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FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Sponsors: Jordan French, Dennis Galligher, Adam Barboza-Simpkins

An Act To: Expand the Security of Voting Rights

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: The purpose of this bill is to ensure the integrity and security of Rhode Island's general elections by mandating annual audits of the state's election facilities just before each general election. These audits will help identify and address potential vulnerabilities, ensuring that voting systems, equipment, and processes are secure and functioning properly. This bill also ensures that the state's funding toward these facilities is being used accordingly. By conducting thorough checks every year, the bill aims to prevent errors, fraud, and security threats, building public confidence in the election process as well as cutting any unnecessary spending from the election process— saving large sums of money that can be used for other necessities. Ultimately, it seeks to safeguard the fairness and transparency of elections, protecting citizens' right to a secure and accurate vote.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Election Facilities: Any physical or virtual location where election-related activities occur, including but not limited to polling stations, vote-counting centers, and data processing hubs used in Rhode Island's general elections.

Audit: A comprehensive, systematic review and evaluation of election facilities, equipment, processes, and security measures to assess their functionality, accuracy, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

General Election: The regular election held in Rhode Island to elect public officials, including statewide, legislative, and local elections, conducted on a set date established by state law.

Vulnerabilities: Any weaknesses or gaps in election infrastructure, processes, or systems that could potentially compromise the security, accuracy, or integrity of the election.

Cybersecurity: The protection of election systems and data from unauthorized access, cyberattacks, or malicious interference, including threats to voting machines, databases, and communication networks.

Transparency: The principle that election processes and results are open to scrutiny, providing the public and oversight bodies with clear access to information and documentation related to the election.



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1 Election Fraud: Any intentional act of deception or manipulation that undermines
2 the fairness, accuracy, or legality of the election process, including tampering with
3 ballots, vote tallying, or voter identification.

4 Election Equipment: The hardware and software used in conducting elections, such
5 as voting machines, tabulators, scanners, and any other technology involved in the
6 casting, counting, or reporting of votes.

7 Compliance: Adherence to relevant state and federal election laws, regulations,
8 standards, and guidelines designed to ensure fair, secure, and accurate elections.

9 **Section 2: Provisions**

10 This bill would not amend any law put into place.

11 **Justification:** \$10 million dollars is allocated from the state treasury every year for
12 the maintenance of voting facilities in Rhode Island. This bill would provide a
13 mandatory audit for these facilities to track the spending of the state's funding to
14 ensure that there is no form of embezzlement or espionage. Funding will only be
15 redacted if there is definitive evidence proving the negligence of the state's funding.

16
17 **Fiscal Implications:** Displacement of state funding (if any) above \$10,000 or
18 more will result in a \$50,000 fine as well as a thorough investigation. Any
19 displacement of state funding (if any) above \$100,000 or more will result in a fine
20 of \$500,000 as well as a lawsuit.

21
22 **Environmental Implications:** There are no environmental implications.

23
24 **Effective Date:** This law will go into effect in January 2026.



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Sponsors: Isabella Giammarco, Mia Dieffenbach,

An Act To: Town and City Roadway Beautification Act

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: The bill's purpose is to fix the terrible roads in Rhode Island

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Town and City shall refer to any populated area in the State of Rhode Island.

Roadway shall refer to the part of a road intended for motor vehicles.

Beautification shall refer to improving appearance. Town and City shall refer to any populated area in the State of Rhode Island.

Section 2: Provisions

1. This bill will keep up with beautification and make Rhode Island a more appealing state to visitors, residents, and businesses. It will also decrease each motorist's cost for repairs. It is more typical for roads to remain damaged than be repaired.

2. Cities and towns are responsible for repairing any of their damaged roads by the September 30th date after the discovery of the damage. This requires an annual inspection. Roads that pass through more than one city/town (example, Mineral Spring Avenue) will be the responsibility of the city/town in which the portion of the road is located. The exception is damage caused by any public utility or construction company contracting with the town or city.

3. A worker for the Department of Transportation will be responsible for examining roads, taking up-to-date pictures of them, and submitting those pictures back to the Department of Transportation between March 1-April 30 of every year. The Department of Transportation will keep the pictures on file.

4. It will be the responsibility of the Department of Transportation to compare images of the current year with those of the previous year in order to determine which roads need repairs and will alert cities and towns to those damages. This will be completed by June 30th of each year.

5. Cities and towns will then set up schedules for the repairs and will alert residents about potential dates of road closings and an approximation of how long the road(s) might be closed for repair.

6. Cities and towns will send pictures of the newly-repaired roads by August 31st to the Department of Transportation, who will either accept repairs or request further repairs. If further repairs are requested, the city or town will have 30 days to complete them.



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7. It will be up to the cities and towns of Rhode Island to determine how to pay for damages, whether it be to raise taxes, reallocate funds, or come up with a completely different methodology, because costs may vary from year to year.

8. Cities and towns will be eligible to apply for funding for repairs of any and all roads that are considered state roads. A map of state highways and public roads can be found at <https://www.dot.ri.gov/about/maproom/index.php>.

Justification: The Town and City Roadway Beautification Act will work to stop the continuing issue of roadway neglect that occurs in the State of Rhode Island. According to a 2021 report by worldpopulation.com, Rhode Island currently ranks number one on the list of worst roads in the United States, with 53% of its roads in poor condition. These poor conditions cost each motorist about \$823, the third-highest in the country. In addition, they act as a disincentive for tourists to visit and businesses to relocate. It is the hope that this bill will prevent any further damage to the Ocean State's roadways and will increase the attractiveness and inhabitability of the place that we call home

Fiscal Implications: 1. Any city or town that fails to provide pictures by the specified date will be given a warning by the Department of Transportation and a date by which pictures must be submitted.

2. If a city or town does not comply with this requirement, that city or town will be fined \$1,000 for a first offense. If the city or town remains out of compliance, the chief executive officer of the city or town will be required to appear in person before the Director of the Department of Transportation and provide both a written and oral response explaining the noncompliance. The Director will determine whether any additional fines are in order and will work with the chief executive officer to set up an acceptable schedule to complete the project.

Environmental Implications: 1. Not applicable Any city or town that fails to provide pictures by the specified date will be given a warning by the Department of Transportation and a date by which pictures must be submitted.

2. If a city or town does not comply with this requirement, that city or town will be fined \$1,000 for a first offense. If the city or town remains out of compliance, the chief executive officer of the city or town will be required to appear in person before the Director of the Department of Transportation and provide both a written and oral response explaining the noncompliance. The Director will determine whether



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any additional fines are in order and will work with the chief executive officer to set
up an acceptable schedule to complete the project.

Effective Date: 46023



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Sponsors: Logan Hoard, ,

An Act To: Increase and Standardize Public Defender's Salary

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: The general purpose of this bill is to Increase and Standardize the Salary of Public Defenders as a method of increasing the amount of public defenders in the state and addressing the serious understaffing faced by the public defender's office

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Public Defender shall refer to a lawyer employed at public expense in a criminal trial to represent a defendant who is unable to afford legal assistance.

Public Prosecutor shall refer to a law officer who conducts criminal proceedings on behalf of the government or in the public interest.

Appropriation shall refer to a law of Congress that provides an agency with budget authority

General Assembly shall refer to the legislature of the State of Rhode Island

Section 2: Provisions

a) All public defenders will receive an immediate payment of \$10,000, as well as a later standardized salary fixed by the general assembly

b) This is aimed at closing the wide pay gap between the salaries of public prosecutors and public defenders, as well as improving the unfair conditions faced by public defenders, increasing morale, creating a more fair and equitable justice system, lessening the turnover of public defense, and incentivising prospective public defenders to consider working as one.

d) This standardised salary will go into effect the January 1, 2026

Justification: Throughout the nation, public defenders are notoriously overworked and underpaid. A study conducted by NACDL showed that in order to provide the necessary minimum representation for the over 15,000 new cases assigned each year, the state of Rhode Island would have to employ 136 full time public defenders- as of the last time there was a known amount, there were 49. This makes sense when you realize that the understaffing seen in the RI public defender's office is due in large part to the absolutely horrendous pay they receive, resulting in many turning over to private practice. On average, public defenders make \$18,000 less than public prosecutors- a number which keeps ballooning up each and every year. The goal of this bill is to curb this effect, and standardize pay across the board for all public defenders in the state of Rhode Island, setting them



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Sponsors: Logan Hoard, ,

on track to make more, which will incentivise public defense and lessen the burden this severe understaffing has had on public defenders in the State of Rhode Island.

Fiscal Implications: This bill will amend § 36-6-5 (Manner of compensation prescribed by appropriation law), now including public defenders in the group of people who are not paid based on the amount of money given to Rhode Island in any of the 12 (twelve) appropriation acts set out by Congress annually.

Environmental Implications: N/A

Effective Date: Effective January 1, 2026



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Sponsors: Ajax Holmer, ,

An Act To: to Ban The Sale and For-Profit Exchange of Art Generated by Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: This bill will ban the sale of AI-generated art, protecting the livelihood of artists.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Artificial Intelligence (AI) shall refer to programs that scrape data from the internet to produce text, images, audio, or other media based on a user-requested prompt. AI-generated art or "AI art" shall refer to art that was generated using an artificial intelligence program such as Midjourney, Night Cafe, DALLÉ-2, Dream by WOMBO, and other similar algorithms.

A commissioned artist shall refer to someone who is paid by another party to produce a piece of art.

Copyright shall refer to a form of licensing that protects original works from being stolen and reproduced without the creator's consent.

Fair use shall refer to a doctrine that permits that, in some circumstances, copyright can be somewhat waived without permission of the creator if the work is being criticized, reported on, used in educational material, or for research.

The Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) shall refer to a law that protects copyright holders from having their work unlawfully reproduced and distributed.

A cease and desist shall refer to a notice that informs a person to stop an illegal action immediately upon notification, otherwise legal action will be taken.

Willful infringement shall refer to the act of copyright infringement with full intent and deliberation of stealing from the original creator.

Section 2: Provisions

1. The use of AI-generated art in advertising and marketing is prohibited.
2. AI art shall not be sold, exchanged for profit, or entered into competitions for money.
3. Commissioned artists must clearly and explicitly disclose if their art is created from AI-generated services.
4. AI art generators shall not be allowed to request payment from their users in exchange for use of their services.
5. AI-art generator websites such as Midjourney, Night Cafe, Dream by WOMBO, and other similar websites shall keep a public record of art generated on their



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platforms. If a piece of art is suspected to be AI generated, a simple reverse-image search will redirect the user to the public record.

6. In accordance with the US Copyright Office's declaration that AI art cannot be copyrighted and does not constitute fair use, if a website user suspects a piece of work is AI-generated and being used for profit, they can report the post to the website host and have it removed (to stay in operation, all website hosts are already required to have a copyright reporting system in compliance with the DMCA).

7. If the data an AI art generator is scrapping is only free-use, public domain work, this bill does not apply to the for-profit work it creates.

8. If an artist intentionally and willingly relinquishes the rights of a piece of work to an AI-art generator, this bill does not apply to the for-profit work it creates.

9. If an individual or organization is discovered violating this act, they will be notified and sent a cease and desist. For standard violation, if this cease and desist is not heeded, the violator will be charged a fine of \$750 for each infringement.

10. The damages can vary in terms of the extent of the infringement. In accordance with the Copyright Office, if the case is one of willful infringement, then it is a criminal case, and the violator can be awarded up to \$150,000 per offense.

Justification: AI generated art is created by an algorithm scrubbing the work of thousands of arts from the web without their consent. Some artists have their entire portfolios sampled by these algorithms with the express intent by the AI's creators to replicate their style and reproduce their art without any form of credit nor compensation. This fact is made even more egregious when taken into account that many AI art websites, such as Midjourney, charge on a subscription-based service for the use of their generators, with zero proceeds being given to the sampled artists' work.

In addition, AI art is not protected under fair use. By taking this data without consent of the creator, the AI algorithm infringes on the copyright that is granted to all media posted to the internet. Furthermore, AI "artists" purposefully mislead their audiences by claiming their work to be completely original. Art generated by AI is created from stolen content and actively harms the welfare of artists and the integrity of the art industry. Therefore, as stolen work, AI art should be prohibited from being exchanged for profit and for being used for advertising purposes.

Fiscal Implications: Artificially-generated art will not be available for sale or advertising. This will encourage companies and clients to seek out artists to create



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Sponsors: Ajax Holmer, ,

their advertising and commission material, promoting commerce within Rhode Island's art industry.

Environmental Implications: The generation of a single piece of AI art takes 0.011 kilowatt hours of electricity, which is equivalent to charging half of a smartphone's battery. The data centers that power generative AI tools require water to cool them down, which leads to a further environmental strain. By limiting the for-profit exchange of AI art, less energy will be allocated towards AI art generation, allowing environmental resources to be saved.

Effective Date: This bill will take effect on June 20th, 2025.



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Sponsors: Eilidh Thomson, ,

An Act To: An Act to Register Gun Ownership

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: To create a Rhode Island registry of gun ownership and quantities.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Register shall refer to the act of adding to an official registry/record.

Gun shall mean any device designed to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive, gas, or mechanical means. This includes, but is not limited to, rifles, shotguns, handguns, pistols, revolvers, and any other weapon that can expel a projectile and is capable of being legally possessed under state and federal law.

Ownership shall refer to the legal act or right of possession over a given thing.

Blue Card shall refer to the Possession of a Pistol/Revolver Safety Certificate that is a required document as part of the process of purchasing a firearm in Rhode Island.

Section 2: Provisions

All individuals who own a firearm in Rhode Island must be registered as gun owners with the Office of the Attorney General within two (2) years of this bill's implementation. This registry shall be maintained and updated by the Attorney General's office.

To register a firearm, the owner must submit an official "Blue Card," issued by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, to the Attorney General's office for verification and approval.

When a Rhode Island resident purchases a firearm within the state, the seller is required to withhold delivery of the firearm until the Attorney General's office verifies the purchaser's registration status.

Upon successful registration and verification, the firearm may be transferred to the purchaser.

Justification: There is a strong interest for this legislative body to encourage responsible gun practices, ensure gun owner accountability, and lessen burdens for law enforcement during the investigation and prevention of violent crimes. From a public safety standpoint, gun registries allow authorities to more easily identify owners of firearms used in crimes, trace firearms to their original purchasers, confiscate known firearms from individuals who become prohibited possessors, reduce gun theft, and return firearms to their rightful owners - being conscious of the fact that stolen weapons are increasingly common in violent crimes, and having



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Sponsors: Eilidh Thomson, ,

a registry can help monitor where guns end up after theft - help police solve violent crimes, identify repeat offenders, and much more. Rhode Island cares about the Second Amendment rights of its residents, and it also cares about their safety, and registries are a simple way to enhance safety without restricting legal gun ownership and possession.

Fiscal Implications: Initial government spending on administrative processes, database management, enforcement, and legal defense. Potential revenue from registration fees may offset some costs.

Environmental Implications: Increased paperwork and resource use, but the impact can be minimized with digital infrastructure. Proper disposal and reduced illegal dumping of firearms could provide long-term environmental benefits.

Effective Date: January 1st, 2026



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Sponsors: Alexandra Martens, ,

An Act To: Allocate Students 35 Minutes for LunchAllocate Students 35 Minutes for Lunch

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: Extend student lunch times in Rhode Island to allow students enough time to take a break from classes and be able to enjoy their lunch without having to rush eating and worry about not being able to finish their meals in time. allows students enough time to take a break from classes and be able to enjoy their lunch without having to rush eating and worry about not being able to finish their meals in time.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Lunch refers to the time students take during a school day to break from classes, eat lunch, and return to classes.

Lunch areas refer to the place where students are meant to consume lunch in schools. Lunch refers to the time students take during a school day to break from classes, eat lunch, and return to classes.

Section 2: Provisions

Every school in Rhode Island should allocate 35 minutes out of the school day for students to have lunch, including the time it takes for students to leave class, go to their designated lunch areas, eat, and return to classes. Every school in Rhode Island should allocate 35 minutes out of the school day for students to have lunch, including the time it takes for students to leave class, go to their designated lunch areas, eat, and return to classes.

Justification: This bill is important because it allows students enough time to take a break from classes and be able to enjoy their lunch without having to rush eating and worry about not being able to finish their meals in time. Students in Rhode Island public schools are currently allocated at least 20 minutes for a lunch break, including time given to get to and from lunch and classes. This is not nearly enough time for students to be given an actual break to consume lunch at their own pace, which is the purpose of this class break. Given taking time out of classes and learning is an important factor to consider in allocating time for lunch, which is why 35 minutes is a perfect amount of time as it doesn't take too much time out of classes yet still allows students just enough time to be able to break for lunch and get to and from the designated lunch rooms to class.



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Sponsors: Alexandra Martens, ,

324 **Fiscal Implications:** N/A

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326 **Environmental Implications:** N/A

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328 **Effective Date:** This shall take effect in the 2026-2027 school year in high schools
329 across the state of Rhode Island.



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Sponsors: Ava McGrath, Emma Landreth,

An Act To: An Act To Regulate Pet Breeders

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: The purpose of this bill is to reduce overflow within animal shelters and strays, encourage proper licensing and improve animal welfare.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Section One:

Regulate shall refer to control of the supply, sales, licensing and petcare of pet breeders within Rhode Island.

Backyard Breeders shall refer to inadequate breeding practices where animals are not properly selected for genetic and or behavioral qualities, are not properly socialized, and can be raised in poor conditions.

Animals refers to typical household pets such as dogs, cats, hamsters, rabbits, ferrets, etc.

Breeder shall refer to a person who breed

Section 2: Provisions

Section Two:

a.) In order to purposely breed any animal within the state of Rhode Island, it's required to have a state-issued license and comply with the strict guidelines.

b.) Breeders are required to include license numbers in advertisements for animals.

c.) Each time a breeder makes a sale, they must fill out a contract confirming that the animal is to be returned to the breeder if the buyer cannot care for it, this will reduce the amount of dumped animals and overflowing shelters.

d.) All towns of Rhode Island must apply to the same state animal laws that require proper breeding permits and housing limits to ensure correct monitoring over animal breeding and welfare.

Justification: Applying stricter laws to regulate improper breeding will help reduce overpopulation in shelters and lower the amount of stray animals dumped on Rhode Island streets. Uneducated pet buyers do so much harm to the pet industry, improperly bred animal breeds can develop behavioral and health problems deliberately impacting bred standards. Making it harder for backyard breeders to evade state pet regulations will make it safer and more healthy for our pets.



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Sponsors: Ava McGrath, Emma Landreth,

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Fiscal Implications: This bill doesn't require a budget, all fines within the bill will go to the State of Rhode Island.

Environmental Implications: This bill would not have any environmental implication, except help keep stray animals off the streets.

Effective Date: June 1st 2025



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Sponsors: Sydney Pavao, Meagan Mulcahey,

An Act To: Banning the Sale of Cars with LED Headlights

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: Stop dealerships from selling cars with LED headlights on them.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Halogen light: The type of headlight that was used before LED headlights were made, similar to incandescent lights. Generally less bright than LED lights.

LED light: A type of light that is able to produce brighter light than halogen

Astigmatism: An imperfection in the eyes curvature that can cause light to appear fuzzy or streaky, making it hard to see.

Section 2: Provisions

Any car dealership within Rhode Island must not sell cars that are manufactured with LED headlights or resell cars that have aftermarket LED headlights put in them.

Justification: LED headlights are more expensive than halogen lights. A single LED headlight bulb costs on average \$70 while a two pack of halogen lights costs on average \$30. Also, the brightness of LED headlights can impair other drivers, especially those with an astigmatism. Thirty three percent of people in the US have astigmatism. The harsh light from LED headlights can cause headaches and eye pain from not being able to adjust to light quickly. The light is concentrated in the very center which can blind drivers and make them unable to see other cars on the road at night.

Fiscal Implications: Dealerships would have to pay to replace the LED headlights with Halogen headlights.

Environmental Implications: None

Effective Date: This bill would go into effect on January 1st, 2026.



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Sponsors: Aaron Chellel, Fatim Ndiaye,

An Act To: Keep Public School Students Nourished

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: To ensure that every public school student in the state has the opportunity to get a school provided breakfast and lunch at school.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

1. Public school shall refer to any school classified as a public school by the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE)
2. School provided lunch shall refer to a meal provided to students, in the designated lunch time, by the school which that student is enrolled in.
3. School provided breakfast shall refer to a meal provided to students, in the designated breakfast time, by the school which that student is enrolled in.

Section 2: Provisions

1. No student enrolled in any public school shall be charged for the following:
 - a. School provided lunch*.
 - b. School provided breakfast*.
2. Violation of this act shall be a fee of \$5,000 to the school district which is not complying. This fee will be per each violation.

*Only one per day to be allowed

Justification: In Rhode Island, education has been an area that has needed work and that the government has been continuously trying to improve. In order for Rhode Island's public school students to improve and work as hard as they can, the state needs to help fulfill their nutritional needs. When students are well fed, they perform well. During the COVID-19 pandemic, students were able to get a free lunch from their school to take home and eat. This system let students eat at home, whether they were qualified for free or reduced lunch or not. Some kids may not eat because, while they don't qualify for free lunch, they still cannot afford to eat. Rhode Island shouldn't let kids go hungry.

Fiscal Implications: Estimated at \$36,000,000

Environmental Implications: N/A



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Sponsors: Aaron Chellel, Fatim Ndiaye,

443 **Effective Date:** Effective on the first day of school of the 2025-2026 school year.



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Sponsors: Angelina Pereira, ,

An Act To: Improve flood mitigation

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: To provide extra preventatives against flooding in certain Rhode Island towns and increase hazard mitigation in high-risk flood areas.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Hazard mitigation shall refer to the effort to reduce impacts from natural hazards through community planning, policy changes, educational programs, infrastructure projects, and other activities.

Road drain shall refer to a structure designed to direct water along, across, or underneath a road.

Floodwall shall refer to a freestanding, permanent, engineered structure designed to prevent encroachment of floodwaters

Flood-inundation maps shall refer to a set of maps that show the spatial extent and depth of flooding at specific water-level (stream stage) intervals along an individual stream section.

Section 2: Provisions

Road drains in the towns of West Warwick and Cranston will be inspected no less than three (3) times per year by each town's respective public works departments.

Flood walls will be built along high-risk areas of the Pawtuxet River based on the flood-inundation maps for the Pawtuxet River in West Warwick, Warwick, and Cranston, Rhode Island. (available at pubs.usgs.gov) Each town must submit a construction plan for review by the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency. (RIEMA)

Existing floodplains along the Pawtuxet River will not be impacted by this bill and shall not be built upon.

Justification: Many Rhode Island towns have been susceptible to frequent flash flooding over many decades, and despite continuous efforts to reduce this, the basements of homes, parking lots of commercial buildings, and high-traffic streets still experience flooding during moderate to heavy rainfall. Two major factors contributing to flooding in the towns affected by this bill are clogged and overflowing road drains, as well as the overflow of the Pawtuxet River. Various measures have been implemented to reduce flooding in these areas, but none have involved the construction of physical barriers. Instead of demolishing and relocating



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Sponsors: Angelina Pereira, ,

homes and small businesses, this bill aims to create a permanent solution that will protect all existing infrastructure.

Fiscal Implications: The cost of construction and maintenance of flood walls shall be determined by the West Warwick, Cranston, and Warwick public works departments through cost analysis.

State grants will be allocated to each town towards the construction of floodwalls, the amount will be decided by the RIEMA based upon construction plans.

All routine management and upkeep funding of the floodwalls will be sourced from local taxes.

Environmental Implications: Not only will the provisions of this bill act to prevent flooding of Rhode Island homes and infrastructures, but will reduce stormwater pollution in local waterways. As listed in the provisions, floodplains will not be negatively impacted by the construction of floodwalls.

Effective Date: This bill will take effect in January 2026. Each town will be required to submit floodwall construction plans within one (1) year and begin construction within two (2) years of RIEMA approval.



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Sponsors: Dimyana Shenoda, ,

An Act To: An Act to Ban Cell Phones in Schools

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: This bill will ban cell phone use by students in all Rhode Island schools during school hours.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Phone shall be defined as any cell phone, smart phone, watch, or other device capable of web browsing and possessing an operating system (OS) with the exception of computers and tablets.

School shall refer to any institution, public or private, created for the education of children in/between preschool through grade twelve.

School hours are when school is in session, including but not limited to homeroom, lunch, assemblies, recess, and classes.

Section 2: Provisions

a) Rhode Island schools educating children in/between the grades of preschool through grade 12 must ban students utilizing phones during school hours.

b) Students may use their cell phones devices in the following circumstances:

1. With permission from an instructor;
2. In case of an emergency;
3. and/or when a licensed physician has deemed utilization of the device during school hours necessary to the student's wellbeing.

Justification: In light of the myriad perils to education and mental health presented by cell phones, it is prudent to remove them from schools. According to the Pew Research Center, this danger is especially prevalent for adolescents in the United States, 95% of whom have access to a cell phone. The average adolescent opens their phone 51 times a day, but many do so far more—some as many as 500 times per day, as stated by Common Sense Media. The Pew Study found that 46% of adolescents confessed to being online nearly constantly and 36% divulged that they spend far too much time on social media. Constant access to cell phones is particularly detrimental to children because their brains are still developing and they possess less restraint over their impulses than adults. Cell phones damage students' educational performances—the Pew Study shows 72% of high school teachers find phone use a significant difficulty in classrooms. In fact, some research



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Sponsors: Dimyana Shenoda, ,

shows that it takes a person about twenty minutes to refocus after checking their phones. Each additional ten minutes of cell phone use is correlated with a stable decrease in academic achievement. A study in the International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction, found a correlation between adolescents with higher rates of depression and greater social media use. Additionally, the ability to use phones during free time and lunch often prompts students to socialize far less with others and instead individually operate their phones. Furthermore, phone accessibility prompts students to spend less time outside and more time indoors on their phones.

