization to limit health care. They, along with many health care providers, argue that prior authorization requirements delay care, resulting in poorer health outcomes and increased costs.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Coalition for Children and Families presents legislative priorities at State House**

The Rhode Island Coalition for Children and Families joined legislators Thursday to present its legislative agenda to help children, youth and families. House Speaker K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick), Senate Majority Leader Ryan W. Pearson (D-Dist. 19, Cumberland, Lincoln), Senate Education Committee Chairwoman Sandra Cano (D-Dist. 8, Pawtucket) and Rep. Teresa A. Tanzi (D-Dist. 34, South Kingstown, Narragansett) all spoke at the event, highlighting housing and a child tax credit as priorities this session.

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▪ **House marks anniversary of independence of Dominican Republic**

The House of Representatives observed the 180th anniversary of the independence of the Dominican Republic during its session Feb. 27. Rep. Grace Diaz (D-Dist. 11, Providence) led the celebration by sponsoring a resolution ([2024-H 7708](#)) commemorating the anniversary of the Dominican Republic's independence from Haiti, which took place on Feb. 27, 1844.

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