

March 24, 2017

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>



- **Sen. Ruggerio elected Senate president, Sen. McCaffrey majority leader**
Sen. Dominick J. Ruggerio (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) was unanimously elected president of the Senate after Sen. M. Teresa Paiva Weed (D-Dist. 13, Newport, Jamestown) stepped down from that post after eight years to accept a position as president of the Hospital Association of Rhode Island. Sen. Michael J. McCaffrey (D-Dist. 29, Warwick) was elected majority leader by his fellow Democrats, stepping into the role previously held by the new president. Sen. Maryellen Goodwin (D-Dist. 1, Providence) will continue to serve as majority whip. [Click here to see news release.](#)
- **House passes Serpa bill to stop insurers from halting substance abuse treatment**
The House of Representatives passed legislation ([2017-H 5218](#)) introduced by Rep. Patricia Serpa (D-Dist. 27, West Warwick, Coventry, Warwick) that would keep insurers from terminating residential or inpatient substance abuse treatment for patients currently in treatment. The measure now heads to the Senate, where similar legislation ([2017-S 0501](#)) has been introduced by Sen. Elizabeth A. Crowley (D-Dist. 16, Central Falls, Pawtucket). [Click here to see news release.](#)
- **House OKs bill nixing state residency requirements for police, firefighters**
The House approved legislation ([2017-H 5351](#)) sponsored by Rep. David A. Bennett (D-Dist. 20, Warwick, Cranston) to prohibit municipal charters and ordinances from requiring that police officers and firefighters live in the state. The measure is intended to help attract the most qualified and diverse candidates available. Sen. Frank S.

More...

Lombardi (D-Dist. 26, Cranston) has introduced identical legislation ([2017-S 0512](#)) in the Senate.

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- **House passes Edwards bill allowing self-seal tires as substitute for jack, spare**
The House of Representatives has passed legislation ([2017-H 5412](#)) introduced by Majority Whip John G. Edwards (D-Dist. 70, Portsmouth, Tiverton) that would permit the selling of automobiles equipped with self-sealing tires or other technological improvements consistent with federal motor vehicle safety standards. The legislation now heads to the Senate for consideration, where similar legislation ([2017-S 0429](#)) has been introduced by Sen. Cynthia A. Coyne (D-Dist. 32, Barrington, Bristol, East Providence).
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Craven’s revenge porn and sextortion legislation passes the House**
Rep. Robert E. Craven’s (D-Dist. 32, North Kingstown) legislation ([2017-H 5304](#)) that criminalizes revenge porn and sextortion was passed by the House of Representatives. Revenge porn is sexually explicit media that is publicly shared online without the consent of the pictured individual. The legislation also creates criminal penalties for those who engage in “sextortion,” a relatively new cybercrime that occurs when offenders use personal images — often stolen or obtained by hacking — to force victims to engage in sending more sexually explicit photos or videos under threat the images will be made public. The measure now heads to the Senate, where similar legislation ([2017-S 0401](#)) has been introduced by Sen. Erin Lynch Prata (D-Dist. 31, Warwick, Cranston).
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- **Sen. Ciccone, Rep. Williams bill would give driving privileges to undocumented**
Sen. Frank A. Ciccone III (D-Dist. 7, Providence, North Providence) and Rep. Anastasia P. Williams (D-Dist. 9, Providence) held a press conference at the State House announcing legislation ([2017-S 0183](#), [2017-H 5686](#)) they have reintroduced that would allow the Division of Motor Vehicles to issue driving privilege licenses and permits to applicants unable to establish lawful presence in the United States. The licenses and permits would not be valid for identification purposes.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Canario introduces bill to make left lanes on highways passing only**
Rep. Dennis M. Canario (D-Dist. 71, Portsmouth, Little Compton, Tiverton) has introduced legislation ([2017-H 5398](#)) that would fine drivers for using the far-left lane on three-lane highways when not passing another vehicle. The legislation would fine drivers \$85 if they are caught driving in the far-left lane without passing cars in the other lanes.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Vella-Wilkinson bill would extend benefits to gay veterans**
Rep. Camille F.J. Vella-Wilkinson (D-Dist. 21, Warwick) has introduced legislation ([2017-H 5198](#)) that would extend veterans’ benefits to gay members of the armed forces who were discharged under the military’s “Undesirable” discharge when the

discharge was based on the veteran's sexual orientation.

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- **Rep. McNamara, Sen. Felag announce Livable Home Tax Credit Act**
Rep. Joseph M. McNamara (D-Dist. 19, Warwick, Cranston) and Sen. Walter S. Felag Jr. (D-Dist. 10, Warren, Bristol, Tiverton) joined with representatives of AARP Rhode Island at the State House to announce the introduction of the Rhode Island Livable Home Tax Credit Act. The legislation ([2017-H 5778](#), [2017-S 0477](#)) would provide a tax credit against the state's personal income tax for taxpayers who purchase new residences or retrofit residences that meet or are modified to meet standards that make the residences more accessible for elderly and disabled persons.
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- **Working Rhode Islanders, businesses, leaders rally for \$15 minimum wage**
Legislation ([2017-H 5595](#), [2017-S 0510](#)) sponsored by Rep. Marcia Ranglin-Vassell (D-Dist. 5, Providence) and Sen. Jeanine Calkin (D-Dist. 30, Warwick) to raise the minimum wages for hourly and tipped workers to \$15 over the next several years was the subject of a rally at which working Rhode Islanders, business owners and community urged passage.
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