These problems, however, can be easily ameliorated; disallowing phones in schools generally causes academic performance and mental health to improve. For example, an Australian study found the test scores of 16-year olds and older to improve 6.4% after the prohibiting of cell phones in their schools. A UNESCO 14-country study shows that countries which enforce phone restrictions generally have enhanced academic achievements and fewer incidents of bullying. In order to protect its students' wellbeing both in health and academics, Rhode Island must ban cell phones from its schools.

Fiscal Implications: This bill does not have any fiscal implications.

Environmental Implications: This bill does not have any environmental implications.

Effective Date: This bill shall go into effect at the beginning of the 2025–2026 school year.



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Sponsors: Maddison Ashman, ,

An Act To: An Act to reduce the amount of recyclable plastic and aluminum waste from landfills in RI.

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: Purpose

The amount of recyclable litter has a devastating impact on the environment and natural ecosystem in Rhode Island. To encourage consumers to recycle recyclable materials like bottles, this bill will add a 10 cent deposit fee on all recyclable beverage containers. Consumers will be able to return their bottle at retailers of the containers or drop off facilities to be reimbursed for the 10 cent deposit fee.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Recyclable litter: anything made from a recyclable material that is commonly thrown away or disregarded.

Recyclable beverage containers: all containers that contain something that was intended to be drank that are made from a recyclable material such as plastic, aluminium or glass.

Retailers of the containers: any stores that sell drinks in recyclable beverage containers.

Drop off facilities- facilities administered by Rhode Island Resource Recovery for the purpose of collecting recyclable litter and reimbursing the consumer their ten cents.

Section 2: Provisions

1. All recyclable beverage containers shall have a 10 cent tax added onto them that will be returned to the consumer when the recyclable litter is returned to participating retailers of the containers or a drop off facility.

2. All participating retailers of the containers or the drop off facility will be responsible for recycling all beverage containers returned to their stores and distributing the appropriate tax refund.

3. Rhode Island Resource Recovery shall administer drop off facilities.

Justification: This bill should be made into law because it would greatly help the ecosystem of Rhode Island and convince more people to recycle. Because Rhode Islanders are more likely to throw their recyclables into a garbage can instead of a recycling bin, a good amount of garbage can be recycled. A grand $\frac{1}{3}$ of the beverage containers that were thrown away in 2022 never made it to a recycling facility. Every other state with a bottle bill is recycling more than RI. In Vermont, they recycle 75 percent of their plastic bottles with their bottle bill, while other



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Sponsors: Maddison Ashman, ,

recyclable containers only get recycled 36 percent of the time. In RI, a huge 73 percent of all our recyclable materials goes to a landfill instead of being recycled. Store owners and retailers of these recyclable beverage containers are also responsible for recycling any container that is returned to their store and repaying the customer their ten cents.

Fiscal Implications: There are no fiscal implications.

Environmental Implications: there will be less litter and a cleaner environment for Rhode Island.

Effective Date: June 5th 2026



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Sponsors: Evan Reineke, ,

An Act To: Bring Nuclear Power to Rhode Island

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: This Bill provides for the construction of a nuclear reactor to generate electricity for the State of Rhode Island. This will lower the cost of energy within our State and reduce our environmental impact.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Revenue bond shall refer to the type of government bond by which the repayment of the investment is guaranteed by the operating revenues of the construction that it funds. Revenue bonds do not need to be voted on by the general public.

The AP300 Reactor shall refer to the model of nuclear reactor by the same name designed by Westinghouse. It is a small-scale, modular reactor design, which will most likely become certified for use in the United States circa 2027 by the Federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission. According to Westinghouse, it can generate approximately 330 MW of electricity (about 35% of the State's total energy demand). It is designed to operate for "an 80+ year life cycle". One AP300 Reactor is projected to cost about \$1B to construct.

The profits of the reactor shall refer to the amount of money left over each fiscal year after the bond's repayment and interest for the year and the reactor's maintenance, staff, fuel, and any other costs have been paid off.

Westinghouse shall refer to Westinghouse Electric Corporation, the designer of the AP300 Reactor.

Local institutions of higher education shall refer to universities and colleges which are physically located within the State of Rhode Island. This includes, but is not limited to, the University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College, Brown University, and the Community College of Rhode Island.

Section 2: Provisions

A revenue bond will be created, for the sum of \$1.5B, to account for cost overruns or other unforeseen expenses, for the term of 30 years. The bond will be opened to the general public and any companies or corporations who wish to invest. The money raised from this bond will be used to construct and operate a Westinghouse AP300 Reactor, once they become certified for use in the United States. The revenue from the reactor, once operational, will be used to repay this bond and its interest in its entirety. It will also cover its own operating expenses. The profits of the reactor shall be paid into the Rhode Island General Fund.



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Sponsors: Evan Reineke, ,

As much of the staff of the reactor should be locally trained and educated experts as the situation allows. The staff shall be employees of the State, specifically the Rhode Island Atomic Energy Commission. The Rhode Island Atomic Energy Commission will partner with local institutions of higher education to train technicians and experts to work in the Reactor, with the ultimate goal of having the entire staff of the facility be locally trained and educated.

Justification: Climate change worsens every year and it is imperative that humanity begins to use as much renewable, clean energy as possible. Nuclear energy is one of the safest, cleanest, and most effective forms of energy generation available. Constructing a nuclear power plant in the State of Rhode Island would help us to hit our goal of using 100% renewable energy, as pledged by the governor. Furthermore, a nuclear power plant will provide high-quality, educated jobs to Rhode Islanders and will help drive down the cost of electricity in the state. The plant will eventually pay for itself during its long lifetime, so cost should not be a restricting factor in our decision. In fact, the plant will most likely be profitable, which will provide additional funding to the State, with which we can lower taxes or increase other vital spending to further improve the lives of the inhabitants of Rhode Island. The AP300 Reactor is one of the cheapest available. It uses rigorously tested, extremely effective reactor technology from previous models of Westinghouse reactors.

Fiscal Implications: The State will take out a bond totalling \$1.5B, but the State will not have to directly pay this back. The reactor, once created, will pay for itself. Once the reactor pays off its own bond, it will serve as an additional income source for the State of Rhode Island. The presence of the reactor will drive down the cost of energy within our State, as more energy is created for low cost.

Environmental Implications: Nuclear reactors are rigorously tested to the highest standards of safety. It is highly unlikely that there will be any major environmental incident from this reactor. The presence of the reactor within the State will decrease the State's carbon emissions, by creating large amounts of clean energy to replace the energy generated through carbon-heavy methods of energy generation. There will be minor environmental disruptions from the construction of the building to house the reactor, but no more than it takes to construct a similar building of the same size.



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Sponsors: Evan Reineke, ,

683 **Effective Date:** This Bill shall go into effect immediately, although in different
684 stages. Fundraising for the bond will begin at the beginning of Financial Year 2026,
685 on July 1, 2026. Once the AP300 Reactor has been certified for use in the United
686 States by the Nuclear R



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Sponsors: Jillian Escobar, ,

An Act To: Start the school day later

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: So that students can sleep in and get much needed rest so that they will be fully able to focus and perform better throughout the school day.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Section 1:

School shall refer to highschool

Activities shall refer to extracurriculars such as sports or clubs

Average Teenager: highschool students ages 14-18

Section 2: Provisions

1. The school day should start no later than 9:30 and no earlier than 8:15

2. The school day is typically 6 hours so if you start at 9:00 you would end at 3:00

Justification: The average teenager needs 8-10 hours of sleep. It's difficult to make that a daily habit due to homework and after school activities which means that most students are not sleeping enough. This is why we need to start school later so that students can get the recommended hours of sleep so that they do better in school. Some may argue that starting school later will conflict with after school activities. However, starting the school day at 9:00 means that day will end around 3. Most activities don't start until later in the day anyways so you will still have plenty of time. The purpose of this bill is to allow students to be well rested for school so that they are able to focus better in school and retain information better.

Fiscal Implications: N/a

Environmental Implications: N/a

Effective Date: The start of the 2025 school year.



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Sponsors: Orianna French, ,

An Act To: This legislation amends current Rhode Island lighting laws to impose stricter restrictions on light posts in an attempt to prevent light pollution and energy waste.

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: This legislation addresses growing light pollution in Rhode Island by introducing new standards for the installation and design of streetlights and other public light fixtures. It mandates the use of energy-efficient lighting systems with properly designed caps to prevent needless light from spilling into the sky, reducing environmental degradation and improving nighttime visibility. The bill also aims to put a stop to the current wastage of taxpayers' funds on inefficient lighting. With the passage of this bill, Rhode Island will reduce both light pollution and the expense of lighting, which will bring significant environmental and financial dividends to the state.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

The legislation aims to combat light pollution in the state of Rhode Island by requiring more stringent standards in the design and installation of streetlights and other public lighting. It specifically requires the use of energy-efficient light fixtures with properly designed caps to prevent light spill, which will be less harmful to the environment and improve visibility. The purpose of the bill is to curb the misuse of taxpayers' funds by curbing energy inefficiencies in public lighting. With these regulations, Rhode Island will experience less light pollution and reduced energy costs, which will translate into environmental and financial benefits.

Section 2: Provisions

Upon enactment of the Light Pollution Reduction Act of 2025, all new or retrofitted street lighting in the state of Rhode Island will be subject to the following requirements: Streetlights in residential and low-traffic areas will not exceed 3000 lumens. Streetlights in commercial or high-traffic areas will not exceed 6000 lumens. All streetlights will have a color temperature of 3000 Kelvin or lower and will utilize LED or comparable energy efficient light systems. There shall be a one year trial period starting June 1st, 2025, and ending on June 1st, 2026, during which municipalities and government agencies will implement these new standards. Progress will be reported to the authority as required. Compliance will be monitored and information on light pollution levels, energy savings, and public feedback will be gathered by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. All



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Sponsors: Orianna French, ,

lighting in parks, roadways, government buildings, and other public spaces that are publicly owned or publicly funded needs to comply with these standards by June 1st, 2026. Non-compliance after the trial period can result in escalating fines and mandatory modifications.

Justification: The Light Pollution Reduction Act of 2025 is essential to safeguard Rhode Island's natural environment, public health, and energy resources. Light pollution damages wildlife, disrupts ecosystems, and hinders astronomical research, reaching both urban and rural communities across the state. Over 80% of Americans live under light-polluted skies, which disrupts sleep, increases stress, and amplifies the risks of conditions like obesity and depression. In addition, excessive artificial lighting wastes billions of dollars annually. In Rhode Island, LED energy-efficient lighting has the potential to cut public lighting energy consumption by up to 50%, which will result in significant taxpayer savings along with assisting the state in meeting its environmental goals. The legislation will bring direct benefits to residents across the state, especially in urban areas that are worst affected by light pollution. By reducing light pollution, the bill protects nocturnal species such as birds and insects that rely on darkness to migrate and breed. Furthermore, energy efficient technology will save towns and cities money in the long term through lower energy bills and less frequent maintenance. By implementing these standards, Rhode Island will be a leader in mitigating light pollution while providing a healthier, more sustainable environment for all.

Fiscal Implications: Passage of the Light Pollution Reduction Act of 2025 can achieve substantial cost savings for the state. Based on a study conducted by the U.S. Department of Energy, the utilization of LEDs as a replacement for traditional street lighting can conserve as much as 50% of energy use. For Rhode Island, this would be equivalent to approximately \$3 million in savings annually in energy costs on public lighting. In addition, LEDs last longer than conventional lights, which will decrease maintenance and replacement expenses by an estimated \$1.5 million in the coming decade. These savings in dollars will defray the up front expense of upgrading public lighting systems.

Environmental Implications: Passage of a light pollution bill would greatly improve the environment by reducing interference of wildlife and ecosystems. The majority of wildlife, particularly nocturnal ones, rely on natural darkness to perform activities like migration, mating, and foraging. Artificial light will most likely disorient birds, disturb insect populations, and destroy plant growth by interfering



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Sponsors: Orianna French, ,

with normal cycles. A light pollution bill would improve judicious lighting practices, preserving the natural nighttime ecosystem, conserving energy, and safeguarding diversity. Besides, it would give humans a clearer view of the night sky, inspiring an appreciation for nature and good mental health.

Effective Date: Ideally we start this as soon as possible. Improvements could be visible in 2 to 5 years, and urban areas such as Providence will take longer, but rural and suburban areas across Rhode Island would see quicker benefits.



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Sponsors: Rylie Whitten, ,

An Act To: An Act to Provide Homeless Shelters with State-Funded Mental Health Professionals

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: This bill will provide a grant of \$728,000 to be distributed among public homeless shelters in Rhode Island. This will enable these establishments to hire mental health professionals to treat the unhoused, who are unable to afford treatment for mental illness or substance abuse. Both of these factors lead to chronic homelessness, which has risen substantially throughout Rhode Island. Additionally, this bill has the potential to reduce the percentage of homeless individuals who are struggling with untreated mental illness.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Mental health professionals shall refer to psychologists, substance abuse counsellors, therapists, and other healthcare providers who offer treatments for the purpose of bettering one's mental health or to treat mental disorders.

Homeless shelters shall refer to an establishment that provides temporary accommodations for the unhoused. In this case, these shelters will be public entities, not private institutions.

Chronic homelessness shall refer to unhoused persons who have a substance abuse or mental health disorder, and have been without a home for over a year.

Grant shall refer to a financial provision given by the state government to an individual to fund a beneficial project.

Section 2: Provisions

1. This bill will provide a grant of \$728,000 to be distributed amongst 20 public homeless shelters throughout Rhode Island.

2. The grant will cover one mental health professional for each of the 20 shelters, where they will operate within the shelter for 7 hours a week.

3. The mental health professionals in this program will offer short-term services for each patient, with 8-12 once a week, one hour sessions. After their services are complete, they will provide referrals to other services. This will enable them to assist more patients.

4. If the program is successful, the grant can be reintroduced at the start of next year.

Justification: As of 2024, Rhode Island was reported to have the second-highest percentage of chronic homelessness in the United States. The 2024 Point in Time



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Sponsors: Rylie Whitten, ,

census conducted by the Rhode Island Coalition to End Homelessness found that not only has chronic homelessness seen an upward trend, but the number of homeless Rhode Islanders has risen by 35%. The amount of the chronically homeless, however, reached a 48.8% increase, rising from 629 individuals to a total of 936 individuals. Of those who are unhoused, 20-25% struggle with mental illness, and do not have the funds necessary to secure professional treatment. Since chronic homelessness is closely tied to mental illness and substance abuse, supplying homeless shelters with the capital needed to hire mental health professionals will give unhoused people struggling the ability to treat their mental illnesses and give them the potential to improve their quality of life. With the proper treatment, those struggling with mental illness may be able to escape homelessness and join the workforce, and will at least be able to improve their lives. Supplying public homeless shelters with state-funded mental healthcare will surely reduce the amount of unhoused people struggling with mental illness, and has the potential to reduce the amount of chronic homelessness, as well as contribute to the workforce.

Fiscal Implications: With a cost of \$80-200 an hour for therapy sessions in Rhode Island and a proposed number of 20 public homeless shelters to provide for, this bill will require a grant of \$728,000.

Environmental Implications: This bill will have no effects on the environment.

Effective Date: January 1st, 2026



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Sponsors: Lily Tremble, ,

An Act To: Encourage Job Training for Individuals on SNAP

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: The purpose of this bill is to encourage job training for individuals on SNAP by expanding excluded income to include all training allowances and WIOA on-the-job-training earnings.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Training allowances shall refer to allowances from vocational and rehabilitative programs sponsored by Federal, State, or local governments, to the extent they are not a reimbursement.

Household Income shall refer to the total gross income received by all members of a household.

SNAP Benefits shall refer to The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provided nutrition assistance to eligible, low-income individuals and households via a monthly benefit on an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card, similar to a debit card, which can be used at authorized retailer stores to purchase food.

WIOA On-the-Job-Training shall refer to training within the federal program funded by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which lets one hire and train skilled workers and get reimbursed for their efforts.

Section 2: Provisions

a) All training allowances paid to an individual in the state of Rhode Island will be excluded from Household Income when calculating for their SNAP benefit eligibility.

b) All WIOA On-the-Job-Training OJT earnings paid to an individual in the state of Rhode Island will be excluded from Household Income when calculating for their SNAP benefit eligibility.

Justification: Training programs are an important resource for all people but for low income families and individuals who need assistance from the government they can be life changing. The most recent RI SNAP Report showed that 77.7% of the known self reported education attainment of head of household was a 12th grade education/GED or lower. Training programs create better opportunities for workers to have access to growth in their careers and higher job satisfaction. If a person takes advantage of training they are more likely to go into a career they are



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Sponsors: Lily Tremble, ,

passionate about and get a job they will keep. This small change will let people be a part of these training programs without the fear of losing their benefits.

Fiscal Implications: While this bill may increase state spending by a small percentage in the short term, in the long run it will mean spending less on SNAP and other programs. Individuals who are a part of these training programs are more likely to get high paying jobs and keep them. It will help to break the cycle of poverty and keep people off of government assistance.

Environmental Implications: There are no environmental implications of this bill.

Effective Date: This bill will go into effect immediately after passage.



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Sponsors: Ariana Bobiak, Sophie Sullivan,

An Act To: An Act to Implement Cursive in the Elementary School Curriculum

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: - The purpose of this bill is for children to have the ability to utilize cursive in relation to writing skills, such as signing your name for important papers, or needing a more formal way of writing.
- Also to ensure that all students will be able to read, comprehend, and analyze, important documents that are influential to the history of our country. Things such as The Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, handwritten letters, or speeches.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Elementary: refers to students in the third grade of Rhode Island public schools.
Cursive: refers to the handwriting in which the characters are joined together.
Curriculum: refers to the subjects comprising a course of study in a school/college.

Section 2: Provisions

This bill will implement cursive teaching to the third-grade curriculum. Students must learn how to read and write in cursive by the time they have reached fourth grade. This writing should be legible, and students must know how to sign their name.

Justification: This bill will ensure that children will have a basic background of reading and writing cursive. Cursive comes into play more as children get older, and having previous knowledge on the subject will be beneficial in more ways than one. Cursive is also an adequate tool for children's cognitive and memory skills, which will help kids be more prepared for the future.

Fiscal Implications: Does not apply to our bill

Environmental Implications: Does not apply to our bill

Effective Date: January 1st, 2026



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Sponsors: Amanda Clare Liwanag, ,

An Act To: Require All Rhode Island High Schools to provide sustainable and free menstrual hygiene products in monitored locations within school establishments.

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: a) The purpose of this bill is to make menstrual hygiene products accessible and free to any person who works or learns in a school establishment. Implementing products that are readily available for any menstruating individual can aid in reducing the stigma and allow students to access products without disrupting class time. In addition to having the menstrual hygiene products be free and accessible, all products must be sustainable to keep chemicals out of these products and prevent the potential consequences associated with such chemicals.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

1. All Rhode Island High Schools refer to the four years of education prior to graduation before pursuing higher education. This includes all high schools within the state of Rhode Island and is restricted to only cities in Rhode Island.
2. Menstrual hygiene products shall refer to disposable tampons and pads.
3. Accessible shall refer to various types of menstrual hygiene products that differ in size and absorbency to accommodate different menstruating individuals.
4. Sustainable menstrual hygiene products shall refer to menstrual hygiene products that are environmentally conscious and will not impose any negative effects on the environment or a menstruating individual utilizing any of the available products.
5. Monitored locations shall refer to areas that are checked frequently to guarantee a variety of products will be available for any menstruating individual to take. Monitored locations will include all restroom facilities as well as the school nurse's office and main office.

Section 2: Provisions

1. All high schools in Rhode Island shall provide sustainable menstrual hygiene products at no cost in monitored locations within school establishments.
2. All menstrual hygiene products must be placed in all restroom facilities, including ones labeled as female or gender neutral, but not limited to these labels.
3. Rhode Island high schools must ensure that a range of menstrual hygiene products are always available and that these products are of good quality and diversity to meet the needs of any menstruating individual.



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Sponsors: Amanda Clare Liwanag, ,

4. The school will be responsible for monitoring the stock of these products and should put measures in place to protect these products from misuse.

Justification: a)The economic barrier of being able to afford menstrual hygiene products monthly can lead students to have low school attendance rates. An estimated 25 percent of students attending school struggle to pay for menstrual products because of their high cost and frequent purchase. This struggle can be solved by providing products so students can focus on school rather than worrying about whether any student will have enough products to make it throughout the school day. Menstruating is a natural bodily process, so just like toilet paper, menstrual hygiene products must be free and accessible. Menstruating shouldn't feel taboo, embarrassing, or even shameful to anyone who experiences it, so having what someone needs can help boost self-confidence.
b) This bill will modify existing R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-21-38. (Availability of feminine hygiene products) with the addition of having the menstrual products be sustainable and good for the environment because it will reduce plastic pollution on the earth. Unsustainable menstrual hygiene products have also been found to contain various harmful metals/chemicals, which can lead to an increased risk of developing certain diseases.

Fiscal Implications: a)The Rhode Island Department of Health(RIDOH) shall allocate 3 million dollars on top of any money already being spent on providing free menstrual hygiene products to implement this act.

Environmental Implications: a)The implementation of this bill will benefit the environment and help reduce plastic pollution in landfills.

Effective Date: a)This bill will go into effect after the conclusion of this academic year, on 30 June 2025.



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Sponsors: Theodore Pickford, Jay Barrass,

An Act To: Establish 100-foot wetland border zones

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: the purpose of this bill is to protect the wetlands in our state from damage caused by the construction and upkeep of new buildings.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Wetlands shall be defined as areas where water covers the soil, or is present either at or near the surface of the soil all year or for varying periods of time during the year, including during the growing season, as determined by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

Development Activity shall be defined as any construction or other related human activity that alters natural areas.

Buffer Zone shall be defined as a strip of land of a certain dimension surrounding a Wetland, that separates a Wetland or other natural feature from Development Activity,

Access Points shall be defined as structures that allow the public to view and interact with the wetland in a way that minimizes environmental impact.

Scientific research shall be defined as any research started by a scientific institution to better understand our environment.

A boardwalk shall be defined as a promenade along a beach or waterfront, typically made of wood.

Section 2: Provisions

a) A mandatory buffer zone of a minimum of 100 feet shall be enforced in any new Development Activity around all wetlands.

b) This Buffer Zone shall consist mostly of natural and native vegetation.

c) No Development Activity shall occur in the designated Buffer Zone unless approval is given from the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management.

Activities allowed to proceed within the construction zone include:

d) Restoring or enhancing native vegetation and plants

e) Scientific research

f) Boardwalks, trails, and other access points

g) repair of buildings that existed in the zone before the law passed.

Punishments



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Sponsors: Theodore Pickford, Jay Barrass,

Any party found guilty of breaking this bill shall have their project immediately ceased and shall receive a fine starting at \$100 for the first square yard of wetland destroyed before exponentially increasing by 10% each square yard. Furthermore, the entity must pay to restore the Wetland that their project infringed upon.

Justification: There is a responsibility as a legislative body to preserve and expand our natural environment in order to keep our state's environment healthy and move forward to improve the condition of our state for the future. By passing this bill, our state takes another step towards a future where humans and nature can thrive in cohesion. Giving Wetlands more room to grow and expand will enhance the natural tendencies of our state. Additionally, by providing these Wetlands with the support they need, we will have stronger and more diverse ecosystems, greater protection for our coastlines, and we will overall improve the quality of nature in our state.

Fiscal Implications: The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management will need additional funding to overview and enforce this new legislation. This will include personnel for inspections and overviews of proposed projects. This legislation also requires fines for violations, but in the enforcement and legal implications of this, the RIDEM will require additional funding. Additionally, if any party fails to comply, restoration costs may be placed on the RIDEM, causing an unexpected financial burden.

Restriction of development on land 100 feet within a wetland would reduce the availability of land for housing and other projects. Real estate may see increased costs due to potential fines, which would discourage investment in areas around the wetland. These properties could also lose some of their property value due to the risk and additional costs associated with these new implications.

By helping to restore our wetlands, the risk of water damage due to flooding or storms significantly decreases. This would help reduce costs to repair infrastructure and disaster response. Additionally, less money would need to be allotted to restoration projects due to the effects of this legislation.

Environmental Implications: The extension of the wetland buffer zones will help further protect our wetlands by giving them more protection from human activities. By creating a physical barrier between human activity and the natural environment we will continue our efforts to support the natural world.

By further protecting our wetlands, we will see an increase in both biodiversity and the overall health of our wetlands. This will in turn benefit our communities. The



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Sponsors: Theodore Pickford, Jay Barrass,

1085 quality of both the water and the air will be positively affected by this legislation,
1086 which will in turn increase the overall health of our community members.
1087 By putting effort towards protecting our wetlands, we would see an increase in
1088 recreational activities relating to wildlife. This would include fishing, hiking,
1089 birdwatching, and more. By providing fun activities connected to nature, our future
1090 generations will be more aware and careful of our environment.

1091
1092 **Effective Date:** January 1st, 2026



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Sponsors: Isabella Crupe, ,

An Act To: An Act To Provide Free School Meals to Public School Students

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: The purpose of this act is to guarantee that all public school students, from elementary through high school, have access to free, nutritious breakfast and lunch.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Public Schools: All schools supported by public funds. This includes all public elementary, middle and high schools in the State of Rhode Island.

Nutritious Meal: A meal that meets both the federal and state dietary requirements. This includes breakfast and lunch.

Free: The provision of meals to students at no cost to them or their families, without any requirements of financial qualification, or reimbursement.

