

April 29, 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 approves Let RI Vote Act**

The Senate approved the Let RI Vote Act ([2022-S 2007A](#)) sponsored by Sen. Dawn Euer (D-Dist. 13, Newport, Jamestown) to expand voter access while ensuring the integrity of Rhode Island elections. The bill makes permanent several elections provisions put in place in 2020 to protect voters during the pandemic, including wider use of mail ballots. The Senate also approved legislation ([2022-S 2119A](#)) sponsored by Sen. Cynthia A. Coyne (D-Dist. 32, Barrington, Bristol, East Providence) to expand the time the Board of Elections has to certify mail ballots and codify a secure mail ballot voter signature verification process. Both bills now go to the House, where House Majority Whip Katherine S. Kazarian (D-Dist. 63, East Providence) is sponsoring the Let RI Vote act ([2022-H 7100](#)) and Rep. Evan P. Shanley (D-Dist. 24, Warwick) is sponsoring the other bill ([2022-H 7428](#)).

[Click here to see Let RI Vote release.](#)

[Click here to see Board of Elections release.](#)

- **House OKs McNamara bill requiring schools to share list of teacher firings**

The House of Representatives passed legislation ([2022-H 7274A](#)) introduced by Rep. Joseph M. McNamara (D-Dist. 19, Warwick, Cranston) that would require a school committee or the governing body of a charter or private school to submit the identity of any teacher terminated for cause to the Rhode Island Department of Education. The act would also require the department to allow access to the list by the hiring authority of any private, parochial, charter or public school. The measure now moves to the Senate for consideration.

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

More...

- **House OKs bill to ban toxic chemicals from food packaging**  
The House approved legislation ([2022-H 7438A](#)) sponsored by Rep. Terri Cortvriend (D-Dist. 72, Portsmouth, Middletown) prohibiting per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) from food packaging made or sold in Rhode Island beginning in 2024. PFAS chemicals are used as grease-proofing agents in fast-food wrappers, microwave popcorn bags, take-out paperboard containers, pet food bags and thousands more products, and they have been linked to cancer and other health problems. The bill now goes to the Senate, where Sen. James A. Seveney (D-Dist. 11, Portsmouth, Bristol, Tiverton) is sponsoring companion legislation ([2022-S 2044](#)). [Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate OKs bill extending postpartum Medicaid coverage**  
The Senate passed legislation ([2022-S 2202](#)) sponsored by Senate Majority Whip Maryellen Goodwin (D-Dist. 1, Providence) to ensure that women who give birth while enrolled in Medicaid/RIte Care receive Medicaid coverage through the last day of the month in which their 12-month post-partum period ends, instead of the current 60 days postpartum coverage. The bill now goes to the House, where Rep. Anastasia P. Williams (D-Dist. 9, Providence) is sponsoring a companion bill ([2022-H 7290](#)). [Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Both chambers pass wiretap bills to address human trafficking**  
The Senate and the House each approved legislation ([2022-S 2706](#), [2022-H 7700](#)) to allow court-approved wiretaps for suspected felony human trafficking. Each bill now goes to the other chamber for approval before the measure can be sent to the governor. The bills are sponsored by Senate Judiciary Committee Chairwoman Cynthia A. Coyne (D-Dist. 32, Barrington, Bristol, East Providence) and Rep. Carol Hagan McEntee (D-Dist. 33, South Kingstown, Narragansett). [Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Carson, Ruggiero push to transform state services for seniors**  
Rep. Lauren H. Carson (D-Dist. 75, Newport) and Rep. Deborah Ruggiero (D-Dist. 74, Jamestown, Middletown) were joined by senior center directors, seniors and other supporters at a State House event promoting the Aging Your Way Act ([2022-H 7616](#)) 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. [Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate passes President Ruggiero Real Jobs Rhode Island Act**  
The Senate passed legislation ([2022-S 2815](#)) introduced by President Dominick J. Ruggiero (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) that would make the successful Real Jobs Rhode Island program permanent. The measure now moves to the House of Representatives for consideration. [Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate passes Cano bill to expand Medicaid to 'Cover All Kids'**  
The Senate passed legislation ([2022-S 2187](#)) introduced by Sen. Sandra Cano (D-Dist. 8, Pawtucket) that would ensure that all children, regardless of immigration status, qualify for health insurance under the state's RIte Track program. The bill now

heads to the House of Representatives where Rep. David Morales (D-Dist. 7, Providence) has introduced similar legislation ([2022-H 7484](#)).

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

▪ **House passes Rep. Alzate bill allowing happy hours**

The House approved legislation ([2022-H 7060A](#)) sponsored by Rep. Karen Alzate (D-Dist. 60, Pawtucket) that would allow happy hour drink specials to be served in conjunction with food prepared on the premises. The bill now heads to the Senate where Sen. Alana M. DiMario (D-Dist. 36, Narragansett, North Kingstown) has introduced similar legislation ([2022-S 2139](#)).

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

▪ **House approves two animal protection measures**

The House approved legislation ([2022-H 7361](#)) sponsored by House Majority Whip Katherine S. Kazarian (D-Dist. 63, East Providence) that would prohibit the sale, offer of sale, trade or distribution of animal fur products within Rhode Island. It now heads to the Senate where Sen. Dawn Euer (D-Dist. 13, Newport, Jamestown) has introduced similar legislation ([2022-S 2646](#)). The House also passed a bill ([2022-H 6663](#)) sponsored by Rep. Brandon Potter (D-Dist. 16, Cranston) to prohibit the production, sale or importation into Rhode Island of any force-fed poultry products. The bill would impose a civil penalty of \$500 for each violation.

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

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

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