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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>



- **Senators Miller, McCaffrey introduce bill to legalize, tax and regulate cannabis**
Sen. Joshua Miller (D-Dist. 28, Cranston, Providence) and Senate Majority Leader Michael J. McCaffrey (D-Dist. 29, Warwick) unveiled legislation ([2021-S 0568](#)) to create a comprehensive tax and regulatory structure that legalizes cannabis in Rhode Island. If enacted, a Cannabis Control Commission would oversee a competitive and accessible licensing structure that would generate tax revenue through the sales tax, a special sales tax and a local sales tax.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Prescription drug affordability package introduced in Senate**
Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) and Majority Whip Maryellen Goodwin (D-Dist. 1, Providence) announced the reintroduction of a package of legislation in the Senate to address the high cost of prescription drugs. The eight-bill package aims to protect consumers by limiting copays for insulin, capping out-of-pocket expenses for high deductible plans, requiring health insurers to cover preventive colorectal cancer screening, eliminating clauses hidden in pharmacy contracts that prevent a pharmacist from talking about more affordable options, requiring transparent pricing information, importing wholesale prescription drugs from Canada, and creating a board responsible for evaluating and ensuring drug prices are affordable. Also, Rep. Mia Ackerman (D-Dist. 45, Cumberland, Lincoln) introduced ([2021-H 5494](#)) legislation that would provide transparency to the cost of prescription drugs.
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[Click here to see Ackerman release.](#)

More...

- **House OKs bill allowing pharmacists to prescribe birth control**
The House of Representatives passed legislation ([2021-H 5241](#)) introduced by Rep. Camille F.J. Vella-Wilkinson (D-Dist. 21, Warwick) that would authorize a pharmacist to prescribe and dispense hormonal contraceptive patches and self-administered oral hormonal contraceptives, provided that the pharmacist has completed a training program approved by the state board of pharmacy. The measure now moves to the Senate, where similar legislation ([2021-S 0488](#)) has been introduced by Sen. Kendra Anderson (D-Dist. 31, Warwick, Cranston).
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- **Senate passes Dignity at Work Act to combat workplace bullying**
The Senate passed legislation ([2021-S 0196](#)) introduced by Sen. Frank A. Ciccone (D-Dist. 7, Providence, North Providence) that would provide workers with more protection from bullying and harassment in the workplace. The bill would recognize and protect the right to dignity in the workplace, and prevent, detect, remedy and eliminate all forms of workplace bullying and harassment that infringe upon that right.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **House OKs bill that excludes chronic pain from prescribing guidelines**
The House of Representatives passed legislation ([2021-H 5247](#)) introduced by Rep. Gregg Amore (D-Dist. 65, East Providence) that would exclude chronic intractable pain from the definition of “acute pain management” for the purposes of prescribing opioid medication. The bill calls for new guidelines for the treatment of chronic intractable pain to be based upon the consideration of the individualized needs of patients suffering. Sen. Valarie J. Lawson (D-Dist. 14, East Providence) has introduced the legislation ([2021-S 0384](#)) in the Senate.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate votes to require civics, create career/academic plans for students**
The Senate passed two bills sponsored by Sen. Hanna M. Gallo (D-Dist. 27, Cranston, West Warwick) to make civics education a graduation requirement for all high schoolers ([2021-S 0076aa](#)), and to require the creation of personal career and academic plans for every student starting at Grade 6 ([2021-S 0285](#)).
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- **House OKs Bennett bill to allow students sunscreen in schools**
Students in Rhode Island schools will not be denied the right to possess and apply sunscreen under legislation ([2021-H 5164](#)) sponsored by Rep. David Bennett (D-Dist. 20, Warwick, Cranston) and unanimously approved by the House. The bill now goes to the Senate, where Senate Health and Human Services Committee Chairman Joshua Miller (D-Dist. 28, Cranston, Providence) is sponsoring companion legislation ([2021-S 0034](#)).
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Euer bill bans evictions during emergencies, creates eviction-diversion program**
The Senate Judiciary Committee heard legislation ([2021-S 0183](#)) sponsored by Sen. Dawn Euer (D-Dist. 13, Newport, Jamestown) to impose a moratorium on nonessential residential evictions and mortgage foreclosures during a state of

emergency and establish an eviction-diversion program to resolve landlord-tenant eviction disputes. Rep. Grace Diaz (D-Dist.11, Providence) is sponsoring the bill ([2021-H 5309](#)) in the House.

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▪ **Goldin, Cassar file bill to expand TCI**

Pointing to its use to help Rhode Islanders weather the COVID-19 pandemic for the last year, Sen. Gayle L. Goldin (D-Dist. 3, Providence) and Rep Liana Cassar (D-Dist. 66, Barrington, East Providence) have introduced legislation ([2021-S 0436](#), [2021-H 5789](#)) to expand the state’s paid family leave program. Their legislation would make Rhode Island’s Temporary Caregiver Insurance (TCI) program a stronger support for those who need it, and open it up to the self-employed and those who work in the gig economy.

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▪ **Senate, House pass resolution celebrating International Women’s Day**

The Senate and House of Representatives passed a resolution ([2021-S 0565](#), [2021-H 6106](#)) introduced by Sen. Sandra Cano (D-Dist. 8, Pawtucket) and Rep. Susan Donovan (D-Dist. 69, Bristol) respectively, celebrating International Women’s Day. This year’s theme of the annual celebration is “Choose to Challenge,” which highlights the struggle to create an inclusive world for all. International Women’s Day is a day to acknowledge the plight of women and to reflect on the achievements of women and the fight for gender equality. It is also a day to acknowledge the strides the world has taken in advancing women’s rights, freedoms and protections.

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