Student: Any student enrolled in public school in the State of Rhode Island. This includes elementary, middle and high school students.

Breakfast: A morning meal served to students during designated breakfast hours, consisting of nutritious items that meet the USDA guidelines for school meals.

Lunch: An afternoon meal provided to students during designated lunch periods, consisting of nutritious items that meet the USDA guidelines for school meals.

USDA Guidelines for School Meals: The nutritional set of standards set up by the United States Department of Agriculture that outline the required nutritional content for meals served in public schools.

Section 2: Provisions

1. The purpose of this act is to guarantee that all public school students, from elementary through high school, have access to free, nutritious breakfast and lunch.

2. The meals must be provided daily during designated breakfast and lunch breaks.

3. Meals must be provided to every student regardless of income, to support the health, academic success and overall well-being of every student.

4. All meals served must meet or exceed the United States Department of Agriculture guidelines for school meals.

5. All public schools are required to implement a no cost meal program by the start of the 2025-2026 academic year. The program will be fully implemented in all districts within one academic year from the date of this bill's passage.



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6. The Rhode Island Department of Education will issue twenty-five million USD (\$25,000,000) annually, to guarantee that every public school is equipped to meet these needs.

Justification: The need and importance of free, nutritious school breakfast and lunch for public school students is immense. With 11.2% of Rhode Island's population living below the poverty line, many families struggle to provide healthy meals for their children everyday. Furthermore, growing school lunch debt increases stress for low-income households. A no cost meal program would reduce the prevalence of child hunger and food insecurity across the State of Rhode Island. Furthermore, to be able to focus and learn, students must be fully nourished and equipped with the nutrients they need to succeed. The Rhode Island Department of Education is required to supply textbooks to all students, regardless of income. Free breakfast and lunch should be provided in the same way. Through a no cost meal program, we can improve learning, remove student meal debt and play an essential role in the academic success of students. With the assumption the Rhode Island Department of Education will issue \$25,000,000 USD annually, this would be on par per student with existing Massachusetts legislation. Passing this bill will allow for every child to have the ability to succeed in the classroom, ease the stress of numerous families and bring essential necessities to Rhode Island public schools.

Fiscal Implications: 1. The Rhode Island Department of Education will issue twenty-five million USD (\$25,000,000) annually, to guarantee that every public school is equipped to meet these needs.

Environmental Implications: N/A

Effective Date: 1. All public schools are required to implement a no cost meal program by the start of the 2025-2026 academic year. The program will be fully implemented in all districts within one academic year from the date of this bill's passage.



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Sponsors: Ella Procaccianti, ,

An Act To: Support Small Businesses in the Smallest State

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: Support and promote the wellbeing and longevity of small businesses in the digital age.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Small business - a for-profit company having fewer than 500 employees

Digitalization - the conversion of business practices into digital tools

Section 2: Provisions

Streamlining Regulatory Operations

1. All business and occupational licenses are now renewed bi-annually

2. The Rhode Island Department of Business Regulation must digitalize its operations

a. All licensing applications and forms must be able to be submitted electronically,

b. No business or individual can be required to submit a paper application for renewal or obtaining of an occupational or business license,

3. All government agencies that handle business licensing, occupational licensing, or building permits must process initial applications and respond to the applicant within ten (10) business days of receiving the application.

Creating a Better Business Environment

1. This bill changes Rhode Island's corporate tax codes;

a. Reducing corporate taxes paid by small businesses to 6% as opposed to 7% and,

b. Increasing the rate for businesses not considered small businesses from 7% to 7.5%,

2. The Rhode Island LLC fee will be lowered from \$150 to \$75 for all small businesses.

3. This bill creates a \$1,000,000 Small Business E-Commerce fund to be allocated over 3 years.

a. Small and micro businesses can apply for a grant of up to \$2,500 to assist in the development of e-commerce, digitization, or digital marketing,



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Sponsors: Ella Procaccianti, ,

b. The grant program will be administered by the Rhode Island Commerce Department,

i. The Rhode Island Commerce Department will create an application for this grant, and each applicant will be reviewed by the department,

ii. All applications for this grant must be able to be submitted digitally.

Justification: Rhode Island is and has historically been one of the worst states for small businesses. Convolutioned licensing and permitting processes and a difficult business environment make this state a difficult one for small businesses to compete in. But we can change this. Especially now, in the digital age, small businesses need support when it comes to competing in digital marketing and e-commerce. This bill, the Small State, Small Business Act, will seek to increase the viability of small businesses in Rhode Island in several ways. Decreasing both the corporate taxes paid by small businesses and the licensing fees shows financial support for these businesses and can help change the narrative that Rhode Island is not small business friendly. We will establish a grant to empower small businesses to compete with large companies, and we will streamline the complicated process of navigating government bureaucracy to obtain necessary permitting and licensing. Small businesses make up 98.9% of the businesses in Rhode Island, employ over half of our workforce and generate almost half of our state's GDP. They need our support.

Fiscal Implications:

Small businesses are the backbone of any thriving economy. Supporting small businesses directly supports the local economic well-being of your communities. Small businesses are major economic contributors, employing significant portions of the local population and contributing to the overall economic health of our towns and cities. Up to 90% of the new jobs created every year are created by small and locally owned businesses. Supporting them supports the overall health of the job market and employees everywhere. Small businesses also allow for more economic diversity. This bill seeks to relieve tax and fee burdens on small businesses, and creates a fund that provides grant money to ensure continued support for these businesses as rapidly developing technology and markets require small businesses to be able to quickly adapt and innovate. These requests will be factored into the creation of the 2026 fiscal year budget, and the state will see all of the money 'returned' with the economic stability and success this bill promotes in our statewide economy.



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Sponsors: Ella Procaccianti, ,

1236

1237

1238 **Environmental Implications:** The 100 largest companies in the world account for
1239 almost 71% of carbon emissions since 1998, according to the Carbon Disclosure
1240 Project. These companies are broadly responsible for most of the carbon emissions
1241 and environmental exploitation that occurs on a daily basis, generating over 450
1242 metric tons of plastic waste every year. And while these statistics can make the
1243 current environmental crisis seem like something out of our individual hands, we
1244 have something extremely powerful to protest with; our dollars. As consumers and
1245 legislators, we have an obligation to support small and local businesses, with the
1246 goal of creating health not only in our local economies but in our global
1247 environment. This bill seeks to prop up small businesses and support them over
1248 large and international corporations which can have devastating impacts on the
1249 environment. Small businesses reduce automobile emissions, with less
1250 transportation required; locally owned businesses make more local purchases.
1251 Supporting this bill supports small businesses, and supporting small businesses
1252 supports the environment.

1253

1254

1255 **Effective Date:** October 1st, 2025 (start of the next fiscal year)



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Sponsors: Mia Dieffenbach, Alex Dieffenbach,

An Act To: Mandate First Aid Kits at Every Sporting Complex

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: This bill will allow for all sporting complexes to have mandatory first aid kits and defibrillator machines in an area that would be easily accessible. Any person can acquire these items in emergencies or if an injury takes place at the facility.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

First aid kits - a collection of supplies and equipment used to give immediate medical treatment, primarily to treat injuries and other mild or moderate medical conditions.

Defibrillator machines - devices that apply an electric charge or current to the heart to restore a normal heartbeat.

Sporting Complex - any facility or venue used for athletic events including but not limited to: outdoor or indoor sports fields, gymnastics or arenas for teams, or recreational facilities.

Emergencies - a serious, unexpected, and often dangerous situation requiring immediate action.

Section 2: Provisions

(a) Any person present at the sporting complex shall have the right to access the first aid kit or defibrillator in the event of an emergency or injury.

(b) Staff and personnel shall be trained on the proper use of defibrillator machines and first aid equipment.

(c) The equipment should be placed in a clearly marked and accessible area for both the players, coaches, or any person present to be able to use.

(d) Kits will be inspected yearly by the organization owner to make sure they are up to date with new materials that are deemed appropriate. Pictures will be taken and sent to Health and Human Services for inspection. Any owner who is not compliant will face a 1,000 dollar fine for every month that evidence is not received from their property.

Justification: Annually, 3.5 million kids under the age of fourteen get hurt playing sports. Then, once those kids begin playing those sports at the high school level, 90% of them will sustain an injury whether that is sprains, bone injuries, or head trauma. Even some severe enough to cause permanent damage which could be career ending. Within those statistics was Alex Dieffenbach, who faced not only a



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Sponsors: Mia Dieffenbach, Alex Dieffenbach,

1293 career defining injury but months of rehabilitation to get back to the sport he loved.
1294 This injury could have been minimized if a first aid kit was at the scene. Many
1295 injuries and hospital trips can be prevented with these new treatments on the field.

1296
1297 **Fiscal Implications:** A 2,000 dollar budget for first aid kits, including a
1298 defibrillator machine, will be given to every sporting complex in the state, no
1299 matter the type of sport or facility. Every owner will have to put this into their
1300 yearly budget for new equipment.

1301
1302 **Environmental Implications:** Not applicable.

1303
1304 **Effective Date:** February 1, 2026.



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Sponsors: Pluto Mosier, Ajax Holmer,

An Act To: Prevent Felons From Appearing on Rhode Island Ballots

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: This bill will prevent candidates who have been convicted of felonies in the past five years from appearing on Rhode Island ballots, ensuring that unlawful individuals do not gain positions of power in our government without reform.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Felon shall refer to a person who has been convicted of a felony level offense in a state or federal court.

Felony shall refer to the Rhode Island State definition of a felony, under Title 11 - Criminal Offenses, Chapter 1, General Provisions R.I. Gen. Laws § 11-1-2, as "any criminal offense which at any given time may be punished by imprisonment for a term of more than one year, or by a fine of more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000)."

Candidate shall refer to a person running for a town, state, or federal governmental position.

Section 2: Provisions

1. A candidate who has been convicted of a felony during the past five years before the date of the election shall not appear on Rhode Island voter ballots, regardless of when the original crime occurred.

2. Individuals who were convicted of nonviolent felonies that occurred when the individual was a minor shall not have their ballot status limited by this bill.

3. Individuals who were exonerated/pardoned of the original felony conviction shall not have their ballot status limited by the bill.

4. If a Rhode Island district receives ballots from the Rhode Island Department of State with one or more candidates whose status is limited by this act, they must send the ballots back with a request for new ballots without the candidate(s)'s name on it in accordance with this legislation.

5. If the pollster(s) who receive the ballots do not send the ballots back and attempt to use the ballots in the following election, they will be fined \$500 and will be charged with voter fraud. The Rhode Island Department of State will withdraw the incorrect ballots and replace them with ballots without the ineligible candidate(s) name(s) on it.

Justification: Although felons lose the right to vote while incarcerated, they are not explicitly banned from running for office. In order to discourage convicted felons



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Sponsors: Pluto Mosier, Ajax Holmer,

from doing so, this legislation prevents candidates who have been convicted of a felony in the past five years from appearing on ballots in Rhode Islands, whether it be for local, state, and/or federal elections.

Furthermore, as seen in the recent sentencing of President Donald Trump, the fact that felons can be elected president in between sentencing and conviction can interfere with the decision of the courts in the sentencing. The argument that being sentenced to any degree can interfere with one's official duties is valid--but should not stand as a barrier to justice.

We should not and cannot allow positions of office to be held by individuals who may abuse that power to their advantage. As people of a country that is built on democracy, a democracy that should protect us, we deserve candidates that have our best interests at heart.

Fiscal Implications: This bill has no fiscal implications.

Environmental Implications: This bill has no environmental implications.

Effective Date: This bill will take effect on January 1st, 2026.



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Sponsors: Zoë Clay, Sophie Roda,

An Act To: An act to implement a feline rehabilitation program in prisons, allowing inmates to care for stray cats to promote responsibility, emotional growth, and successful reintegration.

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: To provide companionship and shelter for stray cats, while allowing inmates to improve their personal responsibility through caring for the cats.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Animal Welfare Organizations: Shelters and Organizations such as the RISPCA

Low Risk Offenders: One with a relatively low probability of reoffending

Socialization: The process of preparing a cat or dog to enjoy interactions and be comfortable with other animals, people, places, and activities.

Grants: a sum of money given by a government or other organization for a particular purpose.

Private Partnership: collaboration between a government agency and a private-sector company.

Section 2: Provisions

1. All Rhode Island Prisons, in partnership with animal welfare organizations, must provide low risk offenders the option of having a shelter cat as a temporary companion.

2. Facilities must be determined as safe, enclosed areas for housing and caring for cats.

3. Participation is voluntary and the inmates must adhere to program guidelines, with violations leading to removal from the program.

4. Cats will be sourced from local shelters, focusing on cats that require socialization.

5. Inmates will be responsible for feeding, grooming, cleaning, and socializing the cats under supervision.

6. Veterinary care will be provided by the associated animal welfare organization. A select group of prison staff and animal welfare experts will oversee the program.

7. The program will be funded through grants, private partnerships, and nonprofit contributions.

8. Success of the program is measured by inmate behavioral improvements and cat adoptions rates.



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Sponsors: Zoë Clay, Sophie Roda,

Justification: Rhode Island faces a significant issue with feline overpopulation, with estimates ranging from 70,000 to 200,000 stray and feral cats across the state. State Veterinarian Scott Marshall has acknowledged this as a growing concern, emphasizing the need for sustainable solutions. Shelters often reach capacity, leaving many cats without homes or proper care. Establishing a feline rehabilitation program within correctional facilities provides a humane and effective way to address this overpopulation by housing, socializing, and preparing these cats for adoption.

Beyond addressing Rhode Island's stray cat crisis, this program offers significant rehabilitative benefits for incarcerated individuals. Research by Monica Solinas-Saunders, an associate professor at Indiana University specializing in incarceration and offender rehabilitation, has shown that animal-assisted programs contribute to lower recidivism rates and improved soft skills—such as responsibility, empathy, and communication—helping inmates reintegrate into society more successfully. By implementing this initiative, Rhode Island can create a mutually beneficial program that improves animal welfare, reduces the burden on shelters, rehabilitates inmates, and generates economic savings through lower incarceration and animal control costs.

Fiscal Implications: From a fiscal standpoint, this initiative is a cost-effective solution with long-term benefits. By reducing the stray cat population, the program can lower costs associated with animal control services, shelter overcrowding, and euthanasia. Additionally, because the program can be funded through grants, nonprofit partnerships, and private donations, it minimizes financial strain on taxpayers. The reduction in recidivism rates also presents long-term savings, as fewer reoffenders lead to decreased incarceration costs for the state.

Environmental Implications: Animals will be given the opportunity to experience consistent human interaction, bettering their chances of being adopted into a permanent residence. Inmates will have the ability to bond with an animal, which will relieve stress and encourage responsibility. Once the inmate is released, they will have experienced commitment and accountability, which will be helpful upon re/entering the workforce and adjusting to the condition of life outside of prison.

Effective Date: 46183



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Sponsors: Pluto Mosier, ,

An Act To: Protect the label of incarcerated individuals

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: Block the exploitation of incarcerated workers.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Minimum wage shall refer to the minimum hourly wage employees must receive in compensation for their labor.

An incarcerated person shall refer to an individual who is incarcerated in a Rhode Island state facility.

Penal institution: a correctional facility; a jail or prison.

Section 2: Provisions

1. Any individual who is currently serving time in a Rhode Island state penal institution shall not be mandated to work in their time incarcerated.

2. Any individual who is working during their time incarcerated in a Rhode Island state penal institution shall not receive less than Rhode Island minimum wage compensation.

3. Any company or penal institution employing incarcerated individuals found to have violated minimum wage requirements will be required to reimburse the individuals for the missing wages with 10% interest compounded quarterly.

4. Any company or penal institution employing incarcerated individuals found to have violated any of the provisions of this bill will be subject to mandatory review from the Department of Corrections and up to a \$10,000 fine.

Justification: This bill is designed to protect incarcerated individuals from exploitation when serving out a prison sentence. The goal of prison is rehabilitation, and treating incarcerated individuals poorly and making it difficult for them to support themselves financially when they leave prison only increases the chances that these individuals will reoffend.

Fiscal Implications: This may make it more difficult for projects where labor is sourced from incarcerated individuals to be funded.

Environmental Implications: N/A

Effective Date: July 1st, 2025



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Sponsors: Jana Denise Madriaga, Landon Lafrenaye, Nattapol Vongvilay

An Act To: Reinforce and amend the bill requiring Asian American history to be taught in all schools in Rhode Island.

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: To inform students about the culture, heritage, and history of Asian Americans that are not being taught. As a result of the lack of education on Asian American history in schools, an edition of the pivotal role of these people in the development of the United States should be part of every curriculum. The absence of knowledge of Asian American history creates a dangerous environment for the Asian American population and makes those of Asian descent easier victims of oppression and racism. Teaching the history of Asian Americans in schools is crucial in fighting against racist stereotypes and dehumanization; making education on this topic mandatory will force the United States into a safer and more comfortable environment for the Asian American community.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

AA refers to Asian American groups across the United States
NHPI refers to Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander groups across the United States.

Section 2: Provisions

Beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, every public elementary and secondary school shall include in its curriculum at least one unit (approx. one week) of Asian American history, one unit of Native Hawaiian or Hawaiian American history, and one unit of Pacific Islander history. Each unit will be required to include several, more than two, influential or important figures from each respective group as well as contributions made from said groups to the United States. Said contributions should range from AA and NHPI additions from civil rights to American economy, social, cultural, political, etc. contributions. The study of AA and NHPI material removes, in some capacity, the risk of discrimination against those of AA and NHPI descent.

The council on elementary and secondary education, in collaboration with the commissioner, shall decide an appropriate amount of material needed for education on AA and NHPI, but must at minimum be one unit per each group, AA, NH, and PI. The curriculum on AA and NHPI history must be reviewed each year and, if needed, updated.



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Sponsors: Jana Denise Madriaga, Landon Lafrenaye, Nattapol Vongvilay

Justification: The bill emphasizes the significant historical contributions of Asian Americans to the United States and underlines the importance of adopting an inclusive educational environment. Also, it advocates for the incorporation of diverse cultural figures and events into a school's curriculum, similar to the established lessons on other minority groups in high school programs. From this approach, we can further develop a cultural understanding and provide a comprehensive education for both current and future high school students of Rhode Island, recognizing Asian American history's role as an essential aspect to the United States history.

Fiscal Implications: The funding for our bill would come from taxes, federal sources, and state government aid as well as local contributions to help signify and recognize the importance of implementing Asian American studies into school curriculums and why it is necessary to include Asian American history in schools curriculums across Rhode Island.

Environmental Implications: N/A

Effective Date: This bill will go into effect at the beginning of 2026, with each public school required to provide the curriculum by the beginning of the next school year.



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Sponsors: Jorge Sanchez, Demarcus Jackson, Alex Kapsimalis

An Act To: An act allowing students in Rhode Island public schools to take up to 7 excused mental health days.

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: - Improve the mental health and emotional wellness of students in Rhode Island's public schools by granting them the ability to take up to seven excused mental health days per academic year, without academic penalties. These days will help students manage stress better. These can be used for family vacations, stay-at-home, or play video games! They won't have to worry about any assignments during those 7 days.
- It does not have to be 7 consecutive days. These can be separated.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

- Mental Health Days: Days that students are allowed to take off from school for reasons related to emotional or mental health. These can include stress, depression or just tiredness
- Excused Absence: An absence from school that does not count against a student's attendance record, and does not affect their academic standing or grades. An absence that does not count against the student's attendance. All work missed is not counted against them
- Student: Any student in a K-12 public school in the state of Rhode Island.
- Parent/Guardian Notification: Parents or guardians have to notify the school through a signed waiver, indicating the days taken for Mental Health

Section 2: Provisions

Excused Mental Health Days: Seven mental health days are allowed every year. They are given without any penalties or marks to the attendance.
Confidentiality: Even if the reason for the absence is revealed, it will not be used against the student. Only the student if he so chooses may decide to make it public.
Parental Notification: Only students or parents may be the ones who will let the school know about the absence within the 24-hour time gap.
Support for Students: At the same time, each school will share information concerning the mental health resources the children can use where counseling services are among them.
No Academic Penalties: If you don't want to be penalized for work you missed due to your mental health, you can make up the assignments and the grades' level will be the same.



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Sponsors: Jorge Sanchez, Demarcus Jackson, Alex Kapsimalis

Justification: Mental health is a widespread problem for students, as it is known to result in a reduced performance in school and such, stress and anxiety are the major factors. The existing school attendance norms are inadequate to cater for mental health needs. Mental health days encompassing mental health learning will help students handle their mental health issues, thereby improving their academic performance and making them more satisfied overall. This act will reduce the stigma and provide the flunking students with the assistance they require.

Fiscal Implications: The fiscal cost of the bill will primarily include the administrative cost for the excused mental health days implementation and tracking, which will necessitate schools to instill systems for notifying and tracking absences. Estimated costs for administrative adjustments are very small and would be supported by the existing district budgets. The state is going to give \$500,000 for the first year as start-up money for schools to build this system, which will also include funding for staff training and the development of notification systems. Costs will be integrated into the state's main education budget, and additional funds will be allocated if mental health support services are needed in schools.

Environmental Implications: Not Applicable

Effective Date: Beginning of the 2025-2026 academic year.



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Sponsors: Ela Er, ,

An Act To: Ban Sales of Energy Drinks for Minors

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: To lower the amount of minors that are suffering from the side effects of energy drinks.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Ban shall refer to the prohibition of the sales and distribution of energy drinks for those who are under the age of 18.

Energy Drinks shall refer to drinks that contain high levels of stimulants, typically caffeine, sugar, and guarana that are formulated to boost energy levels and for better performance. This includes but is not limited to: Red Bull, Monster Energy, Celsius, Alani, Rockstar, and Bang.

Minors shall refer to any individual who has not reached the age of 18.

Retailer shall refer to any business, individual, or organization that is responsible for the sales of goods or services to customers.

Government-issued identification shall refer to any form of ID that is issued by a government authority or agency, used to verify a person's identity or age. This includes but is not limited to a Driver's License, Passport, Social Security Card, Military ID, Green Card, and National Identity Card.

Section 2: Provisions

Employee Training: All employees will be trained on this topic and will understand how to obey the law. They will be aware and they will not be selling any energy drinks to minors. This includes them checking for forms of identification during checkout.

Security System: In addition, the energy drinks will be locked up. Only a trained employee will have access to open them. There will be a button, and the employee will be there but they will also check for some form of identification as well.

Online Retailing - Delivery Personnel Training: All delivery personnel will also be trained on this topic. When the product gets shipped, it needs to have a specific packaging that mentions on it that it's an energy drink and when it gets dropped off an adult needs to be present to give a signature.

Monitoring: Regular checks will be conducted in-person by Rhode Island Department of Health to make sure everything is going how it's supposed to go and how the security measures are working out as well.



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Sponsors: Ela Er, ,

Justification: There is a responsibility as legislation to make this world safer for younger people as well as to protect our great minds. According to a study done by Johns Hopkins University, the effects of energy drinks on kids include abnormal heartbeats, seizures, diarrhea, high blood pressure, anxiety, panic attacks, and many more. Energy drinks on average contain about 100-200mg of caffeine, which exceeds the recommended amount for minors aged between 12-18. The consumption of them will worsen their health and lead to other problems such as cardiovascular and neurological diseases. The energy drinks are not giving energy, they are causing disruptive problems in students' academic performances, physical and emotional health, as well as unhealthy sleep habits. Through the passing of this bill, the minors of Rhode Island will be protected, and eventually grow up to be healthier people as well as better decision-makers.

Fiscal Implications: Through the passing of this law there will be a slight decrease in the sales of energy drinks since minors won't be allowed to purchase, and this will decrease the revenue of the energy drink businesses. In addition, this law may lead to a decrease in the tax revenues due to reduced sales.

Environmental Implications: There are no environmental implications on this bill.

Effective Date: This bill will go into effect on January 1st, 2026.



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Sponsors: Amanda Proia, ,

An Act To: An act to require a mental health unit be taught in all elementary schools in the state of Rhode Island, starting at the third grade level.

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: According to the American Psychological Association, the rising rates of mental health issues among young children has been declared a crisis. In the past 10 years alone, more young people are feeling more helpless and alone than ever before. This bill would require elementary school age students to complete a unit about understanding their mental health to help them navigate the challenges they may face in the future.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Section 2: Provisions

- All students in grades 3-5 will be required to take part in an 8 week long mental health unit within their physical education & health class.

- All working physical education teachers in the state of Rhode Island will be required to take a two week long course for a certification in order to teach this topic to students

- The state of Rhode Island must issue grants for funding the training course for teachers

- All schools must re-evaluate their curriculum to implement this program within the health education program

- At the end of the unit, schools will submit a report to the state that will include the student feedback from an assesment

Justification: In our country, young people have been impacted by mental health problems now more than ever. In 2017, the Youth Risk Behavior Survey reported that about 26% of middle school and high school students live with constant feelings of sadness and hopelessness sparking from a mental health issue. This percentage has only risen since then. This rise is due to social media and the building pressure placed on students to fit into cliques and limit their horizons. In October of 2021, adolescent mental health was declared a national emergency. Despite this, very little has been done to help students understand just how important it is to take care of their mental health, and how a mental health issue could be so detrimental to their quality of life later on. If young people were taught how to understand their feelings, manage stress, and support themselves and their friends from a young age in a mental health centered class unit, then they will



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Sponsors: Amanda Proia, ,

know how to navigate any mental health related changes they might face as they grow up in a world that is changing rapidly. If students can help each other, they will feel less alone, as well as more safe and protected by their school community. The purpose of education is to prepare students for their lives, so we must understand how we can help them become the best possible versions of themselves. They are our future, and we cannot give up on them.

