

June 10, 2020

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>



- **House Finance Committee approves 2023 state budget bill**

The House Finance Committee has approved a \$13.6 billion state budget ([2022-H 7123A](#)) for the 2023 fiscal year that provides targeted taxpayer relief and directs spending of the remainder of the state's American Rescue Act Plan (ARPA) funds to strengthening existing commitments. The budget accelerates the phase-out of the auto excise tax, adds a one-time child tax credit of \$250 per child, eliminates the fee for replacing new license plates, adds \$4 million to increase the tax credit for elderly and disabled residents, eliminates taxes on military pensions, reduces businesses' unemployment tax rates, and includes \$250 million in ARPA funds to address the housing crisis. The measure now moves to the floor of the House of Representatives, which is expected to take up the spending plan on Thursday, June 16. [Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Let RI Vote Act signed into law**

The Let RI Vote Act ([2022-H 7100A](#), [2022-S 2007A](#)) sponsored by House Majority Whip Katherine S. Kazarian (D-Dist. 63, East Providence) and Senator Dawn Euer (D-Dist. 13, Newport, Jamestown), which expands voter access while ensuring the integrity of Rhode Island elections, was signed into law by Gov. Daniel McKee. [Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Assembly votes to repeal law allowing subminimum wages for disabled workers**

The General Assembly passed legislation ([2022-H 7511](#), [2002-S 2242](#)) sponsored by Speaker of the House K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick) and Sen. John P. Burke (D-Dist. 9, West Warwick) that would repeal a law allowing employers to pay workers with disabilities below the minimum wage. The measure now moves to the

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governor's office.

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▪ **Assembly OKs bill lowering elder financial exploitation age**

The General Assembly approved legislation ([2022-S 2228](#), [2022-H 7246](#)) sponsored by Senate Judiciary Committee Chairwoman Cynthia A. Coyne (D-Dist. 32, Barrington, Bristol, East Providence) and Rep. Jason Knight (D-Dist. 67, Barrington, Warren) to lower the age at which a victim can be considered an elder under the state's elder financial exploitation law from 65 to 60. The measure now moves to the governor's office.

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▪ **General Assembly approves 'stolen valor' bill**

The General Assembly approved legislation ([2022-H 7714A](#), [2022-S 2425A](#)) sponsored by Rep. Samuel A. Azzinaro (D-Dist. 37, Westerly) and Sen. Roger A. Picard (D-Dist. 20, Woonsocket, Cumberland) that would make it a crime to fraudulently represent oneself as an active or veteran member of the military or armed forces for the purpose of obtaining money, property or other tangible benefits. The measure now moves to the governor's office.

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▪ **Legislature passes bill allowing two-tiered licensing for mental health counselors**

The General Assembly passed legislation ([2022-S 2616A](#), [2022-H 7872A](#)) introduced by Sen. Alana M. DiMario (D-Dist. 36, Narragansett, North Kingstown) and Rep. Kathleen A. Fogarty (D-Dist. 35, South Kingstown) that would address the shortage of mental health counselors by creating a two-tiered licensing structure to allow applicants as mental health associates to practice under supervision prior to becoming a licensed counselor or therapist. The measure now moves to the governor's office.

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▪ **Assembly approves bill to protect elections cybersecurity**

The General Assembly has approved legislation ([2022-H 7732](#), [2022-S 2809](#)) sponsored by Rep. Deborah Ruggiero (D-Dist. 74, Jamestown, Middletown) and Sen. Cynthia A. Coyne (D-Dist. 32, Barrington, Bristol, East Providence) to authorize the secretary of state and the Board of Elections to conduct a cybersecurity assessment of Rhode Island's elections system and create systems to protect future elections from cyberattack. The measure now moves to the governor's office.

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▪ **Assembly passes bill to set safe standards for corrosion work on public projects**

The General Assembly approved legislation ([2022-H 6613A](#), [2022-S 2303A](#)) sponsored by House Environment and Natural Resources Committee Chairman David A. Bennett (D-Dist. 20, Warwick, Cranston) and Senate Deputy Majority Whip Ana B. Quezada (D-Dist. 2, Providence) to require all corrosion prevention and mitigation work on state-funded projects to comply with best-practice standards for that industry. The measure now moves to the governor's office.

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- **Assembly approves legislation creating a U.S. Bronze Star Medal license plate**
The General Assembly approved legislation ([2022-S 2136](#), [2022-H 7514](#)) sponsored by Sen. Walter S. Felag (D-Dist. 10, Warren, Bristol, Tiverton) and Rep. John G. Edwards (D-Dist. 70, Tiverton, Portsmouth) that creates a special motor vehicle registration plate for recipients of the United States Bronze Star Medal. The measure now moves to the governor's office.
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- **General Assembly OKs bill naming trilobite RI's state fossil**
The General Assembly gave its approval to legislation ([2022-H 7908](#), [2022-S 2497](#)) sponsored by Rep. Teresa Tanzi (D-Dist. 34, South Kingstown, Narragansett) and Sen. Alana DiMario (D-Dist. 36, Narragansett, North Kingstown) on behalf of a teenage constituent to designate the trilobite Rhode Island's state fossil.
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