

May 9, 2025

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>



- **Several bills in health care accessibility/affordability package pass Senate**  
Several pieces of legislation in a Senate package focused on addressing health care accessibility and affordability passed the chamber this week. A bill ([2025-S 0169](#)) sponsored by Sen. Jacob E. Bissaillon (D-Dist. 1, Providence) would prohibit the attachment of liens against Rhode Islanders' homes because of medical debt. A bill ([2025-S 0172](#)) by Sen. John Burke (D-Dist. 9, West Warwick) would cap the interest rate on new medical debt. Bills ([2025-S 0165A](#), [2025-S 0173](#)) from Sens. Lori Urso (D-Dist. 8, Pawtucket) and Linda L. Ujifusa (D-Dist. 11, Portsmouth, Bristol) would reduce the cost of prescription drugs to Rhode Island patients and taxpayers. A bill ([2025-S 0168A](#)) by Senator Melissa Murray (D-Dist. 24, Woonsocket, North Smithfield) would prohibit insurers from requiring prior authorization for medically necessary services ordered by primary care providers. A bill ([2025-S 0166A](#)) by Sen. Robert Britto (D-Dist. 18, East Providence, Pawtucket) would allow pharmacists to administer certain vaccines to patients over the age of 3. A bill ([2025-S 0170A](#)) by Sen. Peter A. Appollonio Jr. (D-Dist. 29, Warwick) would address the state's medical licensing backlog. The measures now move to the House of Representatives for consideration.  
[Click here for Bissaillon release.](#)  
[Click here for Burke release.](#)  
[Click here for Urso, Ujifusa release.](#)  
[Click here for Murray release.](#)  
[Click here for Britto release.](#)  
[Click here for Appollonio release.](#)

More...

- **House approves bills from Speaker Shekarchi's housing package**

Three bills included in the housing package backed by House Speaker K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick) passed the House and will now head to the Senate. The first bill ([2025-H 5803Aaa](#)), sponsored by Speaker Shekarchi, would expand the use of electronic permitting for applications involving the Department of Environmental Management, the Coastal Resources Management Council and the Department of Transportation. Another bill ([2025-H 5801A](#)), sponsored by Housing Affordability Commission Chairwoman June S. Speakman (D-Dist. 68, Warren, Bristol), would reduce subjectivity in the approval process under Rhode Island's Low and Moderate Income Housing Act to encourage the construction of homes Rhode Islanders can afford. The third bill ([2025-H 5802Aaa](#)), sponsored by Rep. Thomas E. Noret (D-Dist. 25, Coventry, West Warwick), expedites the pathway for developing state-owned vacant or underutilized land for housing.

[Click here for Speakman release.](#)  
[Click here for Noret release.](#)
- **Senate OKs Appollonio bill to require changing stations in new public buildings**

The Senate approved legislation ([2025-S 0387](#)) introduced by Sen. Peter A. Appollonio Jr. (D-Dist. 29, Warwick) that would require the installation of universal changing stations for all ages in all newly constructed, reconstructed or remodeled public buildings and places of public accommodation in the state, starting in 2027. The measure now moves to the House of Representatives where similar legislation ([2025-H 5611](#)) has been introduced by Rep. Thomas E. Noret (D-Dist. 25, Coventry, West Warwick).

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- **Senate OKs Tikoian bill for one-year registration renewals on 3-year leased cars**

The Senate approved legislation ([2025-S 0830](#)) introduced by Senate Majority Whip David P. Tikoian (D-Dist. 22, Smithfield, Lincoln, North Providence) that would authorize the Division of Motor Vehicles to issue one-year renewal registrations for vehicles leased for 36 months when the vehicle is registered in two-year cycles and would enable the agency to issue a credit to a registrant of a leased or purchased vehicle, who voluntarily cancels the registration within the period of registration. The measure now moves to the House of Representatives where similar legislation ([2025-H 5768](#)) has been introduced by Rep. Gregory J. Costantino (D-Dist. 44, Lincoln, Smithfield, Johnston).

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- **Senate passes DiMario bill to continue funding Psychiatry Resource Network**

The Senate passed a bill ([2025-S 0220A](#)) 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 where Rep. Mary Ann Shallcross Smith (D-Dist. 46, Lincoln, Pawtucket) has introduced companion legislation ([2025-H 5461](#)).

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- **Senate OKs Sen. Zurier bill to protect customer's genetic privacy**

The Senate approved legislation ([2025-S 0767](#)) from Sen. Samuel D. Zurier (D-Dist.

3, Providence) to ensure that Rhode Islanders who use consumer genetic testing services retain control of their genetic data at all times. The measure now moves to the House for consideration.

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▪ **Senate passes Acosta bill that extends teacher certifications**

The Senate approved legislation ([2025-S 0021](#)) sponsored by Sen. Jonathon Acosta (D-Dist. 16, Central Falls, Pawtucket) that would extend teacher certifications to address the significant teacher shortage plaguing Rhode Island. The legislation would extend teacher certifications without fee or penalty for three or five years for teachers who hold certifications as of July 1, 2025, and would permit a teacher who has three years of certified teaching experience to acquire an additional certification through examination or content coursework. The bill now heads to the House of Representatives where Rep. Joshua J. Giraldo (D-Dist. 56, Central Falls) has introduced the legislation ([2025-H 5743](#)).

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▪ **Senate passes Ciccone bill allowing home hair care services for disabled**

The Senate passed legislation ([2025-S 0381A](#)) introduced by Majority Leader Frank A. Ciccone III (D-Dist. 7, Providence, Johnston) that would allow individuals with special needs or sensory-related disorders or differences to receive hair care services within their home. The bill updates current law by adding to the types of individuals who can receive services outside of a traditional salon setting by licensed hairdressers. The legislation now heads to the House for consideration.

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▪ **House passes Baginski bill to prohibit synthetic media 90 days before elections**

The House passed legislation ([2025-H 5872A](#)) sponsored by Rep. Jacquelyn Baginski (D-Dist. 17, Cranston) that would ban, within 90 days of an election, any person associated with a rival campaign from creating and publishing depictions of other candidates that, to a reasonable individual, appear to be a real individual in terms of appearance, action, or speech, but that did not occur in reality. The bill now heads to the Senate where Sen. Louis P. DiPalma (D-Dist. 12, Middletown, Little Compton, Newport, Tiverton) has introduced the legislation ([2025-S 0816](#)).

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▪ **Senate passes three bills to aid Rhode Island veterans**

The Senate approved three bills that will help Rhode Island's veterans. The first bill ([2025-S 0075](#)), sponsored by Sen. Walter S. Felag Jr. (D-Dist. 10, Warren, Bristol, Tiverton), would waive the fee for vehicle identification number (VIN) inspections for veterans and active-duty military personnel. Rep. Jennifer Boylan (D-Dist. 66, Barrington, East Providence) has introduced the bill ([2025-H 5081](#)) in the House. The second bill ([2025-S 0914A](#)), also sponsored by Senator Felag, would remove the fee for registration and plate transfer for a Distinguished Service Cross registration plate. The third bill ([2025-S 0076A](#)), sponsored by Sen. Victoria Gu (D-Dist. 38, Westerly, Charlestown, South Kingstown), would allow Rhode Island Bronze Star Medal recipients to apply for a special license plate without paying a registration fee or service charge. Rep. Samuel A. Azzinaro (D-Dist. 37, Westerly) introduced

companion legislation ([2025-H 5049](#)) in the House. All three pieces of legislation now head to the House for consideration.

[Click here for Felag release.](#)

[Click here for Gu release.](#)

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