Fiscal Implications: The cost of a two week mental health training course may range from \$1,500- \$2,000 per individual. Currently, no public data is available on how many physical education teachers there are in the state of Rhode Island, so an exact amount of money necessary is not able to be calculated at the moment.

Environmental Implications: N/A

Effective Date: 46631



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Sponsors: Anna Lancellotta, Mark Goldberg, Jeremy Rice

An Act To: Allow Crocs and other attire in physical education

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: Allow students to wear Crocs in P.E and have participation grading or any grading not dependent on what you wear.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

P.E(Physical Education) shall refer to: instruction in physical exercise and games

Crocs shall refer to: Shoes made from a soft comfortable material

Contingent shall refer to: Occurring or existing only if (certain circumstances) are the case; dependent upon

Curriculum shall refer to: The subjects comprising a course of study in a school or college

Section 2: Provisions

Students can wear Crocs and any other type of shoes as long as it doesn't interfere with sports or activities. Participation grade will not be contingent upon clothing, and attire doesn't decide how well you perform in a P.E class. If necessary, a presentation grade can be introduced to the school P.E curriculum

Justification: Currently, participation in P.E is estimated based upon the attire of each individual, which is a biased approach toward the grading system. A participation grade should not be dependent on clothing principles nor should it decide how well you perform in a P.E class.

Fiscal Implications: None

Environmental Implications: None

Effective Date: The beginning of the 2025-2026 school year



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Sponsors: Eli Turgeon, ,

An Act To: Thereby, the use of generative Artificial Intelligence or deepfakes to impersonate a public or political figure in an attempt to spread misinformation shall be prohibited.

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: In recent years, the development of generative artificial intelligence and “deepfakes” has led to dangerous opportunities for misinformation. To prevent this danger, this bill will prohibit and prosecute the use of AI or deepfakes to impersonate a public or political figure in a malicious way.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Artificial Intelligence (AI): Artificial intelligence, for the purposes of this bill, refers to generative AI materials.

Deepfake: Deepfakes are a form of impersonation utilizing video editing software, in which an actor completes an action, before their face and features are digitally replaced to resemble a public or political figure.

Impersonate: In this bill, impersonate means to take appearance of for the purposes of misinformation, not comedy or satire. It also holds that the image must reasonably appear to be that person.

Political or Public Figure: This is a figure who either holds a political office, or is intentionally well-known.

Section 2: Provisions

1. By August 1st, 2026, the use of generative AI and deepfakes to impersonate public or political individuals will be prohibited.

2. Prior to this date, large-scale AI companies and projects will be notified of the changes which would need to be made to their programs. This would include the following:

a. A warning placed when referencing political or public figures of the legislations surrounding the use of AI in this context.

b. Prohibiting the creation of realistic impersonations of public or political figures.

3. If the prohibition is violated, the punishment will be placed under the standards of Identity Fraud, as defined under Title 11-49.1 of Rhode Island law.

Justification: In the changing political and technological landscape of today, misinformation spreads rapidly. One of the tools, developing at the fastest rate, is Artificial Intelligence. AI-generated media, from videos and voice recordings, which is still distinguishable (in most cases) from reality. However, this may change soon.



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Sponsors: Eli Turgeon, ,

Today, a more pressing issue is the use of deepfakes, which have already been attempted by the Russian government in the 2022 Russo-Ukrainian War, impersonating President Zelensky in an attempt to cause surrenders. In light of these developments, strong action is needed before the midterm elections. With the fast developments of AI technology, it will not be long before it is near-impossible to distinguish what is said by an actual politician. The ability of anyone in the United States with access to the internet to create this destructive content without consequence leaves a massive hole in the protection of election security.

Fiscal Implications: Surveillance for prohibited material will cost approximately \$700-1500 a month, with additional costs to prosecute. This is based on extrapolated costs of corporate surveillance of social medias.

Environmental Implications: N/A

Effective Date: August 1st, 2026



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Sponsors: Jordan French, Dennis Galligher, Adam Barboza-Simpkins

An Act To: Expand the Security of Voting Rights

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: The purpose of this bill is to ensure the integrity and security of Rhode Island's general elections by mandating annual audits of the state's election facilities just before each general election. These audits will help identify and address potential vulnerabilities, ensuring that voting systems, equipment, and processes are secure and functioning properly. This bill also ensures that the state's funding toward these facilities is being used accordingly. By conducting thorough checks every year, the bill aims to prevent errors, fraud, and security threats, building public confidence in the election process as well as cutting any unnecessary spending from the election process— saving large sums of money that can be used for other necessities. Ultimately, it seeks to safeguard the fairness and transparency of elections, protecting citizens' right to a secure and accurate vote.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Election Facilities: Any physical or virtual location where election-related activities occur, including but not limited to polling stations, vote-counting centers, and data processing hubs used in Rhode Island's general elections.

Audit: A comprehensive, systematic review and evaluation of election facilities, equipment, processes, and security measures to assess their functionality, accuracy, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

General Election: The regular election held in Rhode Island to elect public officials, including statewide, legislative, and local elections, conducted on a set date established by state law.

Vulnerabilities: Any weaknesses or gaps in election infrastructure, processes, or systems that could potentially compromise the security, accuracy, or integrity of the election.

Cybersecurity: The protection of election systems and data from unauthorized access, cyberattacks, or malicious interference, including threats to voting machines, databases, and communication networks.

Transparency: The principle that election processes and results are open to scrutiny, providing the public and oversight bodies with clear access to information and documentation related to the election.



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Election Fraud: Any intentional act of deception or manipulation that undermines the fairness, accuracy, or legality of the election process, including tampering with ballots, vote tallying, or voter identification.

Election Equipment: The hardware and software used in conducting elections, such as voting machines, tabulators, scanners, and any other technology involved in the casting, counting, or reporting of votes.

Compliance: Adherence to relevant state and federal election laws, regulations, standards, and guidelines designed to ensure fair, secure, and accurate elections.

Section 2: Provisions

This bill would not amend any law put into place.

Justification: \$10 million dollars is allocated from the state treasury every year for the maintenance of voting facilities in Rhode Island. This bill would provide a mandatory audit for these facilities to track the spending of the state's funding to ensure that there is no form of embezzlement or espionage. Funding will only be redacted if there is definitive evidence proving the negligence of the state's funding.

Fiscal Implications: Displacement of state funding (if any) above \$10,000 or more will result in a \$50,000 fine as well as a thorough investigation. Any displacement of state funding (if any) above \$100,000 or more will result in a fine of \$500,000 as well as a lawsuit.

Environmental Implications: There are no environmental implications.

Effective Date: This law will go into effect in January 2026.

An Act to make Rhode Island an Organ Donation Opt-Out System

Representative Dennis Gallagher, Liberal, Hendricken. Representative Moses Wiess, Liberal, Hendricken. Representative Nathan Vieira, Conservative, Hendricken.

Section 1

"Organ donation" refers to the act of donating one or more organs upon death for transplantation purposes.

"Opt-out" refers to a system under which all individuals are presumed to be willing organ donors unless they take explicit action to decline.

"Registry" refers to the official state registry maintained by the Rhode Island Department of Health where individuals may opt out of organ donation.

"Organ procurement organization" refers to a nonprofit organization designated by the state to coordinate the procurement and transplantation of organs.

Section 2

- All Rhode Island residents will be presumed to agree to donate their organs upon death, unless they opt out.
- The Rhode Island Department of Health and other state agencies and organ procurement organizations shall begin the opt-out system on January 1st, 2026.
- Once someone opts out, their decision will be recorded in the state's registry, and they will not be considered an organ donor.

Section 3

No penalty needed for this bill

Section 4

The Rhode Island Department of Health shall implement a public awareness campaign to inform residents of the opt-out system, the process to opt out, and the benefits of organ donation. The opt out program will be instated on the 1st of January 2025.

Section 5

The proposed bill would overturn the opt-in system by establishing a presumption of consent for organ donation unless people opt out.

Section 6

Rhode Island should switch to an organ donor opt-out program because it would save more lives. In the current system, people have to sign up to be organ donors, but many don't take the time, even if they support organ donation. In fact, 90% of Americans support organ donation but only 60% are donors. By making everyone an organ donor unless they choose to opt out, more organs would be available for people in need. This small change could make a huge difference for those waiting for transplants. Every day, about 17 people in the U.S. die because they don't get the organs they need. An opt-out system would ensure fewer people die waiting for organs.

An Act to Reform All Recreational Facilities in Rhode Island
Introduced By: House Floor Leader Jasmine Humphries
Independent, Coventry High School

Section 1:

- a. *DEM* is defined as the Department of Environmental Management. DEM is the delegation responsible for the maintenance of our recreational facilities.
- b. *Recreational Facility* is defined as any state-owned property incorporating the outside natural environment, used for purposes outside of work. This includes, and is not limited to: state parks, state beaches, bike paths, campgrounds, historic sites, picnic areas, trails, athletic fields, dams, and state-owned bodies of water.
- c. *Littering* is defined as the act of discarding garbage, trash, waste, rubbish, cans, bottles, wire, paper, cartons, boxes, automobile parts, furniture, or any other unsanitary and unsightly item onto a property.
- d. *Vandalism* is defined as the deliberate act of injuring, destroying, covering, or otherwise defacing another's property.

Section 2:

This bill aims to reinforce our DEM, redirect funds toward our recreational facilities, and provide methods to better enforce anti-littering laws.

- a. Reversing Funding Cuts: Funds for the Division of Parks and Recreation of the DEM shall be increased by reinvesting a higher percentage of earned revenue back into the park's maintenance.
 - i. Specifically, Rhode Island currently generates \$3,400,000,000 in consumer spending. Studies show that just \$4,710,000 would be enough to financially sustain all of our recreational facilities. This bill aims to return at least \$6,000,000, for safe measure.
- b. Reversing Staffing Cuts: This bill will establish and define new job opportunities, to fix the lack of staff and proper maintenance.
 - i. Establishment of more Full-Time Maintenance Staff for our recreational buildings and facilities so they meet the national standard of 1 full-time equivalent per 30 acres. This will reduce the need for building repairs, and improve the overall condition of our recreational facilities.
 - ii. Appropriately-Skilled Full-Time Employees shall be hired in positions of surveillance, routine maintenance checks, and basic cleaning procedures for all facilities. Wages are to be decided by employers.
- c. Increasing penalties for vandalism and littering
 - i. The maximum limit for vandalism and littering fines shall be increased from \$1,000 to \$1,250.
 - ii. If any vandalized property is unfixable, the convict shall be liable for its replacement.

Section 3:

- a. Consequences for littering will be enforced as called for under § 37-15-7.
- b. Consequences for vandalism of public parks will be enforced as determined under § 11-44-1.

Section 4:

This Bill will go into effect on January 1, 2026.

Section 5:

This bill will amend § 37-15-7 (Public Properties & Works-Litter Control & Recycling-Penalties), and § 11-44-1 (Criminal Offenses-Trespass and Vandalism Section-Injury to Public Property)

Section 6:

The state of our natural and urban environments could use improvement. Our beaches are covered in litter and our state parks are in disarray. In general, the nature within our state is neglected. Currently, the DEM maintains the state of our parks and beaches. However, due to low staffing and underinvestment, the beauty of our state has been lackluster. Some of our parks don't even meet the national standards. This problem is also a product of the people; with many people casually littering, and even some deliberate vandalism taking place here in Rhode Island. The few Park employees we still have are too overworked, or unqualified, to take care of it. This bill aims to fix everything at once.

An Act to Repeal Large Capacity Magazine Ban

Representative Dennis Gallagher, Liberal, Hendricken, Representative Nathan Vieira,
Conservative, Hendricken, Moses Weiss, Liberal, Hendricken

Section 1.

“High-capacity magazine” – a magazine, box, drum, tube, belt, feed strip, or other ammunition feeding devices which is capable of holding, or can readily be extended to hold, more than ten (10) rounds of ammunition to be fed continuously and directly therefrom into a semiautomatic firearm.

Semi-Automatic Weapon – a repeating firearm whose action mechanism automatically loads a following round of cartridge into the chamber and prepares it for subsequent firing

Ammunition – Rounds that can be shot from a firearms

Section 2.

This bill will repeal 2022 – H 6614 which prohibits the ownership of “high-capacity magazines”. Citizens of Rhode Island will be free to possess any magazine that can hold more than 10 rounds of’ ammunition.

Section 3.

No penalty needed for this bill

Section 4.

This bill will be in effect upon passage. The possession of high-capacity magazines will be legalized and any criminal charges pending against persons penalized for the possession of high-capacity magazines will be dropped.

Section 5.

This Bill would repeal 2022 – H 6614

Section 6.

A high-capacity magazine ban is not only unconstitutional but also ineffective at curbing gun violence. The only people affected by the ban are law-abiding people simply exercising their Second Amendment right to bear arms. In the age of 3-D printing gun parts and quick and easy international delivery, this ban does nothing to restrict firearm access to criminals. Right now, Rhode Island is one of the safest states in regard for gun violence, with only 12 people dying from gun-related homicides per year. This law is unnecessary and is only harming responsible, legal gun owners.

An Act To Require Baby Changing Stations in Public Bathrooms

Representative Gabriella Paulino Cabrera, Liberal
North Providence High School

Section 1:

1. *Baby Changing Station*: A table or other device suitable for changing the diaper of a child age 3 or under.
2. *Public Bathroom*: Any structure or facility situated on public or private property equipped with toilets, including men, women, and family/unisex bathrooms.
3. *Building Code Commission (BCC)*: Protect public health, safety and welfare by enforcing state's minimum standards

Section 2:

1. Public buildings must have one baby changing station in each bathroom that may be used by the general public.
2. Regardless of whether the bathroom is intended for male or female use.
3. The requirement is only optional for bathrooms that aren't intended for public use and are therefore private.
4. Public buildings that don't have ample space in their restrooms are required to provide a safe space as a replacement.
5. The replacement will be inspected and deemed a proficient space by the BCC.
6. Applications to the Department of Administration will allow public buildings access to state matching funds for the cost of purchasing and installing changing spaces.
7. Public buildings that don't require changing stations will not be fined based on the situation, which will be reviewed and determined by the BCC.

Section 3:

Any public buildings that are not in compliance with this bill will be fined \$5,000. If the situation has not been resolved in five months, then \$10,000 will be fined. The fine will be increased by \$5,000, each five months that there has been no resolution.

Section 4:

This motion will go into effect August 1, 2025

Section 5:

This bill will not affect any other legislation.

Section 6:

When public spaces fail to allow space for parents to change their children, families have no choice but to change their children on bathroom floors, in open public places such as in vehicles and on the ground — or just staying home. Male restrooms are more unlikely to contain a changing station which creates a troubling situation for fathers just trying to change their child. It is unethical for parents to be forced to find unique ways to change their child, but the idea that women will more than likely change their children and men won't is inherently discriminating and repressing for single dads.

An Act to Solve the Housing Crisis by Deregulating and Simplifying Land Use and Zoning

Introduced by: Representative Michael Sansone
Conservative, Exeter West Greenwich High School

Section 1:

Zoning- How state land is divided and separated into different zones with their own regulations

Zoning municipality- refers to a specific zone which regulated land uses and standards

Accessory dwelling unit- A separate living space or unit on somebody's property

Special use permit- a permit which is required for land uses that are not usually permitted within a zoning district

By right use- is allowed and does not require any special approval or permit

Multi-family housing- Houses which are designed to accommodate multiple households within one building

Section 2: This bill aims to significantly reduce the extensive statewide restrictions on matters of land use and zoning. This would include the following matters:

1. Allow for multi-family housing by right state wide
2. Decrease the amount of primary residential regulation and increase mixed use zoning; set a statewide minimum of 25% of each regulated area being mixed use.
3. Eliminate and decrease lot size requirements; Allow for zoning municipalities only to require at most 10,000 square feet of lot size for single family homes

4. Ensure the legality of Accessory dwelling units and decrease regulations pertaining to them
5. Reform parking requirements by limiting zoning municipalities to a maximum of one required parking space per unit
6. Set a 60 day time limit for towns to approve or deny a special use permit for any sort of development or other use.(If no decision is made, and the development follows the basic health and safety standards, it is automatically approved)

Section 3: Zoning municipalities who refuse to comply with the changes outlined throughout this bill within 12 months of enactment will lose funding and receive fines. Any municipality who continues to restrict multi family housing, allows a maximum of less than 25% mixed land usage, upholds lot size requirements higher than specified, continues to outlaw accessory dwelling units, refuses to change parking per unit requirements, or who refuses to enact the 60 day time limit for special use permit hearings, will receive a warning. If, after one month, they are still in violation, they will then lose access to any housing grants, infrastructure grants, and municipal aid until meeting the requirements.

Section 4: This bill will be enacted on January 1, 2026

Section 5: This bill is in conflict with and will override R.I General law § 45-24-30 which gives zoning ordinances the power to enact zoning regulations, lot size limits, parking requirements, and more, in accordance with a comprehensive plan. The specific zoning regulations that each ordinance can enact will now be limited or completely abolished as specified by the section 2 objectives.

Section 6: This bill addresses a serious issue impacting Rhode Islanders: restrictive land use and zoning regulations. Throughout our state, zoning laws and regulations control how virtually every piece of land is used—whether for homes, businesses, or a mix. While complex zoning may be intended to influence and create orderly, structured development, in Rhode Island, more than 80% of residential land is zoned for single-family homes only, which severely limits what kind of homes can be built and where. This approach may sound harmless, but it's a major cause of our current housing crisis.

By heavily restricting and controlling development, these regulations limit the supply of houses, which inevitably drives up prices. Currently many developers need special permits just to build multi-family housing or mixed-use projects. This increases the time, expense, and uncertainty of building, causing housing shortages and monstrous prices. Developments often have minimum lot sizes of 10,000 square feet or more, which makes it nearly impossible to build affordable housing. Additionally, many towns can and do impose excessive parking requirements that require up multiple parking spaces per unit. Aside from being inefficient and utterly unnecessary in urban areas, this even further limits housing density, which drives up costs. The result of this? More Rhode Islanders struggle endlessly to find homes that they can actually afford.

Many Supporters of comprehensive zoning and strict land use regulations claim that it protects the character of communities and protects property values. But to be clear, this doesn't protect everyday Rhode Islanders. Instead, it artificially protects exclusivity. By keeping housing limited, zoning regulations make it harder for average people to live near where they work or raise families near essential services.

Lots of regulations also slow down developments through a range of unnecessary delays, forcing property builders to wait months for approvals. This bill ensures that special use permits must be approved or denied within 60 days of being applied for, preventing endless bureaucratic holdups. Many people cite these regulations as protecting the environment, but in reality these laws promote car dependency by separating residential areas from businesses, leading to higher carbon emissions. This also creates long commutes and higher costs for residents.

This bill is ultimately about expanding choice, restoring flexibility, and making Rhode Island livable. It proposes allowing mixed-use and multi-family housing "by right" in all districts, reducing minimum lot sizes, and speeding up the process for permits for affordable housing projects. A statewide minimum of 25% of regulated land would be required to be zoned for mixed-use development, in turn communities more flexibility to naturally develop. Parking regulations would be limited to a maximum of one required space per unit, reducing inefficient and unnecessary barriers to housing construction. Additionally, Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) would be fully legalized with fewer restrictions, allowing Rhode Islanders to make better use of their property.

Some say massive decreases in regulations would lead to overdevelopment and environmental harm. In reality, it leads to natural growth, where communities can adapt at their own pace to meet housing and economic demand rather than follow one-size-fits-all regulations. To ensure accountability, municipalities that refuse to comply would face reductions in state funding and grants for infrastructure. Decentralizing these decisions will let property owners shape their decisions about land use and development according to what is actually needed by the market, not rigid state mandates.

This bill offers Rhode Islanders more housing choices, lowers costs, and respects property rights. We need to stop pushing families out of the market through regulation. This bill should be supported in order to take a large step toward a free and livable future in this great state.

