

April 7, 2023

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 DiMario bill setting stage for future of solar development**

The Senate passed an innovative plan to help set the stage for the future of solar development in Rhode Island. The bill ([2023-S 0504](#)), sponsored by Sen. Alana DiMario (D-Dist. 36, Narragansett, North Kingstown, New Shoreham), would establish a new state program called Renewable Ready that would help offset the costs to prepare certain sites for renewable energy development. Eligible locations would include rooftops of large buildings, properties adjacent to major roads and so-called brownfield sites. The bill now heads to the House for consideration.

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- **Rep. Tanzi bill to ban non-disclosure agreements passes House**

The House passed a bill ([2023-H 5929](#)) sponsored by Rep. Teresa Tanzi (D-Dist. 34 South Kingstown, Narragansett) that would forbid any employer from requiring an employee to execute a nondisclosure agreement or non-disparagement agreement regarding alleged violations of civil rights or criminal conduct as a condition of employment. The bill now heads to the Senate where Sen. Alana DiMario (D-Dist. 36, Narragansett, North Kingstown, New Shoreham) has introduced companion legislation ([2023-S 0342](#)).

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- **House approves bill to clarify public shoreline access**

The House approved legislation ([2023-H 5174](#)) sponsored by Rep. Terri Cortvriend (D-Dist. 72, Portsmouth, Middletown) to establish a more practical and recognizable boundary for the area of the shore to which the public is entitled access. The legislation sets the line at six feet landward from the recognizable high tide line, also

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known as the “wrack line,” recognizable by a line of seaweed, scum and other deposits left where the tide reached its highest point. The bill now goes to the Senate for consideration.

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- **Senate approves Murray bill limiting copays for diabetes supplies, equipment**
 The Senate approved legislation ([2023-S 0281](#)) sponsored by Sen. Melissa A. Murray (D-Dist. 24, Woonsocket, North Smithfield) to limit insured patients’ copays for supplies and equipment used to treat diabetes to \$25 for a 30-day supply. The bill now goes to the House, where House Speaker Pro Tempore Brian Patrick Kennedy (D-Dist. 38, Hopkinton, Westerly) is sponsoring a companion bill ([2023-H 5281](#)).
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- **House passes Rep. Alzate bill reducing driving privilege card fees**
 The House passed legislation ([2023-H 5780](#)) introduced by Rep. Karen Alzate (D-Dist. 60, Pawtucket, Central Falls) that would reduce the fee for an original driver privilege card from \$50 to \$25 in order to bring the fee in line with the cost charged for renewing a driver’s license. The measure now moves to the Senate, where Sen. Robert Britto (D-Dist. 18, East Providence, Pawtucket) has introduced similar legislation ([2023-S 0751](#)).
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- **Cano, Morales, Felix advocate for multilingual learning**
 Sen. Sandra Cano (D-Dist. 8, Pawtucket), Rep. David Morales (D-Dist. 7, Providence), Rep. Leonela Felix (D-Dist. 61, Pawtucket) and advocates from the Coalition for a Multilingual RI held a press conference advocating for two bills ([2023-S 0549](#), [2023-H 5777](#) and [2023-S 0559](#), [2023-H 6023](#)) that would increase investments in multilingual education for all Rhode Island students.
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- **Spears, DiPalma introduce legislation to protect human services benefits**
 Rep. Tina L. Spears (D-Dist. 36, Charlestown, New Shoreham, South Kingstown, Westerly) and Sen. Louis P. DiPalma (D-Dist. 12, Middletown, Little Compton, Newport, Tiverton), chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, have introduced legislation ([2023-H 5998](#), [2023-S 0791](#)) that will help individuals keep some access to crucial human services programs and benefits, even if their incomes rise above eligibility standards. For all health and human services programs, the legislation would authorize the secretary of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) to develop a sliding scale decrease in benefits as a beneficiary’s income increases beyond the current 250 percent federal poverty level.
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- **Paolino, Newberry introduce omnibus campaign finance reform legislation**
 Sen. Thomas J. Paolino (R-Dist. 17, Lincoln, North Providence, North Smithfield) and Rep. Brian C. Newberry (R-Dist. 48, Burrillville, North Smithfield) introduced legislation ([2023-S 0846](#), [2023-H 5962](#)) that would reform campaign finance reporting. It would raise the minimum aggregate reporting amount to \$200 per year and exempt the candidate from the minimum aggregate reporting requirement. It would also raise the contribution limit for individuals and political action committees

to \$2,000 per year. It would further include public financing for primary elections, beginning with the 2026 election cycle.

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- **McNamara bill to ensure more dental premium money spent on patient care**
Rep. Joseph M. McNamara (D-Dist. 19, Warwick, Cranston) has introduced legislation ([2023-H 5497](#)) that would require carriers offering dental benefit plans to annually submit information that includes the current and projected medical loss ratio for claims for their plans. The medical loss ratio would be 85% for determining whether insureds are due a refund or premium credit in any given year. Similar legislation ([2023-S 0286](#)) has been introduced in the Senate by Sen. Linda L. Ujifusa (D-Dist. 11, Portsmouth, Bristol).
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- **Ruggerio joins state leaders to highlight lead pipe replacement efforts**
Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) joined other state officials to highlight progress made toward replacement of all lead pipes in Rhode Island's water supply. President Ruggerio and Rep. William W. O'Brien (D-Dist. 54, North Providence) have introduced the Lead Poisoning Prevention Act ([2023-S-0002](#), [2023-H 5007](#)) to augment the federal resources. The bill would create a lead water supply replacement program for both public and private service lines, with a requirement that all affected lines are replaced within 10 years.
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