

May 28, 2021

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>



- **Rhode Island Promise program permanently enacted**

The Assembly approved and the governor signed into law legislation ([2021-H 5224A](#), [2021-H 0097A](#)) sponsored by House Speaker K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick) and Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) to eliminate the expiration date on the Rhode Island Promise program, which provides up to two years of free tuition for eligible Rhode Islanders at Community College of Rhode Island. The program is now permanent. [Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Nursing Home Staffing and Quality Care Act signed into law**

After final approval from the General Assembly, the governor signed into law the Nursing Home Staffing and Quality Care Act, sponsored by Senate Majority Whip Maryellen Goodwin (D-Dist. 1, Providence) and Rep. Scott A. Slater (D-Dist. 10, Providence). In addition to establishing a minimum standards of 3.58 hours of resident care per day by Jan. 1, 2022, and 3.81 hours of resident care per day beginning Jan. 1, 2023, the bill ([2021-S 0002A](#), [2021-H 5012Aaa](#)) provides funding to raise wages for direct care staff to help recruit and retain a qualified workforce. [Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Legislature OKs bill naming airport Rhode Island T.F. Green International**

The General Assembly passed legislation ([2021-S 0519](#), [2021-H 6051](#)) introduced by Majority Leader Michael J. McCaffrey (D-Dist. 29, Warwick) and House Speaker Pro Tempore Brian Patrick Kennedy (D-Dist. 38, Hopkinton, Westerly) that would rename the state airport in Warwick “Rhode Island T.F. Green International Airport.”

More...

The measure now moves to the governor's office.

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- **Lawmakers OK bill to develop statewide standards in consumer education**
The General Assembly passed legislation introduced by Deputy Majority Whip Mia A. Ackerman (D-Dist. 45, Cumberland, Lincoln) and Sen. Sandra Cano (D-Dist. 8, Pawtucket) that would require statewide standards in consumer education. The legislation ([2021-H 5491](#), [2021-S 0349](#)) would require the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education, in consultation with the Rhode Island Department of Education, to develop and approve the standards in public high schools no later than Dec. 31, 2021. The measure now moves to the governor's office.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **General Assembly bill excludes chronic pain from medication guidelines**
The General Assembly passed Rep. Gregg Amore (D-Dist. 65, East Providence) and Sen. Valarie J. Lawson's (D-Dist. 14, East Providence) legislation ([2021-H 5247A](#), [2021-S 0384A](#)) that would exclude chronic intractable pain from the definition of "acute pain management" for the purposes of prescribing opioid medication. The bill now heads to the governor for consideration.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Senate passes Lawson's bill to increase temporary caregiver benefits**
The Senate passed legislation sponsored by Sen. Valarie J. Lawson (D-Dist. 14, East Providence) that would increase temporary caregiver benefits for Rhode Islanders. The bill ([2021-S 0688](#)) increases benefits to six weeks in a benefit year starting Jan. 1, 2022 and would increase benefits to eight weeks in a benefit year beginning Jan. 1, 2023. House Majority Whip Katherine S. Kazarian (D-Dist. 63, East Providence) has sponsored the legislation ([2021-H 6090](#)) in the House.
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- **Senate passes bill requiring schools to provide feminine hygiene products**
The Senate passed legislation sponsored by Sen. Valarie J. Lawson (D-Dist. 14, East Providence) that would require all public schools to provide feminine hygiene products at no cost to students. The bill ([2021-S 0086](#)) states that at the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year, all public schools teaching grades 6 through 12 shall make feminine hygiene products available in the schools. Rep. Carol Hagan McEntee (D-Dist. 33, South Kingstown, Narragansett) has introduced similar legislation ([2021-H 5083](#)) in the House.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **House passes bill to allow restaurants to continue COVID-19 modifications**
The House of Representatives passed Rep. Carol Hagan McEntee's (D-Dist. 33, South Kingstown, Narragansett) legislation ([2021-H 6119Aaa](#)) that imposes a six-month moratorium on enforcement of municipal ordinances or zoning requirements that penalizes owners of food service establishments for modifications such as outdoor seating to their premises in response to an emergency declaration. The moratorium would be effective during the period of emergency and for six months

after the emergency declarations is rescinded or until Jan. 1, 2022, whichever occurs first. Sen. Alana M. DiMario (D-Dist. 36, Narragansett, North Kingstown) has introduced similar legislation ([2021-S 0654](#)) in the Senate.

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▪ **House passes bill that eliminates the marital sexual assault exemption**

The House of Representatives passed Rep. Robert E. Craven's (D-Dist. 32, North Kingstown) legislation ([2021-H 6155](#)) that eliminates the marital sexual assault exception when a victim is incapacitated, disabled, or helpless. Sen. Dawn Euer (D-Dist. 13, Newport, Jamestown) has sponsored the legislation ([2021-S 0834](#)) in the Senate.

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▪ **House passes bill establishing African-American history education in schools**

The House of Representatives passed Rep. Anastasia P. Williams' (D-Dist. 9, Providence) legislation ([2021-H 5697aa](#)) that would incorporate African heritage history education in all Rhode Island elementary and secondary schools. Sen. Tiara Mack (D-Dist. 6, Providence) has introduced the bill ([2021-S 0458](#)) in the Senate.

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