

March 15, 2019

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>



- **Rep. Speakman sworn in to House of Representatives**
Rep. June S. Speakman (D-Dist. 68, Warren, Bristol) was formally sworn in to the House of Representatives. She was elected March 5 in a special election to replace Laifton Ascençao, who was elected in November, but resigned before being inaugurated.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **General Assembly votes to allow mobile sports wagering**
The General Assembly approved legislation ([2019-S 0037A](#), [2019-H 5241A](#)) introduced by Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) and Speaker of the House Nicholas A. Mattiello (D-Dist. 15, Cranston) that would allow mobile sports wagering through the Twin River casinos in Lincoln and Tiverton. The measure now heads to the governor's office.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate, House pass bills to collect sales tax from online retailers**
The Senate passed legislation ([2019-S 0251A](#)) introduced by Sen. William J. Conley Jr. (D-Dist. 18, East Providence, Pawtucket), and the House passed legislation ([2019-H 5278A](#)) introduced by Rep. Marvin L. Abney (D-Dist. 73, Newport, Middletown) that would extend the requirement to collect sales tax to remote sellers in a way that conforms to a recent U.S. Supreme Court decision making it easier for states to compel collection of the sales tax from retailers who do not have a physical presence in their state. Each bill now moves to the opposite chamber.
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More...

- **Rep. McNamara introduces homeowners bill of rights for solar energy**
Rep. Joseph M. McNamara (D-Dist. 19, Warwick, Cranston) has introduced legislation that would protect consumers by making sure that solar industry professionals are governed by fair business practices. The act ([2019-H 5133](#)) would require solar energy system retailers to provide disclosures in the retail sale or lease documents as well as the right to cancel or rescind the agreement within 90 days prior to installation, and notice of any liens filed against their residential property.
[Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Senate unveils package of economic development bills**
Senate leaders introduced “Building a More Vibrant Rhode Island,” a package of economic development bills. The legislative initiatives propose action in a number of areas, including development, workforce training, housing, education, solar energy and supporting small businesses and Rhode Island’s seafood industry.
[Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Speaker Mattiello’s bill creates teams at every school to prevent violence**
House Speaker Nicholas A. Mattiello (D-Dist. 15, Cranston) introduced legislation ([2019-H 5538](#)) to increase school safety by creating threat assessment teams in schools to serve as the “boots on the ground” in identifying potentially threatening behavior by those in the school community.
[Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Rep. Corvese files bill to protect gift card funds for consumers**
Rep. Arthur J. Corvese (D-Dist. 55, North Providence) has introduced legislation ([2019-H 5810](#)) to protect consumers from losing the value of gift cards when a business closes. The legislation would require that businesses in the state hold funds from the sales of gift cards and gift certificates in an escrow account for at least three years, or until the card or certificate is redeemed, whichever comes first.
[Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Rep. Alzate bill seeks to encourage persons of color to enter education careers**
Rep. Karen Alzate (D-Dist. 60, Pawtucket) has introduced legislation ([2019-H 5553](#)) that would create a nine-member special legislative commission to study and make recommendations for encouraging more persons of color to enter education fields.
[Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Rep. Barros named chairman of Legislative Black and Latino Caucus**
Rep. Jean Philippe Barros (D-Dist. 59, Pawtucket) has been elected as the new chairman of the Rhode Island Legislative Black and Latino Caucus by his fellow caucus members. The previous co-chairs were Rep. Shelby Maldonado (D-Dist. 56, Central Falls) and Rep. Carlos E. Tobon (D-Dist. 58, Pawtucket). The caucus lists 15 legislators as members.
[Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Sen. Sosnowski named chairwoman of re-established Fisheries Task Force**
Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) has re-established the Senate Task Force on Fisheries. The task force will be chaired by Sen. V. Susan Sosnowski (D-Dist. 37, South Kingstown, New Shoreham), who

also serves as chairwoman of the Senate Committee on Environment and Agriculture.
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