

March 18, 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>



- **Senate OKs bill seeking right to ‘equitable, adequate and meaningful’ education**
The Senate passed legislation ([2022-S 2095](#)) sponsored by Sen. Roger A. Picard (D-Dist. 20, Woonsocket, Cumberland) to place a question on the next statewide ballot asking voters to amend the state constitution to guarantee an equitable, adequate and meaningful education to each child. Such a constitutional provision would be legally enforceable, ensuring that failing school systems are addressed. A similar constitutional provision has transformed Massachusetts’ educational system into one of the best in the nation. The bill now goes to the House.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **House OKs McNamara bill to allow chronically ill to use experimental drugs**
The House of Representatives passed the Neil Fachon Terminally Ill Patients Right to Try Act of 2022 ([2022-H 7393](#)) introduced by Rep. Joseph M. McNamara (D-Dist. 19, Warwick, Cranston) that would allow chronically ill patients to obtain experimental drugs that have not yet been federally approved but which may be in the final stages of FDA testing. The measure now moves to the Senate for consideration.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **House OKs Vella-Wilkinson bill to allow pharmacists to prescribe birth control**
The House of Representatives passed legislation ([2022-H 7346A](#)) introduced by Rep. Camille F.J. Vella-Wilkinson (D-Dist. 21, Warwick) that would authorize a pharmacist to prescribe and dispense hormonal contraceptives, provided that the pharmacist has completed a training program approved by the state board of pharmacy. The measure now moves to the Senate, where similar legislation ([2022-S 2330](#)) has been introduced by Sen. Kendra Anderson (D-Dist. 31, Warwick,

More...

Cranston).

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▪ **House approves measure to control bird flu**

The House approved legislation ([2022-H 7785](#)) sponsored by Rep. Brandon Potter (D-Dist. 16, Cranston) to control outbreaks of bird flu and other animal diseases through quarantine measures. The bill, which now goes to the Senate, was requested by the Department of Environmental Management to help the state respond to the outbreak of a highly contagious strain of avian influenza, which has been spreading across the nation since January and has been identified in neighboring states.

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▪ **Senate approves Euer bill to designate environmental justice areas**

The Senate approved legislation ([2022-S 2087](#)) sponsored by Senate Environment and Agriculture Committee Chairwoman Dawn Euer (D-Dist. 13, Newport, Jamestown) to require the Division of Statewide Planning to designate population-based environmental justice focus areas throughout the state that would have extra protection from new proposals that would create additional adverse environmental impacts. The legislation now goes to the House.

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▪ **Multi-passenger, pedaled vehicles could hit RI roads under bill passed by House**

The House has passed legislation ([2022-H 6636A](#)) sponsored by Rep. Arthur Handy (D-Dist. 18, Cranston) to allow quadricycle passenger vehicles — four-wheeled vehicles pedaled by multiple passengers and controlled by one operator — on Rhode Island roads in municipalities that wish to allow them.

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▪ **House passes Rep. Baginski polling place standards bill**

The House of Representatives approved legislation ([2022-H 7429A](#)) introduced by Rep. Jacquelyn Baginski (D-Dist. 17, Cranston) that would increase the amount of voters a polling place can accommodate and would also set further polling place standards. The bill would increase the maximum number of voters that a polling place can accommodate from 3,000 to 3,500 voters and also provides factors to consider when designating polling locations. The measure now moves to the Senate, where similar legislation ([2022-S 2253](#)) has been introduced by Sen. Frank S. Lombardi (D-Dist. 26, Cranston).

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▪ **Senators introduce bills to strengthen early childhood care, education system**

The Senate unveiled a legislative package designed to expand and strengthen the state's early childhood care and education system. The cornerstone of the package, the Rhode Island Prekindergarten Act ([2022-S 2680](#)), introduced by Sen. Hanna M. Gallo (D-Dist. 27, Cranston, West Warwick), would set a new goal of universal pre-K access by June 30, 2028. Senator Gallo also introduced legislation ([2022-S 2678](#)) to create a new Office of Early Childhood Development and Learning. Sen. Sandra Cano (D-Dist. 8, Pawtucket) introduced the Child Care is Essential Act ([2022-S 2681](#)) which expands eligibility for the Child Care Assistance Program through increased income thresholds and caps on co-payments. Senator Cano also introduced

the Early Educator Investment Act ([2022-S 2235](#)), which directs the state's Children's Cabinet to set a target wage scale for early educators and identify strategies for increasing compensation. Sen. Alana M. DiMario (D-Dist. 36, Narragansett, North Kingstown) introduced legislation ([2022-S 2679](#)) to create five Early Learning Hubs across Rhode Island. The Hubs will connect providers with a range of resources and services.

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