Income RIC	Tax Rate RIC	Estimate RIC	Income URI	Tax Rate URI	Estimate URI	Income Brown	Tax Rate Brown	Estimate Brown	Income Bryant	Tax Rate Branyt	Estimate Bryant	Income PC	Tax Rate PC	Estimate PC	Income RISD	Tax Rate RISD	Estimate RISD	Income Salve	Tax Rate Salve	Estimate Salve	Income Roger W	Tax Rate Roger W	Estimate Roger W
\$33,000.00	7%	\$2,310.00	\$33,000.00	8%	\$2,640.00	\$33,000.00	12%	\$3,960.00	\$33,000.00	11%	\$3,630.00	\$33,000.00	12%	\$3,960.00	\$33,000.00	12%	\$3,960.00	\$33,000.00	13%	\$4,290.00	\$33,000.00	10%	\$3,300.00
\$34,000.00	7%	\$2,380.00	\$34,000.00	8%	\$2,720.00	\$34,000.00	12%	\$4,080.00	\$34,000.00	11%	\$3,740.00	\$34,000.00	12%	\$4,080.00	\$34,000.00	12%	\$4,080.00	\$34,000.00	13%	\$4,420.00	\$34,000.00	10%	\$3,400.00
\$35,000.00	7%	\$2,450.00	\$35,000.00	8%	\$2,800.00	\$35,000.00	12%	\$4,200.00	\$35,000.00	11%	\$3,850.00	\$35,000.00	12%	\$4,200.00	\$35,000.00	12%	\$4,200.00	\$35,000.00	13%	\$4,550.00	\$35,000.00	10%	\$3,500.00
\$36,000.00	7%	\$2,520.00	\$36,000.00	8%	\$2,880.00	\$36,000.00	12%	\$4,320.00	\$36,000.00	11%	\$3,960.00	\$36,000.00	12%	\$4,320.00	\$36,000.00	12%	\$4,320.00	\$36,000.00	13%	\$4,680.00	\$36,000.00	10%	\$3,600.00
\$37,000.00	7%	\$2,590.00	\$37,000.00	8%	\$2,960.00	\$37,000.00	12%	\$4,440.00	\$37,000.00	11%	\$4,070.00	\$37,000.00	12%	\$4,440.00	\$37,000.00	12%	\$4,440.00	\$37,000.00	13%	\$4,810.00	\$37,000.00	10%	\$3,700.00
\$38,000.00	7%	\$2,660.00	\$38,000.00	8%	\$3,040.00	\$38,000.00	12%	\$4,560.00	\$38,000.00	11%	\$4,180.00	\$38,000.00	12%	\$4,560.00	\$38,000.00	12%	\$4,560.00	\$38,000.00	13%	\$4,940.00	\$38,000.00	10%	\$3,800.00
\$39,000.00	7%	\$2,730.00	\$39,000.00	8%	\$3,120.00	\$39,000.00	12%	\$4,680.00	\$39,000.00	11%	\$4,290.00	\$39,000.00	12%	\$4,680.00	\$39,000.00	12%	\$4,680.00	\$39,000.00	13%	\$5,070.00	\$39,000.00	10%	\$3,900.00
\$40,000.00	7%	\$2,800.00	\$40,000.00	8%	\$3,200.00	\$40,000.00	12%	\$4,800.00	\$40,000.00	11%	\$4,400.00	\$40,000.00	12%	\$4,800.00	\$40,000.00	12%	\$4,800.00	\$40,000.00	13%	\$5,200.00	\$40,000.00	10%	\$4,000.00
\$41,000.00	7%	\$2,870.00	\$41,000.00	8%	\$3,280.00	\$41,000.00	12%	\$4,920.00	\$41,000.00	11%	\$4,510.00	\$41,000.00	12%	\$4,920.00	\$41,000.00	12%	\$4,920.00	\$41,000.00	13%	\$5,330.00	\$41,000.00	10%	\$4,100.00
\$42,000.00	7%	\$2,940.00	\$42,000.00	8%	\$3,360.00	\$42,000.00	12%	\$5,040.00	\$42,000.00	11%	\$4,620.00	\$42,000.00	12%	\$5,040.00	\$42,000.00	12%	\$5,040.00	\$42,000.00	13%	\$5,460.00	\$42,000.00	10%	\$4,200.00
\$43,000.00	7%	\$3,010.00	\$43,000.00	8%	\$3,440.00	\$43,000.00	12%	\$5,160.00	\$43,000.00	11%	\$4,730.00	\$43,000.00	12%	\$5,160.00	\$43,000.00	12%	\$5,160.00	\$43,000.00	13%	\$5,590.00	\$43,000.00	10%	\$4,300.00
\$44,000.00	7%	\$3,080.00	\$44,000.00	8%	\$3,520.00	\$44,000.00	12%	\$5,280.00	\$44,000.00	11%	\$4,840.00	\$44,000.00	12%	\$5,280.00	\$44,000.00	12%	\$5,280.00	\$44,000.00	13%	\$5,720.00	\$44,000.00	10%	\$4,400.00
\$45,000.00	7%	\$3,150.00	\$45,000.00	8%	\$3,600.00	\$45,000.00	12%	\$5,400.00	\$45,000.00	12%	\$5,400.00	\$45,000.00	13%	\$5,850.00	\$45,000.00	13%	\$5,850.00	\$45,000.00	14%	\$6,300.00	\$45,000.00	11%	\$4,950.00
\$46,000.00	7%	\$3,220.00	\$46,000.00	8%	\$3,680.00	\$46,000.00	12%	\$5,520.00	\$46,000.00	12%	\$5,520.00	\$46,000.00	13%	\$5,980.00	\$46,000.00	13%	\$5,980.00	\$46,000.00	14%	\$6,440.00	\$46,000.00	11%	\$5,060.00
\$47,000.00	7%	\$3,290.00	\$47,000.00	8%	\$3,760.00	\$47,000.00	12%	\$5,640.00	\$47,000.00	12%	\$5,640.00	\$47,000.00	13%	\$6,110.00	\$47,000.00	13%	\$6,110.00	\$47,000.00	14%	\$6,580.00	\$47,000.00	11%	\$5,170.00
\$48,000.00	7%	\$3,360.00	\$48,000.00	8%	\$3,840.00	\$48,000.00	12%	\$5,760.00	\$48,000.00	12%	\$5,760.00	\$48,000.00	13%	\$6,240.00	\$48,000.00	13%	\$6,240.00	\$48,000.00	14%	\$6,720.00	\$48,000.00	11%	\$5,280.00
\$49,000.00	7%	\$3,430.00	\$49,000.00	8%	\$3,920.00	\$49,000.00	12%	\$5,880.00	\$49,000.00	12%	\$5,880.00	\$49,000.00	13%	\$6,370.00	\$49,000.00	13%	\$6,370.00	\$49,000.00	14%	\$6,860.00	\$49,000.00	11%	\$5,390.00
\$50,000.00	8%	\$4,000.00	\$50,000.00	9%	\$4,500.00	\$50,000.00	12%	\$6,000.00	\$50,000.00	12%	\$6,000.00	\$50,000.00	13%	\$6,500.00	\$50,000.00	13%	\$6,500.00	\$50,000.00	14%	\$7,000.00	\$50,000.00	11%	\$5,500.00
\$51,000.00	8%	\$4,080.00	\$51,000.00	9%	\$4,590.00	\$51,000.00	12%	\$6,120.00	\$51,000.00	12%	\$6,120.00	\$51,000.00	13%	\$6,630.00	\$51,000.00	13%	\$6,630.00	\$51,000.00	14%	\$7,140.00	\$51,000.00	11%	\$5,610.00
\$52,000.00	8%	\$4,160.00	\$52,000.00	9%	\$4,680.00	\$52,000.00	12%	\$6,240.00	\$52,000.00	12%	\$6,240.00	\$52,000.00	13%	\$6,760.00	\$52,000.00	13%	\$6,760.00	\$52,000.00	14%	\$7,280.00	\$52,000.00	11%	\$5,720.00
\$53,000.00	8%	\$4,240.00	\$53,000.00	9%	\$4,770.00	\$53,000.00	12%	\$6,360.00	\$53,000.00	12%	\$6,360.00	\$53,000.00	13%	\$6,890.00	\$53,000.00	13%	\$6,890.00	\$53,000.00	14%	\$7,420.00	\$53,000.00	11%	\$5,830.00
\$54,000.00	8%	\$4,320.00	\$54,000.00	9%	\$4,860.00	\$54,000.00	12%	\$6,480.00	\$54,000.00	12%	\$6,480.00	\$54,000.00	13%	\$7,020.00	\$54,000.00	13%	\$7,020.00	\$54,000.00	14%	\$7,560.00	\$54,000.00	11%	\$5,940.00
\$55,000.00	8%	\$4,400.00	\$55,000.00	9%	\$4,950.00	\$55,000.00	12%	\$6,600.00	\$55,000.00	13%	\$7,150.00	\$55,000.00	14%	\$7,700.00	\$55,000.00	14%	\$7,700.00	\$55,000.00	15%	\$8,250.00	\$55,000.00	12%	\$6,060.00
\$56,000.00	8%	\$4,480.00	\$56,000.00	9%	\$5,040.00	\$56,000.00	12%	\$6,720.00	\$56,000.00	13%	\$7,280.00	\$56,000.00	14%	\$7,840.00	\$56,000.00	14%	\$7,840.00	\$56,000.00	15%	\$8,400.00	\$56,000.00	12%	\$6,170.00
\$57,000.00	8%	\$4,560.00	\$57,000.00	9%	\$5,130.00	\$57,000.00	12%	\$6,840.00	\$57,000.00	13%	\$7,410.00	\$57,000.00	14%	\$7,980.00	\$57,000.00	14%	\$7,980.00	\$57,000.00	15%	\$8,550.00	\$57,000.00	12%	\$6,840.00
\$58,000.00	8%	\$4,640.00	\$58,000.00	9%	\$5,220.00	\$58,000.00	12%	\$6,960.00	\$58,000.00	13%	\$7,540.00	\$58,000.00	14%	\$8,120.00	\$58,000.00	14%	\$8,120.00	\$58,000.00	15%	\$8,700.00	\$58,000.00	12%	\$6,960.00
\$59,000.00	8%	\$4,720.00	\$59,000.00	9%	\$5,310.00	\$59,000.00	12%	\$7,080.00	\$59,000.00	13%	\$7,670.00	\$59,000.00	14%	\$8,260.00	\$59,000.00	14%	\$8,260.00	\$59,000.00	15%	\$8,850.00	\$59,000.00	12%	\$7,080.00
\$60,000.00	8%	\$4,800.00	\$60,000.00	10%	\$6,000.00	\$60,000.00	12%	\$7,200.00	\$60,000.00	13%	\$7,800.00	\$60,000.00	14%	\$8,400.00	\$60,000.00	14%	\$8,400.00	\$60,000.00	15%	\$9,000.00	\$60,000.00	12%	\$7,200.00
\$61,000.00	8%	\$4,880.00	\$61,000.00	10%	\$6,100.00	\$61,000.00	12%	\$7,320.00	\$61,000.00	13%	\$7,930.00	\$61,000.00	14%	\$8,540.00	\$61,000.00	14%	\$8,540.00	\$61,000.00	15%	\$9,150.00	\$61,000.00	12%	\$7,320.00
\$62,000.00	8%	\$4,960.00	\$62,000.00	10%	\$6,200.00	\$62,000.00	12%	\$7,440.00	\$62,000.00	13%	\$8,060.00	\$62,000.00	14%	\$8,680.00	\$62,000.00	14%	\$8,680.00	\$62,000.00	15%	\$9,300.00	\$62,000.00	12%	\$7,440.00
\$63,000.00	8%	\$5,040.00	\$63,000.00	10%	\$6,300.00	\$63,000.00	12%	\$7,560.00	\$63,000.00	13%	\$8,190.00	\$63,000.00	14%	\$8,820.00	\$63,000.00	14%	\$8,820.00	\$63,000.00	15%	\$9,450.00	\$63,000.00	12%	\$7,560.00
\$64,000.00	8%	\$5,120.00	\$64,000.00	10%	\$6,400.00	\$64,000.00	12%	\$7,680.00	\$64,000.00	13%	\$8,320.00	\$64,000.00	14%	\$8,960.00	\$64,000.00	14%	\$8,960.00	\$64,000.00	15%	\$9,600.00	\$64,000.00	12%	\$7,680.00
\$65,000.00	8%	\$5,200.00	\$65,000.00	10%	\$6,500.00	\$65,000.00	12%	\$7,800.00	\$65,000.00	14%	\$8,500.00	\$65,000.00	15%	\$9,750.00	\$65,000.00	15%	\$9,750.00	\$65,000.00	16%	\$10,400.00	\$65,000.00	13%	\$8,450.00
\$66,000.00	8%	\$5,280.00	\$66,000.00	10%	\$6,600.00	\$66,000.00	12%	\$7,920.00	\$66,000.00	14%	\$8,600.00	\$66,000.00	15%	\$9,900.00	\$66,000.00	15%	\$9,900.00	\$66,000.00	16%	\$10,560.00	\$66,000.00	13%	\$8,560.00
\$67,000.00	8%	\$5,360.00	\$67,000.00	10%	\$6,700.00	\$67,000.00	12%	\$8,040.00	\$67,000.00	14%	\$8,700.00	\$67,000.00	15%	\$10,050.00	\$67,000.00	15%	\$10,050.00	\$67,000.00	16%	\$10,720.00	\$67,000.00	13%	\$8,710.00
\$68,000.00	8%	\$5,440.00	\$68,000.00	10%	\$6,800.00	\$68,000.00	12%	\$8,160.00	\$68,000.00	14%	\$8,820.00	\$68,000.00	15%	\$10,200.00	\$68,000.00	15%	\$10,200.00	\$68,000.00	16%	\$10,880.00	\$68,000.00	13%	\$8,840.00
\$69,000.00	8%	\$5,520.00	\$69,000.00	10%	\$6,900.00	\$69,000.00	12%	\$8,280.00	\$69,000.00	14%	\$8,960.00	\$69,000.00	15%	\$10,350.00	\$69,000.00	15%	\$10,350.00	\$69,000.00	16%	\$11,040.00	\$69,000.00	13%	\$8,970.00
\$70,000.00	9%	\$6,300.00	\$70,000.00	10%	\$7,000.00	\$70,000.00	13%	\$9,100.00	\$70,000.00	14%	\$9,800.00	\$70,000.00	15%	\$10,500.00	\$70,000.00	15%	\$10,500.00	\$70,000.00	16%	\$11,200.00	\$70,000.00	13%	\$9,100.00
\$71,000.00	9%	\$6,390.00	\$71,000.00	10%	\$7,100.00	\$71,000.00	13%	\$9,230.00	\$71,000.00	14%	\$9,940.00	\$71,000.00	15%	\$10,650.00	\$71,000.00	15%	\$10,650.00	\$71,000.00	16%	\$11,360.00	\$71,000.00	13%	\$9,230.00
\$72,000.00	9%	\$6,480.00	\$72,000.00	10%	\$7,200.00	\$72,000.00	13%	\$9,360.00	\$72,000.00	14%	\$10,080.00	\$72,000.00	15%	\$10,800.00	\$72,000.00	15%	\$10,800.00	\$72,000.00	16%	\$11,520.00	\$72,000.00	13%	\$9,360.00
\$73,000.00	9%	\$6,570.00	\$73,000.00	10%	\$7,300.00	\$73,000.00	13%	\$9,490.00	\$73,000.00	14%	\$10,220.00	\$73,000.00	15%	\$10,950.00	\$73,000.00	15%	\$10,950.00	\$73,000.00	16%	\$11,680.00	\$73,000.00	13%	\$9,490.00
\$74,000.00	9%	\$6,660.00	\$74,000.00	10%	\$7,400.00	\$74,000.00	13%	\$9,620.00	\$74,000.00	14%	\$10,360.00	\$74,000.00	15%	\$11,100.00	\$74,000.00	15%	\$11,100.00	\$74,000.00	16%	\$11,840.00	\$74,000.00	13%	\$9,620.00
\$75,000.00	9%	\$6,750.00	\$75,000.00	11%	\$8,250.00	\$75,000.00	13%	\$9,750.00	\$75,000.00	15%	\$11,250.00	\$75,000.00	15%	\$11,250.00	\$75,000.00	15%	\$11,250.00	\$75,000.00	17%	\$12,750.00	\$75,000.00	14%	\$10,500.00
\$76,000.00	9%	\$6,840.00	\$76,000.00	11%	\$8,360.00	\$76,000.00	13%	\$9,880.00	\$76,000.00	15%	\$11,400.00	\$76,000.00	16%	\$12,160.00	\$76,000.00	16%	\$12,160.00	\$76,000.00	17%	\$12,920.00	\$76,000.00	14%	\$10,640.00
\$77,000.00	9%	\$6,930.00	\$77,000.00</																				

An Act to Reduce Rhode Island Student Debt and Establish a Sustainable Tuition System

Introduced by: Representative Mason Pucella

Liberal Coventry High School

Section 1:

(a) *Educational Board Reserve (EBR)* shall refer to the banking system established as the Education Reserve responsible for overseeing the financial aspects of the education system

(b) *Tuition Cost Percentage* shall refer to the percentage of the total cost of higher education to be calculated and divided into four quarters

(c) *Yearly Tax* shall refer to the tax calculated based on the final decimal of the tuition cost percentage, to be paid annually by individuals starting from the third year of higher education

(d) *Free Education Provision* shall refer to the period during which the first two years of higher education are provided free of charge for all students until the completion of an associate degree

(e) *Inclusivity Provision* shall refer to special provisions ensuring that low-income households and students in poverty have access to higher levels of education

(f) *Optional Cooperation of Education Boards* shall refer to the commitment of education boards at local levels to fully cooperate with the implementation of the Act, granting access to their finances and following guidelines set by the EBR

(g) *Penalties and Consequences* shall refer to collaboratively determined consequences for non-compliance or violations, adjusted by the three levels of enforcement to ensure fairness and proportionality

Section 2:

- a) School boards shall submit their informational reports to their respective State EBR. The State EBR shall process the information, finalize the reports. Each level (school boards, State EBR) is required to maintain copies of all passing reports for documentation and transparency.
- b) School boards will communicate directly with their respective State EBR, providing constant feedback, fostering a continuous line of communication.
- c) School boards will undergo yearly reviews and evaluations conducted by the State EBR. The State EBR will process information, ensuring compliance and effectiveness until the next review period. If challenges or issues arise, prompting a collaborative meeting to address and adjust plans.
- d) EBR will provide comprehensive training and education. State EBR will disseminate this information to education committees, administrators, and educators, ensuring a structured implementation of the new system and learning the tuition calculations.
- e) Tuition costs for higher education shall be calculated as a percentage, divided into four equal parts. The final decimal of the percentage shall be converted into a yearly tax. The yearly tax shall

be in full effect starting from the third year of education. Individuals shall be required to pay this tax until the decimal is cleared.

- f) The first two years of higher education shall be free for all students until the completion of an associate degree.
- g) A new banking system known as the Educational Board Reserve (EBR) shall be established as a Education Reserve for schools within the State. At least 75-80% of schools must agree by oath to participate in the Educational Board Reserve (EBR) for this plan to be effective. The Education Board Reserve funds the tuition system.
- h) The Educational Board Reserve (EBR) shall serve as the State oversight authority, coordinating efforts and ensuring the effective functioning of the new banking system.
 - Level 1: The EBR will oversee the enforcement of the Act at the State level, ensuring consistency and adherence to guidelines.
 - Level 2: State governments will act as intermediaries, coordinating with the EBR and overseeing compliance within their jurisdictions.
 - Level 3: Local/city governments will enforce the Act at the grassroots level.

Section 3:

- a) Collaboratively determined consequences for non-compliance or violations will be adjusted by the three levels of enforcement to ensure fairness and proportionality.
- b) Loss of documents during the reporting process will result in fines imposed on the responsible entity (school board, State EBR).

Section 4:

This Act will go into effect on January 1, 2026.

Section 5:

This Act will not amend any laws withstanding in Rhode Island

Section 6:

In passing this legislation, Rhode Island aims to revolutionize the educational financing system, providing accessibility, inclusivity, and financial relief to students. By fostering collaboration between education boards and the newly established Educational Board Reserve (EBR), this Act paves the way for a more equitable and sustainable future for higher education in our nation. The purpose of this Act is twofold: to reduce Rhode Island Student Debt and establish a sustainable tuition system with a specific focus on promoting inclusivity. By utilizing this bill as a new recovery system, it aims to fix and stabilize the national student debt, significantly reducing reliance on student loans. Additionally, this Act is designed to help low-income households and students in poverty access higher levels of education, promoting inclusivity. Furthermore, it aims to contribute to a stronger middle class by fostering educational opportunities and reducing financial burdens on aspiring students.

An Act to create the establishment of the Education Board Reserve
Introduced By: Representative Mason Pucella
Liberal Coventry High School

Section 1:

- (a) EBR (Education Board Reserve): The designated banking system established under the Educational-Financial Inclusivity and Middle-Class Strengthening Act of 2025.
- (b) Connection to the Educational-Financial Inclusivity Act: The EBR is formally recognized as a financial institution directly linked to the objectives outlined in the Educational-Financial Inclusivity and Middle-Class Strengthening Act.
- (c) Vault: A specialized mechanism within the EBR designed to benefit workers and investors by accumulating education savings.

Section 2:

- a) Creation of EBR: The Education Board Reserve (EBR) is hereby established as the designated banking system for education boards.
- b) Integration with Educational-Financial Inclusivity Act: The EBR shall operate in alignment with the provisions set forth in the Educational-Financial Inclusivity and Middle-Class Strengthening Act of 2025.
- c) The EBR shall provide essential financial relief to education boards, addressing critical needs such as repairs and upgrades.
- d) EBR safeguards colleges from penalties during the first two years of education by establishing a collective reserve for schools.
- e) The creation of the EBR aims to establish a stable economy within education boards by efficiently managing and recycling funds.
- f) An initial funding amount, to be determined, shall be allocated from an appropriate source to establish and operationalize the Education Board Reserve.
- g) The EBR shall adopt a sustainable funding model, incorporating periodic budget allocations, fees, and revenue generated through financial services.

- h) Schools shall contribute their finances to the EBR, held in a national reserve for interest growth.
- i) EBR has the authority to oversee and manage financial transactions, investments, and reserves related to education boards.
- j) EBR collaborates with education boards at the state and local levels, providing financial services, guidance, and support.
- k) The establishment and operations of the EBR shall contribute to job creation locally and state wide
- l) Job creation through the EBR shall open up new benefits, with a particular emphasis on education-related opportunities.
- m) The design and structure of the EBR in each town and city shall be customized based on local funding and school board income.
- n) The EBR shall establish a special interest-generating mechanism called the "Vault" for the benefit of workers and investors.
- o) Workers and investors within the EBR shall accumulate education savings within the Vault, and the interest on these savings shall be traded and deducted by 25% upon withdrawal, providing an avenue for financing education without fees, debts, or taxes.
- p) The Vault system will be implemented in stages, first starting locally and growing in interest, then progressing to the state, national, and Federal Reserve levels. It aims to extinguish National Student Debt and continue generating profits.
- q) Establishes plans for a public awareness campaign to inform citizens, students, and educators about the EBR.
- r) Outlines a system for monitoring and evaluating the EBR's performance over time.
- s) Explicitly states how education boards, schools, students, and other relevant stakeholders will be engaged in the ongoing implementation and evaluation processes.
- t) Anticipates potential challenges and outlines contingency plans for adapting to changing economic conditions or unforeseen issues.
- u) Encourages environmentally sustainable practices within educational institutions.
- v) Ensures provisions for making educational resources and opportunities accessible to individuals with disabilities.
- w) Explores the possibility of public-private partnerships to enhance the financial sustainability of the EBR.
- x) Includes a provision for periodic reviews of the entire legislation to make necessary adjustments based on evolving needs, economic conditions, and feedback from stakeholders.

Section 3:

- a) Collaboratively determined consequences for non-compliance or violations will be adjusted by the three levels of enforcement to ensure fairness and proportionality.
- b) Loss of documents during the reporting process will result in fines imposed on the responsible entity (school board, State EBR).

Section 4:

This Act shall take effect on January 1, 2026.

Sections 5:

This Act will not Amend any laws withstanding in Rhode Island

Section 6:

In passing this legislation, Rhode Island Model Legislation aims to revolutionize the educational financing system, providing accessibility, inclusivity, and financial relief to students. By fostering collaboration between education boards and the newly established Education Board Reserve (EBR), this Act paves the way for a more equitable and sustainable future for higher education in our nation. The primary objectives of this Act are twofold: to establish the Education Board Reserve (EBR) and to implement financial strategies aligned with the Educational-Financial Inclusivity and Middle-Class Strengthening Act of 2025. EBR aims to alleviate economic challenges faced by education boards through a strategic approach to decreasing student debt and loans. The EBR, by managing finances, contributes to the elimination of penalties for colleges. EBR mirrors FDR New Deal principles, enhancing the collective financial well-being of all educational institutions.

An Act To Reform Rhode Island's Justice and Accuracy Ordinance

Introduced by: Representative Mason Pucella

Liberal Coventry High School

Section 1:

- (a) *Wrongful Conviction*: Conviction of a person for a crime they did not commit
- (b) *Exoneration Procedures*: Local legal process
- (c) *Local Justice Review Panel (LJRP)*: A body established to investigate and recommend resolutions for claims of wrongful convictions
- (d) *False Accusation*: The intentional and knowingly false reporting of a crime with the intent to implicate an innocent person
- (e) *Ending False Conviction Team (EFCT)*: A support program designed to provide career counseling, job placement, housing assistance, and mental health support for individuals wrongfully accused and exonerated
- (f) *Minimum Evidence Threshold*: Requirement of at least two or three independent pieces of credible evidence to file criminal charges against an individual

Section 2:

- (a) *Local Justice Review Panel (LJRP)*: Establishment of an independent body to review wrongful convictions claims and recommended retrials or exonerations- Shall Consist of
 - One Representative from local Police Departments
 - One Representative from the Kent County Public Defender's Officer
 - One Forensic expert from a Rhode Island-accredited lab or university
 - Community members, appointed by town councils and RI's house of representatives
- (b) *Evidence Standard*: No individual may be charged with a crime unless at least two to three credible pieces of evidence support the accusation
- (c) *Accuser Accountability*: Accusers must recite their testimony consistently; significant inconsistencies after two attempts result in penalties
 - Any individual making an accusation of a crime must be required to recite their account of the incident in a clear and consistent manner during their initial testimony
 - The accuser will be asked to recite their story word by word to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the details
 - The court will appoint an expert in witness credibility analysis to assist in evaluating the consistency of the accuser's testimony
 - If the expert determines that the accuser is intentionally changing their story or providing inconsistent information, the penalties will apply
 - If an accuser demonstrates that any inconsistencies were due to a genuine misunderstanding or an honest mistake (ex. Emotional distress or memory issues), they may be exempt from penalties
- (d) *Support for the Exonerated*:
 - The accused shall receive compensation through the State Court Compensation Fund, fines from the accusers, and the EFCT program
 - EFCT will provide career support, housing, and mental health services for the wrongfully accused

- (e) Public Engagement: Implementation of public awareness campaigns about wrongful convictions and the importance of accurate crime reporting
- (f) Victim Support Programs: Resources for individuals who are proven victims of crime, including counseling and restitution assistance
- (g) Local Towns will partner with the Rhode Island Department of Health Forensic Sciences Unit for advanced forensic services
- (h) Thorough Police Training on evidence handling, witness interviews, and the proper collection of forensic evidence
- (i) Reducing Faulty Testimonies: Local Police departments will implement the use of double-blind lineups to reduce the potential of bias choices and document each conversation regarding witness statements or testimonies that could be used as evidence
- (j) Public Engagement and Education:
 - A public education campaign will be launched to increase awareness about the issues of wrongful convictions, the importance of accurate evidence, and the consequences of false accusations and the importance of your legal rights
 - Local town councils will publish an annual report detailing the wrongful convictions claims, findings, and any reforms that have been implemented
- (k) The State shall allocate sufficient funds for the creation and operation of the Local Justice Review Panel (LJRP), the State Court Compensation Fund, and the EFCT.
 - The funds will also cover training programs for law enforcement and the implementation of new evidence handling procedures
- (l) Extended Case Review Timelines:
 - Courts handling serious criminal cases must allocate sufficient time to thoroughly evaluate evidence, witness statements, and forensic results before issuing a verdict
 - Extended pre-trial investigations periods may be requested for cases where the evidence is unclear or heavily circumstantial
 - Forensic evidence shall be re-evaluated by an independent expert in cases where new evidence is discovered, or there is uncertainty in the original findings
 - A review committee must oversee cases where new evidence arises, ensuring procedural fairness and accuracy
- (m) Safeguards to Prevent Premature Judgement
 - Juror shall receive detailed evidence summaries and expert consulting during deliberations
 - Additional time for deliberations will be allowed if requested by the jury
 - Defendants may request extended timelines to gather new evidence or conduct independent investigations
- (n) Right to Jury Trials and retrials
 - Every accused individual has the right to a fair jury trial unless explicitly waived in favor of a bench trial
 - The accused may request a retrial if new evidence or procedural errors are identified
 - Any retrial shall be conducted with a new jury, excluding jurors from the original trial
- (o) Victim Support and Rehabilitation
 - Individuals who are wrongfully accused and later exonerated shall be entitled to free mental health counseling for up to 2 years after their exoneration

- The state will issue a public apology to individuals wrongfully accused, acknowledging the harm caused by the false accusation
-
- A restorative justice program will be offered to exonerated individuals, allowing them to participate in dialogues with the victim to foster mutual healing

Section 3:

(a) Penalties for False Accusations:

- Imprisonment: 1 to 2 years
- Fines: \$1,000 per false accusation

(b) Penalties for Recitation Inconsistencies:

- Imprisonment: 1 to 3 years for intentional false reporting
- Fines: \$2,000 for significant inconsistencies across testimonies

(c) Restitution to the Accused: Accusers must pay restitution for legal costs, lost wages, and emotional distress suffered by the wrongfully accused

Section 4:

This act shall take effect on January 1 2026

Section 5:

Any local laws or Rhode Island that conflict with the provisions of this act, particularly those that allows criminal charges based solely on circumstantial evidence, must be repealed or amended to align with the minimum evidence threshold requirements.

Section 6:

This act is necessary to restore public trust in the judicial system, reduce wrongful convictions, and ensure that only credible evidence supports criminal charges. The act also seeks to provide justice and rehabilitation for the wrongfully accused while holding false accusers accountable.

An Act To Create The Establishment Of The Agriculture Restoration Installment (ARI)

Introduced By: Representative Mason Pucella

Liberal Coventry High School

Section 1:

- (a) "Minor Convicted Criminals" refers to individuals convicted of misdemeanor offenses.
- (b) "Community Cleanup Projects" refers to activities that include cleaning, maintaining, and restoring natural and public areas.
- (c) "Fortified Bracelet" refers to a tracking and alarm device designed to monitor participant locations and ensure compliance with program rules.

