

March 11, 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>



- **Housing bills introduced; Package results from ongoing special commission**  
House Speaker K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick) and Rep. June S. Speakman (D-Dist. 68, Warren, Bristol), chairwoman of the Special Legislative Commission to Study the Rhode Island Low and Moderate Income Housing Act, announced a package of 11 bills to help address the state’s housing crisis. The bills, introduced this week, aim to streamline development, provide more complete and timely information about housing and help municipalities meet their affordable housing goals.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate passes McCaffrey legislation for general officer special elections**  
The Senate passed a joint resolution ([2022-S 2355](#)) introduced by Senate Majority Leader Michael J. McCaffrey (D-Dist. 29, Warwick) that would ask Rhode Island voters to amend the state constitution, allowing for a special election when vacancies occur in the offices of secretary of state, attorney general and general treasurer. The Senate also passed a bill ([2022-S 2356](#)) that would enact the change, pending approval by the voters. The measures now moves to the House of Representatives for consideration.  
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- **House OKs Kennedy bill to extend Medicare policies to those eligible below 65**  
The House of Representatives passed legislation ([2022-H 7244](#)) introduced by Speaker Pro Tempore Brian Patrick Kennedy (D-Dist. 38, Hopkinton, Westerly) that would require Medicare supplement policies in the state to be offered to all patients who are eligible for Medicare by reason of disability, including end-stage renal

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disease (ESRD) regardless of age. The measure now moves to the Senate, where similar legislation ([2022-S 2194](#)) has been introduced by Senate Minority Leader Dennis L. Algieri (R-Dist. 38, Charlestown, South Kingstown, Westerly).

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▪ **House passes Rep. McEntee’s bill that increases age of recorded abuse testimony**

The House passed legislation ([2022-H 6644](#)) sponsored by Rep. Carol Hagan McEntee (D-Dist. 33, South Kingstown, Narragansett) that increases the age of children who are able to utilize recorded forensic interviews when testifying before grand juries in cases of child sexual abuse from 14 to 18 years old. Sen. Alana M. DiMario (D-Dist. 36, Narragansett, North Kingstown) has introduced the bill ([2022-S 2120](#)) in the Senate.

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▪ **Senate OKs bill lowering elder financial exploitation age**

The Senate approved legislation ([2022-S2228](#)) sponsored by Sen. Cynthia A. Coyne (D-Dist. 32, Barrington, Bristol, East Providence) to lower the age at which a victim can be considered an elder under the state’s elder financial exploitation law. The bill lowers the age from 65 to 60, aligning it with existing reporting requirements.

Companion House legislation ([2022-H 7246](#)) is sponsored by Rep. Jason Knight (D-Dist. 67, Barrington, Warren).

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▪ **Bill would transform services to seniors in Rhode Island**

Rep. Lauren H. Carson (D-Dist. 75, Newport) has introduced legislation to transform the state’s Office of Healthy Aging into a far more robust and comprehensive agency to better serve the needs of Rhode Island’s seniors. The legislation ([2022-H 7616](#)) would expand the office to a full-fledged state department, expand its director’s authority, and appoint local senior centers as hubs for service delivery, with authority to bill Medicaid for transportation services.

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▪ **Ruggiero bill would push Renewable Energy Standard to 100 percent by 2030**

Rep. Deborah Ruggiero (D-Dist. 74, Jamestown, Middletown) is sponsoring legislation ([2022-H 7277](#)) that would substantially increase renewable energy production and supply by requiring that 100 percent of Rhode Island’s electricity be offset by renewable production by 2030. The legislation ([2022-S 2274](#)) is sponsored in the Senate by Senate President Dominick J. Ruggiero (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence).

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▪ **Providence legislators introduce bills to protect low-income utility ratepayers**

Providence representatives David Morales (D-Dist. 7, Providence), Scott A. Slater (D-Dist. 10, Providence) and John J. Lombardi (D-Dist. 8, Providence) are sponsoring several bills focused on protecting utility customers from unaffordable rates. The bills limit rate increases for electric ([2022-H 7015](#)) and gas ([2022-H 7529](#)) utilities, create a program that would limit utility rates based on household income ([2022-H 7530](#)) and extend the winter shutoff moratorium ([2022-H 7476](#)).

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- **Rep. Solomon bill would regulate automated license plate readers**  
Rep. Joseph J. Solomon Jr. (D-Dist. 22, Warwick) has introduced legislation ([2022-H 7507](#)) that would regulate and limit governmental use of automated license plate readers. The proposed legislation would limit operation of the readers to official law enforcement purposes only, and would only be used to scan, detect, and identify license plate numbers for the purpose of identifying stolen vehicles; vehicles associated with wanted, missing or endangered persons; and vehicles that register as a match within the National Crime Information Center.  
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- **Sen. DiPalma, Rep. Casimiro introduce human services rate review legislation**  
Sen. Louis P. DiPalma (D-Dist. 12, Middletown, Little Compton, Newport, Tiverton) and Rep. Julie A. Casimiro (D-Dist. 31, North Kingstown, Exeter) were joined by the Community Provider Network of Rhode Island (CPNRI), RI AFL-CIO, service providers and human service program participants at a press conference held at the State House to highlight two pieces of legislation ([2022-S 2311](#),[2022-H 7180](#); [2022-S 2200](#), [2022-H 7489](#)) that provide for periodic rate review/setting processes to ensure accurate and adequate reimbursement of social, medical, human and clinical services.  
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