

March 27, 2015

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.rilin.state.ri.us/News/>



- **House passes bill outlawing the use of electronic tracking devices for stalking**
The House of Representatives voted unanimously to make it a crime to electronically track a vehicle without the consent of the owner. The bill ([2015-H 5817A](#)), sponsored by Speaker of the House Nicholas A. Mattiello, would restrict the installation, concealment or placement of an electronic tracking device in or on a motor vehicle.
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- **Senate president joins governor to highlight proposed School Building Authority**
Senate President M. Teresa Paiva-Weed (D-Dist. 13, Newport, Jamestown) joined Governor Gina M. Raimondo, General Treasurer Seth Magaziner and Newport Mayor Jeanne-Marie Napolitano at the Pell School in Newport to outline the details of the proposed School Building Authority which would create baseline adequacy standards for all of Rhode Island's schools to ensure students are learning in safe, clean, warm and dry facilities.

- **Bill allows DLT to recover fraudulent benefit payments**
Rooting out fraud in the employment benefit system should be accompanied by an effort to recover any money received by claimants as a result of fraud. Legislation ([2015-H 5937](#)) introduced by Rep. Dennis M. Canario (D-Dist. 71, Portsmouth, Little Compton, Tiverton) authorizes the Department of Labor and Training to recover overpayments made to individuals due to specific types of fraud committed by a claimant.
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More...

- **Rep. McNamara bill opens trade experience to students under 18**
House Health, Education and Welfare Chairman Joseph M. McNamara (D-Dist. 19, Warwick, Cranston) introduced a bill ([2015-H 5895](#)) that permits students under 18 years old who are attending career and technical schools to participate in career and technical internships or teacher-supervised on-site job training programs. The bill has been referred to the House Committee on Health, Education & Welfare.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Sen. Lombardi bill bans ‘pay to play’ by vendors**
Legislation introduced by Sen. Frank S. Lombardi (D-Dist. 26, Cranston) would prohibit vendors with state contracts worth more than \$5,000 in the aggregate annually from making political contributions to the officeholder whose office awarded the contract, as well as to any candidate for that office. The bill ([2015-S 0571](#)) would require that contracts of any vendors in violation be voided and it sets penalties for any political committee that accepts such a contribution. The companion House bill ([2015-H 5470](#)) was introduced by Rep. Michael J. Marcello (D-Dist. 41, Scituate, Cranston).
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- **House approves bill aimed at boosting construction industry**
The House of Representatives has passed legislation ([2015-H 5044](#)) aimed at creating a better environment for the supply of new housing and at adding construction jobs to the economy. Introduced by House Majority Whip Rep. John G. Edwards (D-Dist. 70, Tiverton, Portsmouth), the bill provides an exemption from taxation for certain residential property developments which have not been completed or, if completed, which have not been sold and remain unoccupied. A companion Senate bill ([2015-S 0559](#)) has been introduced by Sen. Michael J. McCaffrey (D-Dist. 29, Warwick).
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- **Bills require child-proof packaging on e-cigarette materials**
Legislation has been introduced in the House and Senate ([2015-H 5493](#), [2015-S 0714](#)) at the request of the Office of the Attorney General that would require child resistant packaging for e-liquid used in electronic nicotine-delivery systems such as e-cigarettes. The bills would also prohibit use of electronic nicotine-delivery systems on school property. The House bill was introduced by Rep. Helio Melo (D-Dist. 64, East Providence) and was heard this week by the House Committee on Health, Education and Welfare. The Senate bill was introduced by Senate Majority Leader Dominick J. Ruggerio (D-Dist. 4, Providence, North Providence) and is before the Senate Committee on Judiciary.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Filippi seeks constitutional amendment mandating runoff elections**
Rep. Blake Filippi (I-Dist. 36, New Shoreham, Charlestown, South Kingstown, Westerly) has introduced a resolution ([2015-H 5462](#)) to ask Rhode Island voters to amend the state constitution in the next election. The amendment would require candidates for statewide office and the General Assembly to be elected by a majority rather than a plurality vote. There would also be instant runoff elections if no

candidate gets a majority.

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- **House HEW Committee hears Rep. Tanzi bill that would raise smoking age to 21**
Focusing on the health benefits that have come from similar adoption elsewhere, Rep. Teresa Tanzi (D-Dist. 34, South Kingstown, Narragansett) testified before the House Committee on Health, Education and Welfare in support of her proposed legislation that would increase the minimum age for tobacco purchases in Rhode Island from 18 to 21. The legislation ([2015-H 5225](#)) would apply to all forms of tobacco and non-medical nicotine delivery systems, and would take effect immediately upon passage.
[Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Sen. Conley resolution shows supports for Quahog Cup tournament**
The Senate Committee on Special Legislation and Veterans' Affairs heard a resolution ([2015-S 0191](#)) introduced by Sen. William J. Conley Jr. that calls for Brown University, Bryant University, Providence College and the University of Rhode Island to negotiate a plan for a basketball tournament to be held over Thanksgiving weekend. The tournament, which would be called the Quahog Cup, would support a scholarship fund for Rhode Island public school students who wish to attend one of the four colleges.

-30-

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