

May 15, 2026

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>



- **Speaker Blazejewski to introduce legislation establishing Inspector General**  
House Speaker Christopher R. Blazejewski (D-Dist. 2, Providence) announced that he will introduce legislation to create an Office of the Independent Inspector General to detect fraud, waste, abuse or mismanagement in state and quasi-state agencies, as well as municipal governments utilizing state funds. He sponsored such a bill a decade ago ([2015-H 5164](#)) and has been a cosponsor of it in other years.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **House passes Kennedy bill to make deed theft a felony**  
The House of Representatives passed legislation introduced by House Speaker Pro Tempore Brian Patrick Kennedy (D-Dist. 38, Hopkinton, Westerly) that would criminalize deed theft — an increasingly common practice that bold scammers use to actually steal homes and real estate. The bill ([2026-H 7551aa](#)) would establish the criminal offense of real estate title fraud and create penalties for violations. The measure now moves to the Senate, where the Judiciary Committee has heard testimony on similar legislation ([2026-S 2715](#)) introduced by Senate President Valarie J. Lawson (D-Dist. 14, East Providence).  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **House approves Marszalkowski bill to protect tax filers**  
The House approved legislation sponsored by Rep. Alex D. Marszalkowski (D-Dist. 52, Cumberland) that would protect tax filers from fraudulent or illegal tax preparation services. The legislation ([2026-H 7613A](#)) would create penalties for tax preparers that purposefully mislead their clients or act as ghost preparers of tax returns. It would also require the tax administrator to publish a list of tax preparers

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who have had their privileges to prepare returns revoked or suspended. The bill now heads to the Senate, where Sen. Lammis J. Vargas (D-Dist. 28, Cranston, Providence) has introduced the legislation ([2026-S 2810](#)).

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- **Senate OKs Acosta bill to redefine felonies, misdemeanors, petty misdemeanors**  
The Senate approved legislation sponsored by Sen. Jonathon Acosta (D-Dist. 16, Central Falls, Pawtucket) that revises the state's definitions of felonies, misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors. The proposal ([2026-S 2047](#)) is an effort to reform the state's criminal justice system by focusing on easing pressures on the correctional system and promoting diversion and rehabilitation while increasing public safety. The legislation now heads to the House, where Rep. Leonela Felix (D-Dist. 61, Pawtucket) has introduced the legislation ([2026-H 7198](#)).  
[Click here to see news release](#)
- **House OKs Perez bill to reduce signature requirements for presidential delegates**  
The House passed legislation sponsored by Rep. Ramon A. Perez (D-Dist. 13, Providence, Johnston) that amends signature requirements and deadlines for presidential preference delegate primaries. The legislation ([2026-H 7092](#)) would reduce the number of signatures needed on nomination papers for a candidate to be a delegate to a national presidential convention to 50 voters. The bill now heads to the Senate, where Majority Leader Frank A. Ciccone III (D-Dist. 7, Providence, North Providence) has introduced the legislation ([2026-S 2309](#)).  
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- **Senate OKs Gu bill requiring notice before nonrenewal of insurance policies**  
The Senate voted to approve legislation ([2026-S 2011A](#)) sponsored by Sen. Victoria Gu (D-Dist. 38, Westerly, Charlestown, South Kingstown) to require insurers to provide customers with advance notice of nonrenewal for homeowners and residential fire insurance policies. The bill now moves to the House, where Rep. Samuel A. Azzinaro (D-Dist. 37, Westerly) has introduced similar legislation ([2026-H 7066](#)).  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Legislators join providers to call for investments in healthcare system**  
Representatives Mia A. Ackerman (D-Dist. 45, Cumberland, Lincoln), Susan R. Donovan (D-Dist. 69, Bristol, Portsmouth) and Thomas E. Noret (D-Dist. 25, Coventry, West Warwick) along with Senators Jacob E. Bissaillon (D-Dist. 1, Providence) and Robert Britto (D-Dist. 18, East Providence) joined healthcare workers, nurses and doctors at the State House Thursday to call for action on four targeted healthcare bills to reduce unnecessary administrative barriers that increase costs and delay care.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Cotter proposes sales tax holiday weeks for restaurants**  
Rep. Megan L. Cotter (D-Dist. 39, Exeter, Richmond, Hopkinton) has introduced legislation ([2026-H 8512](#)) to establish one sales tax-free week in the summer and one in the winter for restaurants statewide to encourage support for local businesses.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Ujifusa, Donovan seek tax credit for family caregivers**  
Sen. Linda L. Ujifusa (D-Dist. 11, Portsmouth, Bristol) and House Health and Human Services Committee Chairwoman Susan R. Donovan (D-Dist. 69, Bristol, Portsmouth) have introduced legislation ([2026-S 2246](#), [2026-H 7241](#)) to create a Rhode Island Family Caregiver Tax Credit to help support those caring for elderly or disabled family members. The bill would provide eligible Rhode Islanders with a tax credit equal to 50% of qualified caregiving expenses, up to a maximum credit of \$1,000.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
  
- **Fogarty, Marszalkowski, Edwards, Alzate named to House leadership team**  
Speaker of the House Christopher R. Blazewski (D-Dist. 2, Providence) appointed four veteran House members to his leadership team. Rep. Kathleen A. Fogarty (D-Dist. 35, South Kingstown) has been named first assistant speaker, Rep. Alex D. Marszalkowski (D-Dist. 52, Cumberland) is the second assistant speaker, Rep. John G. Edwards (D-Dist. 70, Tiverton) has been appointed floor manager, and Rep. Karen Alzate (D-Dist. 60, Pawtucket, Central Falls) is the deputy floor manager.  
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