

March 29, 2024

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 Lawson bill to expand parental, caregiving leave**  
The Senate passed legislation ([2024-S 2121](#)) sponsored by Senate Majority Whip Valarie Lawson (D-Dist. 14, East Providence) that would expand Rhode Island's Temporary Caregiver Insurance (TCI) program from six weeks to 12. The bill now heads to the House for consideration, where Rep. Joshua J. Giraldo (D-Dist. 56, Central Falls) has introduced companion legislation ([2024-H 7171](#)).  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate approves Britto legislation to improve prescription drug affordability**  
The Senate approved legislation ([2024-S 2720](#)) sponsored by Sen. Robert Britto (D-Dist. 18, East Providence, Pawtucket) that would improve prescription drug affordability for cancer patients and others with chronic diseases. The bill is part of the Senate's Rhode Island HEALTH (Holistic Enhancement and Access Legislation for Total Health) Initiative, a 25-bill legislative package aimed at improving health care access and affordability in Rhode Island. The measure now moves to the House where similar legislation ([2024-H 8041](#)) has been introduced by Rep. Mia Ackerman (D-Dist. 45, Cumberland, Lincoln).  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate OKs LaMountain bill that would prohibit noncompetition agreements**  
The Senate passed legislation ([2024-S 2436](#)) introduced by Sen. Matthew L. LaMountain (D-Dist. 31, Warwick, Cranston) that would ban noncompetition agreements except for those between a seller and buyer of a business. A noncompetition agreement is a legal accord or clause in a contract specifying that an employee must not enter into competition with an employer after the employment

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period is over. The measure now moves to the House, where similar legislation ([2024-H 8059](#)) has been introduced by Rep. Jacquelyn M. Baginski (D-Dist. 17, Cranston).

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- **Senate passes DiMario bill to continue funding Psychiatry Resource Network**  
The Senate passed legislation ([2024-S 2072](#)) sponsored by Sen. Alana M. DiMario (D-Dist. 36, Narragansett, North Kingstown, New Shoreham) that would provide a stable funding mechanism for a psychiatric resource network for providers treating children and new parents. The bill now heads to the House for consideration where Rep. Mary Ann Shallcross Smith (D-Dist. 46, Lincoln, Pawtucket) has introduced companion legislation ([2024-H 7204](#)).  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **O'Brien, President Ruggerio introduce bill to stiffen penalties for dog abuse**  
Rep. William W. O'Brien (D-Dist. 54, North Providence) and Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) have introduced legislation ([2024-H 8095](#), [2024-S 2744](#)) that would increase the penalty for violations of the care of dogs statute to a minimum fine of \$100 and a maximum fine of \$1,000 per violation. The care of dogs statute includes regulations on tethering dogs, leaving them outside and providing proper care and nutrition.  
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- **Euer bill would help Rhode Islanders pass on their homes without probate**  
Legislation ([2024-S 2027](#)) from Senate Judiciary Committee Chairwoman Dawn Euer (D-Dist. 13, Newport, Jamestown) would allow Rhode Islanders to leave their home to a beneficiary upon their death without the necessity of probate or a trust.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Morales bill increasing the minimum wage toward \$20 heard in committee**  
Rep. David Morales's (D-Dist. 7, Providence) legislation ([2024-H 7579](#)) to increase the state minimum wage to \$20 by 2029 and make future increases automatically linked to inflation was heard in committee Wednesday.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Boylan aims to modernize school safety drill laws**  
Rep. Jennifer Boylan (D-Dist. 66, Barrington, East Providence) introduced legislation ([2024-H 8102](#)) to clarify the gaps in Rhode Island law regarding school safety drills in order to ensure students and staff are prepared for emergencies while minimizing the interruption to instruction and the traumatic effects of training drills on staff and students.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **RIBLIA Caucus announces 2024 policy agenda**  
The Rhode Island Black, Latino, Indigenous, Asian-American and Pacific Islander Caucus (RIBLIA) released its 2024 legislative policy agenda at a press conference in the Senate Lounge. The caucus is chaired by Sen. Jonathon Acosta (D-Dist. 16, Central Falls, Pawtucket) and Rep. Leonela Felix (D-Dist. 61, Pawtucket). The 24-

bill legislative package represents RIBLIA's continued commitment to lifting up the downtrodden, defending the marginalized and ensuring a fair and equitable society for all Rhode Islanders.

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

▪ **House of Representatives honors actress Kali Reis**

A panel of state representatives led by Rep. Camille F.J. Vella-Wilkinson (D-Dist. 21, Warwick) honored actress and East Providence native Kali Reis with a community hero award for her support and advocacy on behalf of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls, a grassroots movement to raise awareness through organizing marches, building databases of the missing, and conducting domestic violence trainings and other informational sessions for police.

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