Section 2:

- (a) The State of Rhode Island shall establish the Agriculture Restoration Installment (ARI) program under the Department of Corrections.
- (b) Eligible individuals may participate in community cleanup projects, including beaches, ponds, lakes, side roads, and parks, to reduce their sentence based on performance and good behavior, provided they are convicted of petty crimes as deemed eligible by the judge. Repeat offenders and individuals convicted of violent crimes are explicitly excluded.
- (c) Post-release, participants may complete additional community service hours, as determined by a judge, to qualify for criminal record expungement. Accumulated hours from advocating and teaching others in prison shall also count towards this.
- (d) Participants shall wear a fortified bracelet with tracking and alarm capabilities at all times while participating in the program.
- (e) The Department of Corrections shall collaborate with local governments and community organizations to identify and coordinate cleanup projects. ARI will act as a third-party monitor connected to minimum security prisons, with a feedback mechanism to evaluate the program's effectiveness.
- (f) Progress reports shall be submitted to the overseeing judge to evaluate participant performance and determine sentence reduction eligibility. Training opportunities, such as environmental cleaning, first aid, or other skills to enhance employment readiness post-program, shall also be provided.

Section 3:

- (a) Any attempt to tamper with or remove the tracking bracelet shall result in an automatic felony charge and a \$5,000 fine. Successful participants may also have the opportunity to work with local town services after record expungement.

(b) Participants who escape and are subsequently apprehended shall receive a mandatory five-year maximum prison sentence, a felony charge, and a \$7,000 fine.

Section 4:

This Act shall take effect on January 1, 2026.

Section 5:

(a) Any existing laws or provisions inconsistent with this Act shall be repealed or amended to align with its provisions.

Section 6:

This Act is necessary to provide an alternative approach to rehabilitation by allowing minor convicted criminals to reconnect with society through meaningful community service. By focusing on environmental restoration and personal accountability, the program aims to reduce recidivism, promote societal reintegration, and enhance public spaces in Rhode Island. Additionally, the provision of free mental health counseling for one year, with discounted appointments thereafter, will support participants' long-term growth and ensure a successful reintegration into the community.

An Act to Require Schools Offer a Specified Non-Western History Course

Introduced By Zaynadin Adam

Liberal, Exeter West Greenwich Regional School District

Section 1

High School - A public facility that offers instruction to ninth through twelfth Grade students.

Specified Non-Western History Course - A history or social studies course pertaining to a region, peoples, or country within:

- (1) The Middle East;
- (2) Asia;
- (3) Africa;
- (4) South America;
- (5) The Caribbean;
- (6) North American Indigenous Peoples;
- (7) Australian Indigenous Peoples.

Section 2

All high schools must provide a specified non-western history course to their students worth a half-credit or more. These courses will be provided but will not be a requirement for students to take or pass, and these classes can be administered to any grade level.

A school shall not be required to offer a specified non-western history course if it can prove to the Rhode Island Department of Education that:

- (1) It offers an extensive high school course covering a non-western region, country, or peoples
- (2) The class is worth a half-credit or more

Section 3

If the curriculum for a specified non-western history course is not submitted by the date required, the school shall first be issued a warning. If nothing is done in the next sixty (60) days, the Rhode Island Department of Education will guide the school in making a curriculum for a non-western history course.

Section 4

Schools must submit the new curriculum in accordance to the bill by August 1, 2028.

Section 5

This bill will amend R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-1-11 by allowing for the Rhode Island Department of Education to hold back funding, under the guidelines of this bill.

Section 6

Among Rhode Island youth is an overall lack of understanding in the world and its history. This is especially true when it comes to non-western countries and regions. To many students, the world seems to consist of Europe, America, and everyone else. Everyone else is not afforded the same levels of understanding in any way, shape, or form be it culturally, religiously, politically, or geographically. This Euro-centric style of education has done a great disservice to American Youth; it shelters children from the most privileged country in the world to the nuance, beauty, and difficulty of less developed nations. Further, it clearly is not sufficient education wise. History scores among school students have been astronomically low in recent years and a simple look at Europe and America each class does little to educate students on the rest of the world. Simply put, the world does not revolve around us and our education ought to reflect that. Should we provide students with a course in which they can explore new cultures, more and more students will become aware of the different cultures and people they share this world with.



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Sponsors: Isabella Giammarco, Mia Dieffenbach,

An Act To: Town and City Roadway Beautification Act

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: The bill's purpose is to fix the terrible roads in Rhode Island

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Town and City shall refer to any populated area in the State of Rhode Island.

Roadway shall refer to the part of a road intended for motor vehicles.

Beautification shall refer to improving appearance. Town and City shall refer to any populated area in the State of Rhode Island.

Section 2: Provisions

1. This bill will keep up with beautification and make Rhode Island a more appealing state to visitors, residents, and businesses. It will also decrease each motorist's cost for repairs. It is more typical for roads to remain damaged than be repaired.

2. Cities and towns are responsible for repairing any of their damaged roads by the September 30th date after the discovery of the damage. This requires an annual inspection. Roads that pass through more than one city/town (example, Mineral Spring Avenue) will be the responsibility of the city/town in which the portion of the road is located. The exception is damage caused by any public utility or construction company contracting with the town or city.

3. A worker for the Department of Transportation will be responsible for examining roads, taking up-to-date pictures of them, and submitting those pictures back to the Department of Transportation between March 1-April 30 of every year. The Department of Transportation will keep the pictures on file.

4. It will be the responsibility of the Department of Transportation to compare images of the current year with those of the previous year in order to determine which roads need repairs and will alert cities and towns to those damages. This will be completed by June 30th of each year.

5. Cities and towns will then set up schedules for the repairs and will alert residents about potential dates of road closings and an approximation of how long the road(s) might be closed for repair.

6. Cities and towns will send pictures of the newly-repaired roads by August 31st to the Department of Transportation, who will either accept repairs or request further repairs. If further repairs are requested, the city or town will have 30 days to complete them.



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7. It will be up to the cities and towns of Rhode Island to determine how to pay for damages, whether it be to raise taxes, reallocate funds, or come up with a completely different methodology, because costs may vary from year to year.

8. Cities and towns will be eligible to apply for funding for repairs of any and all roads that are considered state roads. A map of state highways and public roads can be found at <https://www.dot.ri.gov/about/maproom/index.php>.

Justification: The Town and City Roadway Beautification Act will work to stop the continuing issue of roadway neglect that occurs in the State of Rhode Island. According to a 2021 report by worldpopulation.com, Rhode Island currently ranks number one on the list of worst roads in the United States, with 53% of its roads in poor condition. These poor conditions cost each motorist about \$823, the third-highest in the country. In addition, they act as a disincentive for tourists to visit and businesses to relocate. It is the hope that this bill will prevent any further damage to the Ocean State's roadways and will increase the attractiveness and inhabitability of the place that we call home

Fiscal Implications: 1. Any city or town that fails to provide pictures by the specified date will be given a warning by the Department of Transportation and a date by which pictures must be submitted.

2. If a city or town does not comply with this requirement, that city or town will be fined \$1,000 for a first offense. If the city or town remains out of compliance, the chief executive officer of the city or town will be required to appear in person before the Director of the Department of Transportation and provide both a written and oral response explaining the noncompliance. The Director will determine whether any additional fines are in order and will work with the chief executive officer to set up an acceptable schedule to complete the project.

Environmental Implications: 1. Not applicable Any city or town that fails to provide pictures by the specified date will be given a warning by the Department of Transportation and a date by which pictures must be submitted.

2. If a city or town does not comply with this requirement, that city or town will be fined \$1,000 for a first offense. If the city or town remains out of compliance, the chief executive officer of the city or town will be required to appear in person before the Director of the Department of Transportation and provide both a written and oral response explaining the noncompliance. The Director will determine whether



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Sponsors: Isabella Giammarco, Mia Dieffenbach,

73 any additional fines are in order and will work with the chief executive officer to set
74 up an acceptable schedule to complete the project.

75

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77 **Effective Date:** 46023

78

An Act to Implement Education Opportunities in Homeless Shelters

Introduced by Christiana Votta and Samuel Hiers, Liberals, Coventry High School

Section One:

Homelessness shall refer to the state of being unsheltered and/or not having access to stable, functional housing. In the State of Rhode Island, most of the homeless are the working poor and face circumstances such as rent increases, illnesses, and unemployment.

Education shall refer to the receiving of instruction from a specific institution, such as a school or university.

Opportunity shall refer to an individual's chance to obtain necessary resources to benefit their standards of living. In the case of education, a person's opportunity is their equal access to education.

IEOHS shall refer to the Implement Education Opportunities into Homeless Shelters.

Grants refers to money given to the state government from the federal government to fund state projects.

Non-Profit Organizations refers to a group organized for purposes other than generating profit

Section Two:

- a) All major homeless shelters and organizations within the State of Rhode Island will be mandated to provide basic education programs for homeless and disadvantaged children and adolescents in the area.
- b) Each shelter must approve of a certified, comprehensive coaching program or curriculum that involves support with K-12 English and Math skills.
- c) Homeless shelters and organizations will additionally be required to offer jobs or volunteer opportunities for certified teachers in the area, whether currently teaching or pursuing student teaching (must be certified).
- d) This program would be funded through non-profit organizations and through unused grants.
 - Untouched Grants would be used to help fund this program without furthering Rhode Island's State debt.

Section Three:

- a) If shelters do not provide proper opportunities within a month following the law's implementation, shelters will be fined up to \$200.
- b) Fines can not exceed \$200.
- c) For every month after the deadline for implementation, each homeless shelter that fails to implement the program will be fined an additional \$100.
- d) All fines will go towards the education budget for the State of Rhode Island.

Section Four: This law will go into effect on January 1st, 2026.

Section Five: N/A

Section Six: Implementing a law regarding the intertwining of education opportunities within homeless shelters is necessary, because it would provide more opportunities for RI residents who face homelessness. Many homeless residents in the State of Rhode Island come from historically disadvantaged backgrounds as well, and they already do not have enough resources to access education, such as their housing situations. In addition, these positions would also foster employment opportunities for prospective teachers or for those seeking volunteer work.



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Sponsors: Jordan French, Dennis Galligher, Adam Barboza-Simpkins

An Act To: Expand the Security of Voting Rights

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: The purpose of this bill is to ensure the integrity and security of Rhode Island's general elections by mandating annual audits of the state's election facilities just before each general election. These audits will help identify and address potential vulnerabilities, ensuring that voting systems, equipment, and processes are secure and functioning properly. This bill also ensures that the state's funding toward these facilities is being used accordingly. By conducting thorough checks every year, the bill aims to prevent errors, fraud, and security threats, building public confidence in the election process as well as cutting any unnecessary spending from the election process— saving large sums of money that can be used for other necessities. Ultimately, it seeks to safeguard the fairness and transparency of elections, protecting citizens' right to a secure and accurate vote.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Election Facilities: Any physical or virtual location where election-related activities occur, including but not limited to polling stations, vote-counting centers, and data processing hubs used in Rhode Island's general elections.

Audit: A comprehensive, systematic review and evaluation of election facilities, equipment, processes, and security measures to assess their functionality, accuracy, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

General Election: The regular election held in Rhode Island to elect public officials, including statewide, legislative, and local elections, conducted on a set date established by state law.

Vulnerabilities: Any weaknesses or gaps in election infrastructure, processes, or systems that could potentially compromise the security, accuracy, or integrity of the election.

Cybersecurity: The protection of election systems and data from unauthorized access, cyberattacks, or malicious interference, including threats to voting machines, databases, and communication networks.

Transparency: The principle that election processes and results are open to scrutiny, providing the public and oversight bodies with clear access to information and documentation related to the election.



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Election Fraud: Any intentional act of deception or manipulation that undermines the fairness, accuracy, or legality of the election process, including tampering with ballots, vote tallying, or voter identification.

Election Equipment: The hardware and software used in conducting elections, such as voting machines, tabulators, scanners, and any other technology involved in the casting, counting, or reporting of votes.

Compliance: Adherence to relevant state and federal election laws, regulations, standards, and guidelines designed to ensure fair, secure, and accurate elections.

Section 2: Provisions

This bill would not amend any law put into place.

Justification: \$10 million dollars is allocated from the state treasury every year for the maintenance of voting facilities in Rhode Island. This bill would provide a mandatory audit for these facilities to track the spending of the state's funding to ensure that there is no form of embezzlement or espionage. Funding will only be redacted if there is definitive evidence proving the negligence of the state's funding.

Fiscal Implications: Displacement of state funding (if any) above \$10,000 or more will result in a \$50,000 fine as well as a thorough investigation. Any displacement of state funding (if any) above \$100,000 or more will result in a fine of \$500,000 as well as a lawsuit.

Environmental Implications: There are no environmental implications.

Effective Date: This law will go into effect in January 2026.



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Sponsors: Isabella Giammarco, Mia Dieffenbach,

An Act To: Town and City Roadway Beautification Act

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: The bill's purpose is to fix the terrible roads in Rhode Island

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Town and City shall refer to any populated area in the State of Rhode Island.

Roadway shall refer to the part of a road intended for motor vehicles.

Beautification shall refer to improving appearance. Town and City shall refer to any populated area in the State of Rhode Island.

Section 2: Provisions

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2. Cities and towns are responsible for repairing any of their damaged roads by the September 30th date after the discovery of the damage. This requires an annual inspection. Roads that pass through more than one city/town (example, Mineral Spring Avenue) will be the responsibility of the city/town in which the portion of the road is located. The exception is damage caused by any public utility or construction company contracting with the town or city.

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7. It will be up to the cities and towns of Rhode Island to determine how to pay for damages, whether it be to raise taxes, reallocate funds, or come up with a completely different methodology, because costs may vary from year to year.

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77 **Effective Date:** 46023

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Sponsors: Logan Hoard, ,

1 **An Act To:** Increase and Standardize Public Defender's Salary

2
3 *The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:*

4 **Purpose:** The general purpose of this bill is to Increase and Standardize the Salary
5 of Public Defenders as a method of increasing the amount of public defenders in the
6 state and addressing the serious understaffing faced by the public defender's office
7

8 **Summary of Provisions**

9 **Section 1: Definitions**

10 Public Defender shall refer to a lawyer employed at public expense in a criminal trial
11 to represent a defendant who is unable to afford legal assistance.

12 Public Prosecutor shall refer to a law officer who conducts criminal proceedings on
13 behalf of the government or in the public interest.

14 Appropriation shall refer to a law of Congress that provides an agency with budget
15 authority

16 General Assembly shall refer to the legislature of the State of Rhode Island
17

18 **Section 2: Provisions**

19 a) All public defenders will receive an immediate payment of \$10,000, as well as a
20 later standardized salary fixed by the general assembly

21 b) This is aimed at closing the wide pay gap between the salaries of public
22 prosecutors and public defenders, as well as improving the unfair conditions faced
23 by public defenders, increasing morale, creating a more fair and equitable justice
24 system, lessening the turnover of public defense, and incentivising prospective
25 public defenders to consider working as one.

26 d) This standardised salary will go into effect the January 1, 2026

27 **Justification:** Throughout the nation, public defenders are notoriously overworked
28 and underpaid. A study conducted by NACDL showed that in order to provide the
29 necessary minimum representation for the over 15,000 new cases assigned each
30 year, the state of Rhode Island would have to employ 136 full time public
31 defenders- as of the last time there was a known amount, there were 49. This
32 makes sense when you realize that the understaffing seen in the RI public
33 defender's office is due in large part to the absolutely horrendous pay they receive,
34 resulting in many turning over to private practice. On average, public defenders
35 make \$18,000 less than public prosecutors- a number which keeps ballooning up
36 each and every year. The goal of this bill is to curb this effect, and standardize pay
37 across the board for all public defenders in the state of Rhode Island, setting them



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Sponsors: Logan Hoard, ,

on track to make more, which will incentivise public defense and lessen the burden this severe understaffing has had on public defenders in the State of Rhode Island.

Fiscal Implications: This bill will amend § 36-6-5 (Manner of compensation prescribed by appropriation law), now including public defenders in the group of people who are not paid based on the amount of money given to Rhode Island in any of the 12 (twelve) appropriation acts set out by Congress annually.

Environmental Implications: N/A

Effective Date: Effective January 1, 2026



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Sponsors: Ajax Holmer, ,

An Act To: to Ban The Sale and For-Profit Exchange of Art Generated by Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: This bill will ban the sale of AI-generated art, protecting the livelihood of artists.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Artificial Intelligence (AI) shall refer to programs that scrape data from the internet to produce text, images, audio, or other media based on a user-requested prompt. AI-generated art or "AI art" shall refer to art that was generated using an artificial intelligence program such as Midjourney, Night Cafe, DALLÉ-2, Dream by WOMBO, and other similar algorithms.

A commissioned artist shall refer to someone who is paid by another party to produce a piece of art.

Copyright shall refer to a form of licensing that protects original works from being stolen and reproduced without the creator's consent.

Fair use shall refer to a doctrine that permits that, in some circumstances, copyright can be somewhat waived without permission of the creator if the work is being criticized, reported on, used in educational material, or for research.

The Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) shall refer to a law that protects copyright holders from having their work unlawfully reproduced and distributed.

A cease and desist shall refer to a notice that informs a person to stop an illegal action immediately upon notification, otherwise legal action will be taken.

Willful infringement shall refer to the act of copyright infringement with full intent and deliberation of stealing from the original creator.

Section 2: Provisions

1. The use of AI-generated art in advertising and marketing is prohibited.

2. AI art shall not be sold, exchanged for profit, or entered into competitions for money.

3. Commissioned artists must clearly and explicitly disclose if their art is created from AI-generated services.

4. AI art generators shall not be allowed to request payment from their users in exchange for use of their services.

5. AI-art generator websites such as Midjourney, Night Cafe, Dream by WOMBO, and other similar websites shall keep a public record of art generated on their



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Sponsors: Ajax Holmer, ,

platforms. If a piece of art is suspected to be AI generated, a simple reverse-image search will redirect the user to the public record.

6. In accordance with the US Copyright Office's declaration that AI art cannot be copyrighted and does not constitute fair use, if a website user suspects a piece of work is AI-generated and being used for profit, they can report the post to the website host and have it removed (to stay in operation, all website hosts are already required to have a copyright reporting system in compliance with the DMCA).

7. If the data an AI art generator is scrapping is only free-use, public domain work, this bill does not apply to the for-profit work it creates.

8. If an artist intentionally and willingly relinquishes the rights of a piece of work to an AI-art generator, this bill does not apply to the for-profit work it creates.

9. If an individual or organization is discovered violating this act, they will be notified and sent a cease and desist. For standard violation, if this cease and desist is not heeded, the violator will be charged a fine of \$750 for each infringement.

10. The damages can vary in terms of the extent of the infringement. In accordance with the Copyright Office, if the case is one of willful infringement, then it is a criminal case, and the violator can be awarded up to \$150,000 per offense.

Justification: AI generated art is created by an algorithm scrubbing the work of thousands of arts from the web without their consent. Some artists have their entire portfolios sampled by these algorithms with the express intent by the AI's creators to replicate their style and reproduce their art without any form of credit nor compensation. This fact is made even more egregious when taken into account that many AI art websites, such as Midjourney, charge on a subscription-based service for the use of their generators, with zero proceeds being given to the sampled artists' work.

In addition, AI art is not protected under fair use. By taking this data without consent of the creator, the AI algorithm infringes on the copyright that is granted to all media posted to the internet. Furthermore, AI "artists" purposefully mislead their audiences by claiming their work to be completely original. Art generated by AI is created from stolen content and actively harms the welfare of artists and the integrity of the art industry. Therefore, as stolen work, AI art should be prohibited from being exchanged for profit and for being used for advertising purposes.

Fiscal Implications: Artificially-generated art will not be available for sale or advertising. This will encourage companies and clients to seek out artists to create



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their advertising and commission material, promoting commerce within Rhode Island's art industry.

Environmental Implications: The generation of a single piece of AI art takes 0.011 kilowatt hours of electricity, which is equivalent to charging half of a smartphone's battery. The data centers that power generative AI tools require water to cool them down, which leads to a further environmental strain. By limiting the for-profit exchange of AI art, less energy will be allocated towards AI art generation, allowing environmental resources to be saved.

Effective Date: This bill will take effect on June 20th, 2025.



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Sponsors: Eilidh Thomson, ,

1 **An Act To:** An Act to Register Gun Ownership

2
3 *The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:*

4 **Purpose:** To create a Rhode Island registry of gun ownership and quantities.

5
6 **Summary of Provisions**

7 **Section 1: Definitions**

8 Register shall refer to the act of adding to an official registry/record.

9 Gun shall mean any device designed to expel a projectile by the action of an
10 explosive, gas, or mechanical means. This includes, but is not limited to, rifles,
11 shotguns, handguns, pistols, revolvers, and any other weapon that can expel a
12 projectile and is capable of being legally possessed under state and federal law.

13 Ownership shall refer to the legal act or right of possession over a given thing.

14 Blue Card shall refer to the Possession of a Pistol/Revolver Safety Certificate that is
15 a required document as part of the process of purchasing a firearm in Rhode Island.

16
17 **Section 2: Provisions**

18 All individuals who own a firearm in Rhode Island must be registered as gun owners
19 with the Office of the Attorney General within two (2) years of this bill's
20 implementation. This registry shall be maintained and updated by the Attorney
21 General's office.

22 To register a firearm, the owner must submit an official "Blue Card," issued by the
23 Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, to the Attorney General's
24 office for verification and approval.

25 When a Rhode Island resident purchases a firearm within the state, the seller is
26 required to withhold delivery of the firearm until the Attorney General's office
27 verifies the purchaser's registration status.

28 Upon successful registration and verification, the firearm may be transferred to the
29 purchaser.

30 **Justification:** There is a strong interest for this legislative body to encourage
31 responsible gun practices, ensure gun owner accountability, and lessen burdens for
32 law enforcement during the investigation and prevention of violent crimes. From a
33 public safety standpoint, gun registries allow authorities to more easily identify
34 owners of firearms used in crimes, trace firearms to their original purchasers,
35 confiscate known firearms from individuals who become prohibited possessors,
36 reduce gun theft, and return firearms to their rightful owners - being conscious of
37 the fact that stolen weapons are increasingly common in violent crimes, and having



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Sponsors: Eilidh Thomson, ,

a registry can help monitor where guns end up after theft - help police solve violent crimes, identify repeat offenders, and much more. Rhode Island cares about the Second Amendment rights of its residents, and it also cares about their safety, and registries are a simple way to enhance safety without restricting legal gun ownership and possession.

Fiscal Implications: Initial government spending on administrative processes, database management, enforcement, and legal defense. Potential revenue from registration fees may offset some costs.

Environmental Implications: Increased paperwork and resource use, but the impact can be minimized with digital infrastructure. Proper disposal and reduced illegal dumping of firearms could provide long-term environmental benefits.

Effective Date: January 1st, 2026



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Sponsors: Alexandra Martens, ,

An Act To: Allocate Students 35 Minutes for LunchAllocate Students 35 Minutes for Lunch

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: Extend student lunch times in Rhode Island to allow students enough time to take a break from classes and be able to enjoy their lunch without having to rush eating and worry about not being able to finish their meals in time. allows students enough time to take a break from classes and be able to enjoy their lunch without having to rush eating and worry about not being able to finish their meals in time.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Lunch refers to the time students take during a school day to break from classes, eat lunch, and return to classes.

Lunch areas refer to the place where students are meant to consume lunch in schools. Lunch refers to the time students take during a school day to break from classes, eat lunch, and return to classes.

Section 2: Provisions

Every school in Rhode Island should allocate 35 minutes out of the school day for students to have lunch, including the time it takes for students to leave class, go to their designated lunch areas, eat, and return to classes. Every school in Rhode Island should allocate 35 minutes out of the school day for students to have lunch, including the time it takes for students to leave class, go to their designated lunch areas, eat, and return to classes.

Justification: This bill is important because it allows students enough time to take a break from classes and be able to enjoy their lunch without having to rush eating and worry about not being able to finish their meals in time. Students in Rhode Island public schools are currently allocated at least 20 minutes for a lunch break, including time given to get to and from lunch and classes. This is not nearly enough time for students to be given an actual break to consume lunch at their own pace, which is the purpose of this class break. Given taking time out of classes and learning is an important factor to consider in allocating time for lunch, which is why 35 minutes is a perfect amount of time as it doesn't take too much time out of classes yet still allows students just enough time to be able to break for lunch and get to and from the designated lunch rooms to class.



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Sponsors: Alexandra Martens, ,

38 **Fiscal Implications:** N/A

39

40 **Environmental Implications:** N/A

41

42 **Effective Date:** This shall take effect in the 2026-2027 school year in high schools
43 across the state of Rhode Island.

44



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Sponsors: Ava McGrath, Emma Landreth,

An Act To: An Act To Regulate Pet Breeders

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: The purpose of this bill is to reduce overflow within animal shelters and strays, encourage proper licensing and improve animal welfare.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Section One:

Regulate shall refer to control of the supply, sales, licensing and petcare of pet breeders within Rhode Island.

Backyard Breeders shall refer to inadequate breeding practices where animals are not properly selected for genetic and or behavioral qualities, are not properly socialized, and can be raised in poor conditions.

Animals refers to typical household pets such as dogs, cats, hamsters, rabbits, ferrets, etc.

Breeder shall refer to a person who breed

Section 2: Provisions

Section Two:

a.) In order to purposely breed any animal within the state of Rhode Island, it's required to have a state-issued license and comply with the strict guidelines.

b.) Breeders are required to include license numbers in advertisements for animals.

c.) Each time a breeder makes a sale, they must fill out a contract confirming that the animal is to be returned to the breeder if the buyer cannot care for it, this will reduce the amount of dumped animals and overflowing shelters.

d.) All towns of Rhode Island must apply to the same state animal laws that require proper breeding permits and housing limits to ensure correct monitoring over animal breeding and welfare.

Justification: Applying stricter laws to regulate improper breeding will help reduce overpopulation in shelters and lower the amount of stray animals dumped on Rhode Island streets. Uneducated pet buyers do so much harm to the pet industry, improperly bred animal breeds can develop behavioral and health problems deliberately impacting bred standards. Making it harder for backyard breeders to evade state pet regulations will make it safer and more healthy for our pets.



