

May 5, 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>



- **Senate passes pilot program tapping Medicaid to house homeless**  
The Senate approved legislation sponsored by Senate Health and Human Services Committee Chairman Joshua Miller (D-Dist. 28, Cranston, Providence) to launch a pilot program testing the use of Medicaid funds to treat chronic homelessness. The legislation ([2017-S 0745](#)) would employ Medicaid waiver funds to provide homeless individuals with behavioral health services, case management, personal care and assistance services, home and community-based services and housing support services.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate OKs bill to speed doctors' waits for insurance credentials**  
The Senate approved legislation sponsored by Sen. Gayle L. Goldin (D-Dist. 3, Providence) to institute a 45-day limit on how long a health insurer can take to issue credentials to a physician in Rhode Island. The legislation ([2017-S 0145A](#)) is intended to eliminate lengthy waits new doctors face when they apply to insurance companies for approval to see patients and receive reimbursements from them. Rep. Daniel P. McKiernan (D-Dist. 7, Providence) is sponsoring companion legislation ([2017-H 5219](#)) in the House.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Sen. Lynch Prata's grandparent rights bill passes Senate**  
The Senate passed legislation ([2017-S 0383](#)) introduced by Senate Judiciary Committee Chairwoman Erin Lynch Prata (D-Dist. 31, Warwick, Cranston) that establishes guidelines for the family court to use when deciding on petitions for visitation by grandparents. The measure now moves to the House of Representatives,

More...

where similar legislation ([2017-H 5903](#)) has been introduced by Rep. John J. Lombardi (D-Dist. 8, Providence).

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- **House passes Lancia bill to restrict number of sex offenders at homeless shelters**  
The House of Representatives has passed legislation ([2017-H 5159A](#)) introduced by Rep. Robert B. Lancia (R-Dist. 16, Cranston) that would prevent registered sex offenders from forming more than 10 percent of the population of residential facilities receiving state funding or assistance, with certain exceptions. The bill now moves to the Senate for consideration.
- **Senate passes Sosnowski bill to allow Uber, Lyft regulation on Block Island**  
The Senate has approved legislation ([2017-S 0430](#)) introduced by Sen. V. Susan Sosnowski (D-Dist. 37, South Kingstown, New Shoreham) that would exempt the town of New Shoreham from the jurisdiction of the Division of Public Utilities and Carriers for purposes of regulatory transportation network companies, and would allow the town to establish its own regulatory framework regarding the services of those companies. The bill now moves to the House of Representatives, where similar legislation ([2017-H 5650](#)) has been introduced by House Minority Whip Blake A. Filippi (R-Dist. 36, New Shoreham, Charlestown, South Kingstown, Westerly).  
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- **Senate OKs Archambault bill to promote growth in plant-based industries**  
The Senate has passed legislation ([2017-S 0095A](#)) introduced by Sen. Stephen R. Archambault (D-Dist. 22, Smithfield, North Providence, Johnston) that would require the Office of Regulatory Reform to consult with the departments of Environmental Management, Labor and Training, Revenue, and the Coastal Resources Management Council, and plant-based and agriculture industry representatives to reduce burdensome regulations. The bill now moves to the House of Representatives for consideration.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate President Ruggerio bill to enhance transparency of I-195 Commission**  
Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) has introduced legislation ([2017-S 0850](#)) to enhance the transparency of I-195 Commission meetings. The bill would result in more meetings and discussions being held in public, and it mandates that commission members must participate in ethics training.  
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- **House Minority Leader Morgan asks governor to address gypsy moth crisis**  
House Minority Leader Patricia Morgan (R-Dist. 26, West Warwick, Coventry, Warwick) sent a letter to Gov. Gina M. Raimondo asking her to address the gypsy moth crisis in Rhode Island by commencing a statewide caterpillar eradication program.  
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Vella-Wilkinson bill would prevent municipal pension fund diversion**  
Rep. Camille F.J. Vella-Wilkinson (D-Dist. 21, Warwick) has introduced legislation

([2017-H 6118](#)) that seeks to prevent the diversion of municipal pension funds to the state except in an emergency or unforeseen circumstances upon approval of the city or town council after a public hearing, and a minimum of 30 days prior written notice to affected employees.

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- **House Judiciary Committee hears Rep. Barros' Rhode Island Values Act**  
The House Committee on Judiciary heard testimony on Rep. Jean Philippe Barros' (D-Dist. 59, Pawtucket) legislation ([2017-H 6021](#)) that would enhance community protections during Immigration and Customs Enforcement actions. The legislation would identify certain community locations, defined as "sensitive locations," that would require a judicial warrant for immigration agents to access the premises.  
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- **Sen. Nesselbush holds press conference on banning youth conversion therapy**  
Sen. Donna M. Nesselbush (D-Dist. 15, Pawtucket, North Providence) held a press conference regarding legislation ([2017-S 0267](#)) that she sponsored that would prohibit licensed health care professionals from practicing conversion therapy on patients under the age of 18 years old. Conversion therapy seeks to change an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity and includes practices that intend to eliminate or reduce a person's sexual or romantic attractions or feelings toward individuals of the same sex. The House is considering similar legislation ([2017-H 5277](#)) introduced by Rep. Edith H. Ajello (D-Dist. 1, Providence).  
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**-30-**

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