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Sponsors: Ava McGrath, Emma Landreth,

38

39 **Fiscal Implications:** This bill doesn't require a budget, all fines within the bill will
40 go to the State of Rhode Island.

41

42 **Environmental Implications:** This bill would not have any environmental
43 implication, except help keep stray animals off the streets.

44

45 **Effective Date:** June 1st 2025

46



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Sponsors: Sydney Pavao, Meagan Mulcahey,

An Act To: Banning the Sale of Cars with LED Headlights

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: Stop dealerships from selling cars with LED headlights on them.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Halogen light: The type of headlight that was used before LED headlights were made, similar to incandescent lights. Generally less bright than LED lights.

LED light: A type of light that is able to produce brighter light than halogen

Astigmatism: An imperfection in the eyes curvature that can cause light to appear fuzzy or streaky, making it hard to see.

Section 2: Provisions

Any car dealership within Rhode Island must not sell cars that are manufactured with LED headlights or resell cars that have aftermarket LED headlights put in them.

Justification: LED headlights are more expensive than halogen lights. A single LED headlight bulb costs on average \$70 while a two pack of halogen lights costs on average \$30. Also, the brightness of LED headlights can impair other drivers, especially those with an astigmatism. Thirty three percent of people in the US have astigmatism. The harsh light from LED headlights can cause headaches and eye pain from not being able to adjust to light quickly. The light is concentrated in the very center which can blind drivers and make them unable to see other cars on the road at night.

Fiscal Implications: Dealerships would have to pay to replace the LED headlights with Halogen headlights.

Environmental Implications: None

Effective Date: This bill would go into effect on January 1st, 2026.



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Sponsors: Aaron Chellel, Fatim Ndiaye,

An Act To: Keep Public School Students Nourished

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: To ensure that every public school student in the state has the opportunity to get a school provided breakfast and lunch at school.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

1. Public school shall refer to any school classified as a public school by the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE)
2. School provided lunch shall refer to a meal provided to students, in the designated lunch time, by the school which that student is enrolled in.
3. School provided breakfast shall refer to a meal provided to students, in the designated breakfast time, by the school which that student is enrolled in.

Section 2: Provisions

1. No student enrolled in any public school shall be charged for the following:
 - a. School provided lunch*.
 - b. School provided breakfast*.
2. Violation of this act shall be a fee of \$5,000 to the school district which is not complying. This fee will be per each violation.

*Only one per day to be allowed

Justification: In Rhode Island, education has been an area that has needed work and that the government has been continuously trying to improve. In order for Rhode Island's public school students to improve and work as hard as they can, the state needs to help fulfill their nutritional needs. When students are well fed, they perform well. During the COVID-19 pandemic, students were able to get a free lunch from their school to take home and eat. This system let students eat at home, whether they were qualified for free or reduced lunch or not. Some kids may not eat because, while they don't qualify for free lunch, they still cannot afford to eat. Rhode Island shouldn't let kids go hungry.

Fiscal Implications: Estimated at \$36,000,000

Environmental Implications: N/A



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Sponsors: Aaron Chellel, Fatim Ndiaye,

38 **Effective Date:** Effective on the first day of school of the 2025-2026 school year.
39



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Sponsors: Angelina Pereira, ,

1 **An Act To:** Improve flood mitigation

2
3 *The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:*

4 **Purpose:** To provide extra preventatives against flooding in certain Rhode Island
5 towns and increase hazard mitigation in high-risk flood areas.

6
7 **Summary of Provisions**

8 **Section 1: Definitions**

9 Hazard mitigation shall refer to the effort to reduce impacts from natural hazards
10 through community planning, policy changes, educational programs, infrastructure
11 projects, and other activities.

12 Road drain shall refer to a structure designed to direct water along, across, or
13 underneath a road.

14 Floodwall shall refer to a freestanding, permanent, engineered structure designed
15 to prevent encroachment of floodwaters

16 Flood-inundation maps shall refer to a set of maps that show the spatial extent and
17 depth of flooding at specific water-level (stream stage) intervals along an individual
18 stream section.

19 **Section 2: Provisions**

20 Road drains in the towns of West Warwick and Cranston will be inspected no less
21 than three (3) times per year by each town's respective public works departments.

22 Flood walls will be built along high-risk areas of the Pawtuxet River based on the
23 flood-inundation maps for the Pawtuxet River in West Warwick, Warwick, and
24 Cranston, Rhode Island. (available at pubs.usgs.gov) Each town must submit a
25 construction plan for review by the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency.
26 (RIEMA)

27 Existing floodplains along the Pawtuxet River will not be impacted by this bill and
28 shall not be built upon.

29 **Justification:** Many Rhode Island towns have been susceptible to frequent flash
30 flooding over many decades, and despite continuous efforts to reduce this, the
31 basements of homes, parking lots of commercial buildings, and high-traffic streets
32 still experience flooding during moderate to heavy rainfall. Two major factors
33 contributing to flooding in the towns affected by this bill are clogged and
34 overflowing road drains, as well as the overflow of the Pawtuxet River. Various
35 measures have been implemented to reduce flooding in these areas, but none have
36 involved the construction of physical barriers. Instead of demolishing and relocating



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Sponsors: Angelina Pereira, ,

homes and small businesses, this bill aims to create a permanent solution that will protect all existing infrastructure.

Fiscal Implications: The cost of construction and maintenance of flood walls shall be determined by the West Warwick, Cranston, and Warwick public works departments through cost analysis. State grants will be allocated to each town towards the construction of floodwalls, the amount will be decided by the RIEMA based upon construction plans. All routine management and upkeep funding of the floodwalls will be sourced from local taxes.

Environmental Implications: Not only will the provisions of this bill act to prevent flooding of Rhode Island homes and infrastructures, but will reduce stormwater pollution in local waterways. As listed in the provisions, floodplains will not be negatively impacted by the construction of floodwalls.

Effective Date: This bill will take effect in January 2026. Each town will be required to submit floodwall construction plans within one (1) year and begin construction within two (2) years of RIEMA approval.



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Sponsors: Dimyana Shenoda, ,

1 **An Act To:** An Act to Ban Cell Phones in Schools

2
3 *The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:*

4 **Purpose:** This bill will ban cell phone use by students in all Rhode Island schools
5 during school hours.

6
7 **Summary of Provisions**

8 **Section 1: Definitions**

9 Phone shall be defined as any cell phone, smart phone, watch, or other device
10 capable of web browsing and possessing an operating system (OS) with the
11 exception of computers and tablets.

12 School shall refer to any institution, public or private, created for the education of
13 children in/between preschool through grade twelve.

14 School hours are when school is in session, including but not limited to homeroom,
15 lunch, assemblies, recess, and classes.

16 **Section 2: Provisions**

17 a) Rhode Island schools educating children in/between the grades of
18 preschool through grade 12 must ban students utilizing phones during school
19 hours.

20 b) Students may use their cell phones devices in the following circumstances:

- 21 1. With permission from an instructor;
22 2. In case of an emergency;
23 3. and/or when a licensed physician has deemed utilization of the device during
24 school hours necessary to the student's wellbeing.

25
26 **Justification:** In light of the myriad perils to education and mental health
27 presented by cell phones, it is prudent to remove them from schools. According to
28 the Pew Research Center, this danger is especially prevalent for adolescents in the
29 United States, 95% of whom have access to a cell phone. The average adolescent
30 opens their phone 51 times a day, but many do so far more—some as many as 500
31 times per day, as stated by Common Sense Media. The Pew Study found that 46%
32 of adolescents confessed to being online nearly constantly and 36% divulged that
33 they spend far too much time on social media. Constant access to cell phones is
34 particularly detrimental to children because their brains are still developing and
35 they possess less restraint over their impulses than adults. Cell phones damage
36 students' educational performances—the Pew Study shows 72% of high school
37 teachers find phone use a significant difficulty in classrooms. In fact, some research



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Sponsors: Dimyana Shenoda, ,

shows that it takes a person about twenty minutes to refocus after checking their phones. Each additional ten minutes of cell phone use is correlated with a stable decrease in academic achievement. A study in the International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction, found a correlation between adolescents with higher rates of depression and greater social media use. Additionally, the ability to use phones during free time and lunch often prompts students to socialize far less with others and instead individually operate their phones. Furthermore, phone accessibility prompts students to spend less time outside and more time indoors on their phones.

These problems, however, can be easily ameliorated; disallowing phones in schools generally causes academic performance and mental health to improve. For example, an Australian study found the test scores of 16-year olds and older to improve 6.4% after the prohibiting of cell phones in their schools. A UNESCO 14-country study shows that countries which enforce phone restrictions generally have enhanced academic achievements and fewer incidents of bullying. In order to protect its students' wellbeing both in health and academics, Rhode Island must ban cell phones from its schools.

Fiscal Implications: This bill does not have any fiscal implications.

Environmental Implications: This bill does not have any environmental implications.

Effective Date: This bill shall go into effect at the beginning of the 2025–2026 school year.



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Sponsors: Maddison Ashman, ,

An Act To: An Act to reduce the amount of recyclable plastic and aluminum waste from landfills in RI.

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: Purpose

The amount of recyclable litter has a devastating impact on the environment and natural ecosystem in Rhode Island. To encourage consumers to recycle recyclable materials like bottles, this bill will add a 10 cent deposit fee on all recyclable beverage containers. Consumers will be able to return their bottle at retailers of the containers or drop off facilities to be reimbursed for the 10 cent deposit fee.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Recyclable litter: anything made from a recyclable material that is commonly thrown away or disregarded.

Recyclable beverage containers: all containers that contain something that was intended to be drank that are made from a recyclable material such as plastic, aluminium or glass.

Retailers of the containers: any stores that sell drinks in recyclable beverage containers.

Drop off facilities- facilities administered by Rhode Island Resource Recovery for the purpose of collecting recyclable litter and reimbursing the consumer their ten cents.

Section 2: Provisions

1. All recyclable beverage containers shall have a 10 cent tax added onto them that will be returned to the consumer when the recyclable litter is returned to participating retailers of the containers or a drop off facility.

2. All participating retailers of the containers or the drop off facility will be responsible for recycling all beverage containers returned to their stores and distributing the appropriate tax refund.

3. Rhode Island Resource Recovery shall administer drop off facilities.

Justification: This bill should be made into law because it would greatly help the ecosystem of Rhode Island and convince more people to recycle. Because Rhode Islanders are more likely to throw their recyclables into a garbage can instead of a recycling bin, a good amount of garbage can be recycled. A grand $\frac{1}{3}$ of the beverage containers that were thrown away in 2022 never made it to a recycling facility. Every other state with a bottle bill is recycling more than RI. In Vermont, they recycle 75 percent of their plastic bottles with their bottle bill, while other



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Sponsors: Maddison Ashman, ,

recyclable containers only get recycled 36 percent of the time. In RI, a huge 73 percent of all our recyclable materials goes to a landfill instead of being recycled. Store owners and retailers of these recyclable beverage containers are also responsible for recycling any container that is returned to their store and repaying the customer their ten cents.

Fiscal Implications: There are no fiscal implications.

Environmental Implications: there will be less litter and a cleaner environment for Rhode Island.

Effective Date: June 5th 2026



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Sponsors: Evan Reineke, ,

1 **An Act To:** Bring Nuclear Power to Rhode Island

2
3 *The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:*

4 **Purpose:** This Bill provides for the construction of a nuclear reactor to generate
5 electricity for the State of Rhode Island. This will lower the cost of energy within
6 our State and reduce our environmental impact.

7
8 **Summary of Provisions**

9 **Section 1: Definitions**

10 Revenue bond shall refer to the type of government bond by which the repayment
11 of the investment is guaranteed by the operating revenues of the construction that
12 it funds. Revenue bonds do not need to be voted on by the general public.

13 The AP300 Reactor shall refer to the model of nuclear reactor by the same name
14 designed by Westinghouse. It is a small-scale, modular reactor design, which will
15 most likely become certified for use in the United States circa 2027 by the Federal
16 Nuclear Regulatory Commission. According to Westinghouse, it can generate
17 approximately 330 MW of electricity (about 35% of the State's total energy
18 demand). It is designed to operate for "an 80+ year life cycle". One AP300 Reactor
19 is projected to cost about \$1B to construct.

20 The profits of the reactor shall refer to the amount of money left over each fiscal
21 year after the bond's repayment and interest for the year and the reactor's
22 maintenance, staff, fuel, and any other costs have been paid off.

23 Westinghouse shall refer to Westinghouse Electric Corporation, the designer of the
24 AP300 Reactor.

25 Local institutions of higher education shall refer to universities and colleges which
26 are physically located within the State of Rhode Island. This includes, but is not
27 limited to, the University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College, Brown University,
28 and the Community College of Rhode Island.

29 **Section 2: Provisions**

30 A revenue bond will be created, for the sum of \$1.5B, to account for cost overruns
31 or other unforeseen expenses, for the term of 30 years. The bond will be opened to
32 the general public and any companies or corporations who wish to invest. The
33 money raised from this bond will be used to construct and operate a Westinghouse
34 AP300 Reactor, once they become certified for use in the United States. The
35 revenue from the reactor, once operational, will be used to repay this bond and its
36 interest in its entirety. It will also cover its own operating expenses. The profits of
37 the reactor shall be paid into the Rhode Island General Fund.



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Sponsors: Evan Reineke, ,

As much of the staff of the reactor should be locally trained and educated experts as the situation allows. The staff shall be employees of the State, specifically the Rhode Island Atomic Energy Commission. The Rhode Island Atomic Energy Commission will partner with local institutions of higher education to train technicians and experts to work in the Reactor, with the ultimate goal of having the entire staff of the facility be locally trained and educated.

Justification: Climate change worsens every year and it is imperative that humanity begins to use as much renewable, clean energy as possible. Nuclear energy is one of the safest, cleanest, and most effective forms of energy generation available. Constructing a nuclear power plant in the State of Rhode Island would help us to hit our goal of using 100% renewable energy, as pledged by the governor. Furthermore, a nuclear power plant will provide high-quality, educated jobs to Rhode Islanders and will help drive down the cost of electricity in the state. The plant will eventually pay for itself during its long lifetime, so cost should not be a restricting factor in our decision. In fact, the plant will most likely be profitable, which will provide additional funding to the State, with which we can lower taxes or increase other vital spending to further improve the lives of the inhabitants of Rhode Island. The AP300 Reactor is one of the cheapest available. It uses rigorously tested, extremely effective reactor technology from previous models of Westinghouse reactors.

Fiscal Implications: The State will take out a bond totalling \$1.5B, but the State will not have to directly pay this back. The reactor, once created, will pay for itself. Once the reactor pays off its own bond, it will serve as an additional income source for the State of Rhode Island. The presence of the reactor will drive down the cost of energy within our State, as more energy is created for low cost.

Environmental Implications: Nuclear reactors are rigorously tested to the highest standards of safety. It is highly unlikely that there will be any major environmental incident from this reactor. The presence of the reactor within the State will decrease the State's carbon emissions, by creating large amounts of clean energy to replace the energy generated through carbon-heavy methods of energy generation. There will be minor environmental disruptions from the construction of the building to house the reactor, but no more than it takes to construct a similar building of the same size.



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Sponsors: Evan Reineke, ,

74 **Effective Date:** This Bill shall go into effect immediately, although in different
75 stages. Fundraising for the bond will begin at the beginning of Financial Year 2026,
76 on July 1, 2026. Once the AP300 Reactor has been certified for use in the United
77 States by the Nuclear R
78



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Sponsors: Jillian Escobar, ,

An Act To: Start the school day later

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: So that students can sleep in and get much needed rest so that they will be fully able to focus and perform better throughout the school day.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Section 1:

School shall refer to highschool

Activities shall refer to extracurriculars such as sports or clubs

Average Teenager: highschool students ages 14-18

Section 2: Provisions

1. The school day should start no later than 9:30 and no earlier than 8:15

2. The school day is typically 6 hours so if you start at 9:00 you would end at 3:00

Justification: The average teenager needs 8-10 hours of sleep. It's difficult to make that a daily habit due to homework and after school activities which means that most students are not sleeping enough. This is why we need to start school later so that students can get the recommended hours of sleep so that they do better in school. Some may argue that starting school later will conflict with after school activities. However, starting the school day at 9:00 means that day will end around 3. Most activities don't start until later in the day anyways so you will still have plenty of time. The purpose of this bill is to allow students to be well rested for school so that they are able to focus better in school and retain information better.

Fiscal Implications: N/a

Environmental Implications: N/a

Effective Date: The start of the 2025 school year.



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Sponsors: Orianna French, ,

An Act To: This legislation amends current Rhode Island lighting laws to impose stricter restrictions on light posts in an attempt to prevent light pollution and energy waste.

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: This legislation addresses growing light pollution in Rhode Island by introducing new standards for the installation and design of streetlights and other public light fixtures. It mandates the use of energy-efficient lighting systems with properly designed caps to prevent needless light from spilling into the sky, reducing environmental degradation and improving nighttime visibility. The bill also aims to put a stop to the current wastage of taxpayers' funds on inefficient lighting. With the passage of this bill, Rhode Island will reduce both light pollution and the expense of lighting, which will bring significant environmental and financial dividends to the state.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

The legislation aims to combat light pollution in the state of Rhode Island by requiring more stringent standards in the design and installation of streetlights and other public lighting. It specifically requires the use of energy-efficient light fixtures with properly designed caps to prevent light spill, which will be less harmful to the environment and improve visibility. The purpose of the bill is to curb the misuse of taxpayers' funds by curbing energy inefficiencies in public lighting. With these regulations, Rhode Island will experience less light pollution and reduced energy costs, which will translate into environmental and financial benefits.

Section 2: Provisions

Upon enactment of the Light Pollution Reduction Act of 2025, all new or retrofitted street lighting in the state of Rhode Island will be subject to the following requirements: Streetlights in residential and low-traffic areas will not exceed 3000 lumens. Streetlights in commercial or high-traffic areas will not exceed 6000 lumens. All streetlights will have a color temperature of 3000 Kelvin or lower and will utilize LED or comparable energy efficient light systems. There shall be a one year trial period starting June 1st, 2025, and ending on June 1st, 2026, during which municipalities and government agencies will implement these new standards. Progress will be reported to the authority as required. Compliance will be monitored and information on light pollution levels, energy savings, and public feedback will be gathered by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. All



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Sponsors: Orianna French, ,

lighting in parks, roadways, government buildings, and other public spaces that are publicly owned or publicly funded needs to comply with these standards by June 1st, 2026. Non-compliance after the trial period can result in escalating fines and mandatory modifications.

Justification: The Light Pollution Reduction Act of 2025 is essential to safeguard Rhode Island's natural environment, public health, and energy resources. Light pollution damages wildlife, disrupts ecosystems, and hinders astronomical research, reaching both urban and rural communities across the state. Over 80% of Americans live under light-polluted skies, which disrupts sleep, increases stress, and amplifies the risks of conditions like obesity and depression. In addition, excessive artificial lighting wastes billions of dollars annually. In Rhode Island, LED energy-efficient lighting has the potential to cut public lighting energy consumption by up to 50%, which will result in significant taxpayer savings along with assisting the state in meeting its environmental goals. The legislation will bring direct benefits to residents across the state, especially in urban areas that are worst affected by light pollution. By reducing light pollution, the bill protects nocturnal species such as birds and insects that rely on darkness to migrate and breed. Furthermore, energy efficient technology will save towns and cities money in the long term through lower energy bills and less frequent maintenance. By implementing these standards, Rhode Island will be a leader in mitigating light pollution while providing a healthier, more sustainable environment for all.

Fiscal Implications: Passage of the Light Pollution Reduction Act of 2025 can achieve substantial cost savings for the state. Based on a study conducted by the U.S. Department of Energy, the utilization of LEDs as a replacement for traditional street lighting can conserve as much as 50% of energy use. For Rhode Island, this would be equivalent to approximately \$3 million in savings annually in energy costs on public lighting. In addition, LEDs last longer than conventional lights, which will decrease maintenance and replacement expenses by an estimated \$1.5 million in the coming decade. These savings in dollars will defray the up front expense of upgrading public lighting systems.

Environmental Implications: Passage of a light pollution bill would greatly improve the environment by reducing interference of wildlife and ecosystems. The majority of wildlife, particularly nocturnal ones, rely on natural darkness to perform activities like migration, mating, and foraging. Artificial light will most likely disorient birds, disturb insect populations, and destroy plant growth by interfering



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Sponsors: Orianna French, ,

75 with normal cycles. A light pollution bill would improve judicious lighting practices,
76 preserving the natural nighttime ecosystem, conserving energy, and safeguarding
77 diversity. Besides, it would give humans a clearer view of the night sky, inspiring an
78 appreciation for nature and good mental health.

79
80 **Effective Date:** Ideally we start this as soon as possible. Improvements could be
81 visible in 2 to 5 years, and urban areas such as Providence will take longer, but
82 rural and suburban areas across Rhode Island would see quicker benefits.
83



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Sponsors: Rylie Whitten, ,

An Act To: An Act to Provide Homeless Shelters with State-Funded Mental Health Professionals

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: This bill will provide a grant of \$728,000 to be distributed among public homeless shelters in Rhode Island. This will enable these establishments to hire mental health professionals to treat the unhoused, who are unable to afford treatment for mental illness or substance abuse. Both of these factors lead to chronic homelessness, which has risen substantially throughout Rhode Island. Additionally, this bill has the potential to reduce the percentage of homeless individuals who are struggling with untreated mental illness.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Mental health professionals shall refer to psychologists, substance abuse counsellors, therapists, and other healthcare providers who offer treatments for the purpose of bettering one's mental health or to treat mental disorders.

Homeless shelters shall refer to an establishment that provides temporary accommodations for the unhoused. In this case, these shelters will be public entities, not private institutions.

Chronic homelessness shall refer to unhoused persons who have a substance abuse or mental health disorder, and have been without a home for over a year.

Grant shall refer to a financial provision given by the state government to an individual to fund a beneficial project.

Section 2: Provisions

1. This bill will provide a grant of \$728,000 to be distributed amongst 20 public homeless shelters throughout Rhode Island.

2. The grant will cover one mental health professional for each of the 20 shelters, where they will operate within the shelter for 7 hours a week.

3. The mental health professionals in this program will offer short-term services for each patient, with 8-12 once a week, one hour sessions. After their services are complete, they will provide referrals to other services. This will enable them to assist more patients.

4. If the program is successful, the grant can be reintroduced at the start of next year.

Justification: As of 2024, Rhode Island was reported to have the second-highest percentage of chronic homelessness in the United States. The 2024 Point in Time



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Sponsors: Rylie Whitten, ,

census conducted by the Rhode Island Coalition to End Homelessness found that not only has chronic homelessness seen an upward trend, but the number of homeless Rhode Islanders has risen by 35%. The amount of the chronically homeless, however, reached a 48.8% increase, rising from 629 individuals to a total of 936 individuals. Of those who are unhoused, 20-25% struggle with mental illness, and do not have the funds necessary to secure professional treatment. Since chronic homelessness is closely tied to mental illness and substance abuse, supplying homeless shelters with the capital needed to hire mental health professionals will give unhoused people struggling the ability to treat their mental illnesses and give them the potential to improve their quality of life. With the proper treatment, those struggling with mental illness may be able to escape homelessness and join the workforce, and will at least be able to improve their lives. Supplying public homeless shelters with state-funded mental healthcare will surely reduce the amount of unhoused people struggling with mental illness, and has the potential to reduce the amount of chronic homelessness, as well as contribute to the workforce.

Fiscal Implications: With a cost of \$80-200 an hour for therapy sessions in Rhode Island and a proposed number of 20 public homeless shelters to provide for, this bill will require a grant of \$728,000.

Environmental Implications: This bill will have no effects on the environment.

Effective Date: January 1st, 2026



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Sponsors: Lily Tremble, ,

1 **An Act To:** Encourage Job Training for Individuals on SNAP

2
3 *The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:*

4 **Purpose:** The purpose of this bill is to encourage job training for individuals on
5 SNAP by expanding excluded income to include all training allowances and WIOA
6 on-the-job-training earnings.

7
8 **Summary of Provisions**

9 **Section 1: Definitions**

10 Training allowances shall refer to allowances from vocational and rehabilitative
11 programs sponsored by Federal, State, or local governments, to the extent they are
12 not a reimbursement.

13 Household Income shall refer to the total gross income received by all members of
14 a household.

15
16 SNAP Benefits shall refer to The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
17 provided nutrition assistance to eligible, low-income individuals and households via
18 a monthly benefit on an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card, similar to a debit
19 card, which can be used at authorized retailer stores to purchase food.

20
21 WIOA On-the-Job-Training shall refer to training within the federal program funded
22 by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which lets one hire and
23 train skilled workers and get reimbursed for their efforts.

24 **Section 2: Provisions**

25 a) All training allowances paid to an individual in the state of Rhode Island will be
26 excluded from Household Income when calculating for their SNAP benefit eligibility.

27 b) All WIOA On-the-Job-Training OJT earnings paid to an individual in the state of
28 Rhode Island will be excluded from Household Income when calculating for their
29 SNAP benefit eligibility.

30
31 **Justification:** Training programs are an important resource for all people but for
32 low income families and individuals who need assistance from the government they
33 can be life changing. The most recent RI SNAP Report showed that 77.7% of the
34 known self reported education attainment of head of household was a 12th grade
35 education/GED or lower. Training programs create better opportunities for workers
36 to have access to growth in their careers and higher job satisfaction. If a person
37 takes advantage of training they are more likely to go into a career they are



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Sponsors: Lily Tremble, ,

passionate about and get a job they will keep. This small change will let people be a part of these training programs without the fear of losing their benefits.

Fiscal Implications: While this bill may increase state spending by a small percentage in the short term, in the long run it will mean spending less on SNAP and other programs. Individuals who are a part of these training programs are more likely to get high paying jobs and keep them. It will help to break the cycle of poverty and keep people off of government assistance.

Environmental Implications: There are no environmental implications of this bill.

Effective Date: This bill will go into effect immediately after passage.



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Sponsors: Ariana Bobiak, Sophie Sullivan,

An Act To: An Act to Implement Cursive in the Elementary School Curriculum

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: - The purpose of this bill is for children to have the ability to utilize cursive in relation to writing skills, such as signing your name for important papers, or needing a more formal way of writing.
- Also to ensure that all students will be able to read, comprehend, and analyze, important documents that are influential to the history of our country. Things such as The Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, handwritten letters, or speeches.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Elementary: refers to students in the third grade of Rhode Island public schools.
Cursive: refers to the handwriting in which the characters are joined together.
Curriculum: refers to the subjects comprising a course of study in a school/college.

Section 2: Provisions

This bill will implement cursive teaching to the third-grade curriculum. Students must learn how to read and write in cursive by the time they have reached fourth grade. This writing should be legible, and students must know how to sign their name.

Justification: This bill will ensure that children will have a basic background of reading and writing cursive. Cursive comes into play more as children get older, and having previous knowledge on the subject will be beneficial in more ways than one. Cursive is also an adequate tool for children's cognitive and memory skills, which will help kids be more prepared for the future.

Fiscal Implications: Does not apply to our bill

Environmental Implications: Does not apply to our bill

Effective Date: January 1st, 2026



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Sponsors: Amanda Clare Liwanag, ,

An Act To: Require All Rhode Island High Schools to provide sustainable and free menstrual hygiene products in monitored locations within school establishments.

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: a) The purpose of this bill is to make menstrual hygiene products accessible and free to any person who works or learns in a school establishment. Implementing products that are readily available for any menstruating individual can aid in reducing the stigma and allow students to access products without disrupting class time. In addition to having the menstrual hygiene products be free and accessible, all products must be sustainable to keep chemicals out of these products and prevent the potential consequences associated with such chemicals.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

1. All Rhode Island High Schools refer to the four years of education prior to graduation before pursuing higher education. This includes all high schools within the state of Rhode Island and is restricted to only cities in Rhode Island.
2. Menstrual hygiene products shall refer to disposable tampons and pads.
3. Accessible shall refer to various types of menstrual hygiene products that differ in size and absorbency to accommodate different menstruating individuals.
4. Sustainable menstrual hygiene products shall refer to menstrual hygiene products that are environmentally conscious and will not impose any negative effects on the environment or a menstruating individual utilizing any of the available products.
5. Monitored locations shall refer to areas that are checked frequently to guarantee a variety of products will be available for any menstruating individual to take. Monitored locations will include all restroom facilities as well as the school nurse's office and main office.

Section 2: Provisions

1. All high schools in Rhode Island shall provide sustainable menstrual hygiene products at no cost in monitored locations within school establishments.
2. All menstrual hygiene products must be placed in all restroom facilities, including ones labeled as female or gender neutral, but not limited to these labels.
3. Rhode Island high schools must ensure that a range of menstrual hygiene products are always available and that these products are of good quality and diversity to meet the needs of any menstruating individual.



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Sponsors: Amanda Clare Liwanag, ,

4. The school will be responsible for monitoring the stock of these products and should put measures in place to protect these products from misuse.

Justification: a)The economic barrier of being able to afford menstrual hygiene products monthly can lead students to have low school attendance rates. An estimated 25 percent of students attending school struggle to pay for menstrual products because of their high cost and frequent purchase. This struggle can be solved by providing products so students can focus on school rather than worrying about whether any student will have enough products to make it throughout the school day. Menstruating is a natural bodily process, so just like toilet paper, menstrual hygiene products must be free and accessible. Menstruating shouldn't feel taboo, embarrassing, or even shameful to anyone who experiences it, so having what someone needs can help boost self-confidence.
b) This bill will modify existing R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-21-38. (Availability of feminine hygiene products) with the addition of having the menstrual products be sustainable and good for the environment because it will reduce plastic pollution on the earth. Unsustainable menstrual hygiene products have also been found to contain various harmful metals/chemicals, which can lead to an increased risk of developing certain diseases.

Fiscal Implications: a)The Rhode Island Department of Health(RIDOH) shall allocate 3 million dollars on top of any money already being spent on providing free menstrual hygiene products to implement this act.

Environmental Implications: a)The implementation of this bill will benefit the environment and help reduce plastic pollution in landfills.

Effective Date: a)This bill will go into effect after the conclusion of this academic year, on 30 June 2025.



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Sponsors: Theodore Pickford, Jay Barrass,

An Act To: Establish 100-foot wetland border zones

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: the purpose of this bill is to protect the wetlands in our state from damage caused by the construction and upkeep of new buildings.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Wetlands shall be defined as areas where water covers the soil, or is present either at or near the surface of the soil all year or for varying periods of time during the year, including during the growing season, as determined by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

Development Activity shall be defined as any construction or other related human activity that alters natural areas.

Buffer Zone shall be defined as a strip of land of a certain dimension surrounding a Wetland, that separates a Wetland or other natural feature from Development Activity,

Access Points shall be defined as structures that allow the public to view and interact with the wetland in a way that minimizes environmental impact.

Scientific research shall be defined as any research started by a scientific institution to better understand our environment.

A boardwalk shall be defined as a promenade along a beach or waterfront, typically made of wood.

Section 2: Provisions

a) A mandatory buffer zone of a minimum of 100 feet shall be enforced in any new Development Activity around all wetlands.

b) This Buffer Zone shall consist mostly of natural and native vegetation.

c) No Development Activity shall occur in the designated Buffer Zone unless approval is given from the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management.

Activities allowed to proceed within the construction zone include:

d) Restoring or enhancing native vegetation and plants

e) Scientific research

f) Boardwalks, trails, and other access points

g) repair of buildings that existed in the zone before the law passed.

Punishments



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Sponsors: Theodore Pickford, Jay Barrass,

Any party found guilty of breaking this bill shall have their project immediately ceased and shall receive a fine starting at \$100 for the first square yard of wetland destroyed before exponentially increasing by 10% each square yard. Furthermore, the entity must pay to restore the Wetland that their project infringed upon.

Justification: There is a responsibility as a legislative body to preserve and expand our natural environment in order to keep our state's environment healthy and move forward to improve the condition of our state for the future. By passing this bill, our state takes another step towards a future where humans and nature can thrive in cohesion. Giving Wetlands more room to grow and expand will enhance the natural tendencies of our state. Additionally, by providing these Wetlands with the support they need, we will have stronger and more diverse ecosystems, greater protection for our coastlines, and we will overall improve the quality of nature in our state.

Fiscal Implications: The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management will need additional funding to overview and enforce this new legislation. This will include personnel for inspections and overviews of proposed projects. This legislation also requires fines for violations, but in the enforcement and legal implications of this, the RIDEM will require additional funding. Additionally, if any party fails to comply, restoration costs may be placed on the RIDEM, causing an unexpected financial burden.

Restriction of development on land 100 feet within a wetland would reduce the availability of land for housing and other projects. Real estate may see increased costs due to potential fines, which would discourage investment in areas around the wetland. These properties could also lose some of their property value due to the risk and additional costs associated with these new implications.

By helping to restore our wetlands, the risk of water damage due to flooding or storms significantly decreases. This would help reduce costs to repair infrastructure and disaster response. Additionally, less money would need to be allotted to restoration projects due to the effects of this legislation.

Environmental Implications: The extension of the wetland buffer zones will help further protect our wetlands by giving them more protection from human activities. By creating a physical barrier between human activity and the natural environment we will continue our efforts to support the natural world.

By further protecting our wetlands, we will see an increase in both biodiversity and the overall health of our wetlands. This will in turn benefit our communities. The



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Sponsors: Theodore Pickford, Jay Barrass,

quality of both the water and the air will be positively affected by this legislation,
which will in turn increase the overall health of our community members.
By putting effort towards protecting our wetlands, we would see an increase in
recreational activities relating to wildlife. This would include fishing, hiking,
birdwatching, and more. By providing fun activities connected to nature, our future
generations will be more aware and careful of our environment.

Effective Date: January 1st, 2026



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Sponsors: Isabella Crupe, ,

An Act To: An Act To Provide Free School Meals to Public School Students

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: The purpose of this act is to guarantee that all public school students, from elementary through high school, have access to free, nutritious breakfast and lunch.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Public Schools: All schools supported by public funds. This includes all public elementary, middle and high schools in the State of Rhode Island.

Nutritious Meal: A meal that meets both the federal and state dietary requirements. This includes breakfast and lunch.

Free: The provision of meals to students at no cost to them or their families, without any requirements of financial qualification, or reimbursement.

Student: Any student enrolled in public school in the State of Rhode Island. This includes elementary, middle and high school students.

Breakfast: A morning meal served to students during designated breakfast hours, consisting of nutritious items that meet the USDA guidelines for school meals.

Lunch: An afternoon meal provided to students during designated lunch periods, consisting of nutritious items that meet the USDA guidelines for school meals.

USDA Guidelines for School Meals: The nutritional set of standards set up by the United States Department of Agriculture that outline the required nutritional content for meals served in public schools.

Section 2: Provisions

1. The purpose of this act is to guarantee that all public school students, from elementary through high school, have access to free, nutritious breakfast and lunch.

2. The meals must be provided daily during designated breakfast and lunch breaks.

3. Meals must be provided to every student regardless of income, to support the health, academic success and overall well-being of every student.

4. All meals served must meet or exceed the United States Department of Agriculture guidelines for school meals.

5. All public schools are required to implement a no cost meal program by the start of the 2025-2026 academic year. The program will be fully implemented in all districts within one academic year from the date of this bill's passage.



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Sponsors: Isabella Crupe, ,

6. The Rhode Island Department of Education will issue twenty-five million USD (\$25,000,000) annually, to guarantee that every public school is equipped to meet these needs.

Justification: The need and importance of free, nutritious school breakfast and lunch for public school students is immense. With 11.2% of Rhode Island's population living below the poverty line, many families struggle to provide healthy meals for their children everyday. Furthermore, growing school lunch debt increases stress for low-income households. A no cost meal program would reduce the prevalence of child hunger and food insecurity across the State of Rhode Island. Furthermore, to be able to focus and learn, students must be fully nourished and equipped with the nutrients they need to succeed. The Rhode Island Department of Education is required to supply textbooks to all students, regardless of income. Free breakfast and lunch should be provided in the same way. Through a no cost meal program, we can improve learning, remove student meal debt and play an essential role in the academic success of students. With the assumption the Rhode Island Department of Education will issue \$25,000,000 USD annually, this would be on par per student with existing Massachusetts legislation. Passing this bill will allow for every child to have the ability to succeed in the classroom, ease the stress of numerous families and bring essential necessities to Rhode Island public schools.

Fiscal Implications: 1. The Rhode Island Department of Education will issue twenty-five million USD (\$25,000,000) annually, to guarantee that every public school is equipped to meet these needs.

Environmental Implications: N/A

Effective Date: 1. All public schools are required to implement a no cost meal program by the start of the 2025-2026 academic year. The program will be fully implemented in all districts within one academic year from the date of this bill's passage.



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Sponsors: Ella Procaccianti, ,

An Act To: Support Small Businesses in the Smallest State

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: Support and promote the wellbeing and longevity of small businesses in the digital age.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Small business - a for-profit company having fewer than 500 employees

Digitalization - the conversion of business practices into digital tools

Section 2: Provisions

Streamlining Regulatory Operations

1. All business and occupational licenses are now renewed bi-annually

2. The Rhode Island Department of Business Regulation must digitalize its operations

a. All licensing applications and forms must be able to be submitted electronically,

b. No business or individual can be required to submit a paper application for renewal or obtaining of an occupational or business license,

3. All government agencies that handle business licensing, occupational licensing, or building permits must process initial applications and respond to the applicant within ten (10) business days of receiving the application.

Creating a Better Business Environment

1. This bill changes Rhode Island's corporate tax codes;

a. Reducing corporate taxes paid by small businesses to 6% as opposed to 7% and,

b. Increasing the rate for businesses not considered small businesses from 7% to 7.5%,

2. The Rhode Island LLC fee will be lowered from \$150 to \$75 for all small businesses.

3. This bill creates a \$1,000,000 Small Business E-Commerce fund to be allocated over 3 years.

a. Small and micro businesses can apply for a grant of up to \$2,500 to assist in the development of e-commerce, digitization, or digital marketing,



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Sponsors: Ella Procaccianti, ,

b. The grant program will be administered by the Rhode Island Commerce Department,

i. The Rhode Island Commerce Department will create an application for this grant, and each applicant will be reviewed by the department,

ii. All applications for this grant must be able to be submitted digitally.

Justification: Rhode Island is and has historically been one of the worst states for small businesses. Convolutioned licensing and permitting processes and a difficult business environment make this state a difficult one for small businesses to compete in. But we can change this. Especially now, in the digital age, small businesses need support when it comes to competing in digital marketing and e-commerce. This bill, the Small State, Small Business Act, will seek to increase the viability of small businesses in Rhode Island in several ways. Decreasing both the corporate taxes paid by small businesses and the licensing fees shows financial support for these businesses and can help change the narrative that Rhode Island is not small business friendly. We will establish a grant to empower small businesses to compete with large companies, and we will streamline the complicated process of navigating government bureaucracy to obtain necessary permitting and licensing. Small businesses make up 98.9% of the businesses in Rhode Island, employ over half of our workforce and generate almost half of our state's GDP. They need our support.

Fiscal Implications:

Small businesses are the backbone of any thriving economy. Supporting small businesses directly supports the local economic well-being of your communities. Small businesses are major economic contributors, employing significant portions of the local population and contributing to the overall economic health of our towns and cities. Up to 90% of the new jobs created every year are created by small and locally owned businesses. Supporting them supports the overall health of the job market and employees everywhere. Small businesses also allow for more economic diversity. This bill seeks to relieve tax and fee burdens on small businesses, and creates a fund that provides grant money to ensure continued support for these businesses as rapidly developing technology and markets require small businesses to be able to quickly adapt and innovate. These requests will be factored into the creation of the 2026 fiscal year budget, and the state will see all of the money 'returned' with the economic stability and success this bill promotes in our statewide economy.



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Sponsors: Ella Procaccianti, ,

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Environmental Implications: The 100 largest companies in the world account for almost 71% of carbon emissions since 1998, according to the Carbon Disclosure Project. These companies are broadly responsible for most of the carbon emissions and environmental exploitation that occurs on a daily basis, generating over 450 metric tons of plastic waste every year. And while these statistics can make the current environmental crisis seem like something out of our individual hands, we have something extremely powerful to protest with; our dollars. As consumers and legislators, we have an obligation to support small and local businesses, with the goal of creating health not only in our local economies but in our global environment. This bill seeks to prop up small businesses and support them over large and international corporations which can have devastating impacts on the environment. Small businesses reduce automobile emissions, with less transportation required; locally owned businesses make more local purchases. Supporting this bill supports small businesses, and supporting small businesses supports the environment.

Effective Date: October 1st, 2025 (start of the next fiscal year)



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Sponsors: Mia Dieffenbach, Alex Dieffenbach,

1 **An Act To:** Mandate First Aid Kits at Every Sporting Complex

2
3 *The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:*

4 **Purpose:** This bill will allow for all sporting complexes to have mandatory first aid
5 kits and defibrillator machines in an area that would be easily accessible. Any
6 person can acquire these items in emergencies or if an injury takes place at the
7 facility.

8
9 **Summary of Provisions**

10 **Section 1: Definitions**

11 First aid kits - a collection of supplies and equipment used to give immediate
12 medical treatment, primarily to treat injuries and other mild or moderate medical
13 conditions.

14 Defibrillator machines - devices that apply an electric charge or current to the heart
15 to restore a normal heartbeat.

16 Sporting Complex - any facility or venue used for athletic events including but not
17 limited to: outdoor or indoor sports fields, gymnastics or arenas for teams, or
18 recreational facilities.

19 Emergencies - a serious, unexpected, and often dangerous situation requiring
20 immediate action.

21 **Section 2: Provisions**

22 (a) Any person present at the sporting complex shall have the right to access the
23 first aid kit or defibrillator in the event of an emergency or injury.

24 (b) Staff and personnel shall be trained on the proper use of defibrillator machines
25 and first aid equipment.

26 (c) The equipment should be placed in a clearly marked and accessible area for
27 both the players, coaches, or any person present to be able to use.

28 (d) Kits will be inspected yearly by the organization owner to make sure they are
29 up to date with new materials that are deemed appropriate. Pictures will be taken
30 and sent to Health and Human Services for inspection. Any owner who is not
31 compliant will face a 1,000 dollar fine for every month that evidence is not received
32 from their property.

33 **Justification:** Annually, 3.5 million kids under the age of fourteen get hurt playing
34 sports. Then, once those kids begin playing those sports at the high school level,
35 90% of them will sustain an injury whether that is sprains, bone injuries, or head
36 trauma. Even some severe enough to cause permanent damage which could be
37 career ending. Within those statistics was Alex Dieffenbach, who faced not only a



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Sponsors: Mia Dieffenbach, Alex Dieffenbach,

career defining injury but months of rehabilitation to get back to the sport he loved.
This injury could have been minimized if a first aid kit was at the scene. Many
injuries and hospital trips can be prevented with these new treatments on the field.

Fiscal Implications: A 2,000 dollar budget for first aid kits, including a
defibrillator machine, will be given to every sporting complex in the state, no
matter the type of sport or facility. Every owner will have to put this into their
yearly budget for new equipment.

Environmental Implications: Not applicable.

Effective Date: February 1, 2026.



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Sponsors: Pluto Mosier, Ajax Holmer,

An Act To: Prevent Felons From Appearing on Rhode Island Ballots

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: This bill will prevent candidates who have been convicted of felonies in the past five years from appearing on Rhode Island ballots, ensuring that unlawful individuals do not gain positions of power in our government without reform.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Felon shall refer to a person who has been convicted of a felony level offense in a state or federal court.

Felony shall refer to the Rhode Island State definition of a felony, under Title 11 - Criminal Offenses, Chapter 1, General Provisions R.I. Gen. Laws § 11-1-2, as "any criminal offense which at any given time may be punished by imprisonment for a term of more than one year, or by a fine of more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000)."

Candidate shall refer to a person running for a town, state, or federal governmental position.

Section 2: Provisions

1. A candidate who has been convicted of a felony during the past five years before the date of the election shall not appear on Rhode Island voter ballots, regardless of when the original crime occurred.

2. Individuals who were convicted of nonviolent felonies that occurred when the individual was a minor shall not have their ballot status limited by this bill.

3. Individuals who were exonerated/pardoned of the original felony conviction shall not have their ballot status limited by the bill.

4. If a Rhode Island district receives ballots from the Rhode Island Department of State with one or more candidates whose status is limited by this act, they must send the ballots back with a request for new ballots without the candidate(s)'s name on it in accordance with this legislation.

5. If the pollster(s) who receive the ballots do not send the ballots back and attempt to use the ballots in the following election, they will be fined \$500 and will be charged with voter fraud. The Rhode Island Department of State will withdraw the incorrect ballots and replace them with ballots without the ineligible candidate(s) name(s) on it.

Justification: Although felons lose the right to vote while incarcerated, they are not explicitly banned from running for office. In order to discourage convicted felons



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from doing so, this legislation prevents candidates who have been convicted of a felony in the past five years from appearing on ballots in Rhode Islands, whether it be for local, state, and/or federal elections.

Furthermore, as seen in the recent sentencing of President Donald Trump, the fact that felons can be elected president in between sentencing and conviction can interfere with the decision of the courts in the sentencing. The argument that being sentenced to any degree can interfere with one's official duties is valid--but should not stand as a barrier to justice.

We should not and cannot allow positions of office to be held by individuals who may abuse that power to their advantage. As people of a country that is built on democracy, a democracy that should protect us, we deserve candidates that have our best interests at heart.

Fiscal Implications: This bill has no fiscal implications.

Environmental Implications: This bill has no environmental implications.

Effective Date: This bill will take effect on January 1st, 2026.



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Sponsors: Zoë Clay, Sophie Roda,

An Act To: An act to implement a feline rehabilitation program in prisons, allowing inmates to care for stray cats to promote responsibility, emotional growth, and successful reintegration.

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: To provide companionship and shelter for stray cats, while allowing inmates to improve their personal responsibility through caring for the cats.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Animal Welfare Organizations: Shelters and Organizations such as the RISPCA

Low Risk Offenders: One with a relatively low probability of reoffending

Socialization: The process of preparing a cat or dog to enjoy interactions and be comfortable with other animals, people, places, and activities.

Grants: a sum of money given by a government or other organization for a particular purpose.

Private Partnership: collaboration between a government agency and a private-sector company.

Section 2: Provisions

1. All Rhode Island Prisons, in partnership with animal welfare organizations, must provide low risk offenders the option of having a shelter cat as a temporary companion.

2. Facilities must be determined as safe, enclosed areas for housing and caring for cats.

3. Participation is voluntary and the inmates must adhere to program guidelines, with violations leading to removal from the program.

4. Cats will be sourced from local shelters, focusing on cats that require socialization.

5. Inmates will be responsible for feeding, grooming, cleaning, and socializing the cats under supervision.

6. Veterinary care will be provided by the associated animal welfare organization. A select group of prison staff and animal welfare experts will oversee the program.

7. The program will be funded through grants, private partnerships, and nonprofit contributions.

8. Success of the program is measured by inmate behavioral improvements and cat adoptions rates.



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Sponsors: Zoë Clay, Sophie Roda,

Justification: Rhode Island faces a significant issue with feline overpopulation, with estimates ranging from 70,000 to 200,000 stray and feral cats across the state. State Veterinarian Scott Marshall has acknowledged this as a growing concern, emphasizing the need for sustainable solutions. Shelters often reach capacity, leaving many cats without homes or proper care. Establishing a feline rehabilitation program within correctional facilities provides a humane and effective way to address this overpopulation by housing, socializing, and preparing these cats for adoption.

Beyond addressing Rhode Island's stray cat crisis, this program offers significant rehabilitative benefits for incarcerated individuals. Research by Monica Solinas-Saunders, an associate professor at Indiana University specializing in incarceration and offender rehabilitation, has shown that animal-assisted programs contribute to lower recidivism rates and improved soft skills—such as responsibility, empathy, and communication—helping inmates reintegrate into society more successfully. By implementing this initiative, Rhode Island can create a mutually beneficial program that improves animal welfare, reduces the burden on shelters, rehabilitates inmates, and generates economic savings through lower incarceration and animal control costs.

Fiscal Implications: From a fiscal standpoint, this initiative is a cost-effective solution with long-term benefits. By reducing the stray cat population, the program can lower costs associated with animal control services, shelter overcrowding, and euthanasia. Additionally, because the program can be funded through grants, nonprofit partnerships, and private donations, it minimizes financial strain on taxpayers. The reduction in recidivism rates also presents long-term savings, as fewer reoffenders lead to decreased incarceration costs for the state.

Environmental Implications: Animals will be given the opportunity to experience consistent human interaction, bettering their chances of being adopted into a permanent residence. Inmates will have the ability to bond with an animal, which will relieve stress and encourage responsibility. Once the inmate is released, they will have experienced commitment and accountability, which will be helpful upon re/entering the workforce and adjusting to the condition of life outside of prison.

Effective Date: 46183



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Sponsors: Pluto Mosier, ,

An Act To: Protect the label of incarcerated individuals

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: Block the exploitation of incarcerated workers.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Minimum wage shall refer to the minimum hourly wage employees must receive in compensation for their labor.

An incarcerated person shall refer to an individual who is incarcerated in a Rhode Island state facility.

Penal institution: a correctional facility; a jail or prison.

Section 2: Provisions

1. Any individual who is currently serving time in a Rhode Island state penal institution shall not be mandated to work in their time incarcerated.

2. Any individual who is working during their time incarcerated in a Rhode Island state penal institution shall not receive less than Rhode Island minimum wage compensation.

3. Any company or penal institution employing incarcerated individuals found to have violated minimum wage requirements will be required to reimburse the individuals for the missing wages with 10% interest compounded quarterly.

4. Any company or penal institution employing incarcerated individuals found to have violated any of the provisions of this bill will be subject to mandatory review from the Department of Corrections and up to a \$10,000 fine.

Justification: This bill is designed to protect incarcerated individuals from exploitation when serving out a prison sentence. The goal of prison is rehabilitation, and treating incarcerated individuals poorly and making it difficult for them to support themselves financially when they leave prison only increases the chances that these individuals will reoffend.

Fiscal Implications: This may make it more difficult for projects where labor is sourced from incarcerated individuals to be funded.

Environmental Implications: N/A

Effective Date: July 1st, 2025



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Sponsors: Jana Denise Madriaga, Landon Lafrenaye, Nattapol Vongvilay

An Act To: Reinforce and amend the bill requiring Asian American history to be taught in all schools in Rhode Island.

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: To inform students about the culture, heritage, and history of Asian Americans that are not being taught. As a result of the lack of education on Asian American history in schools, an edition of the pivotal role of these people in the development of the United States should be part of every curriculum. The absence of knowledge of Asian American history creates a dangerous environment for the Asian American population and makes those of Asian descent easier victims of oppression and racism. Teaching the history of Asian Americans in schools is crucial in fighting against racist stereotypes and dehumanization; making education on this topic mandatory will force the United States into a safer and more comfortable environment for the Asian American community.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

AA refers to Asian American groups across the United States
NHPI refers to Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander groups across the United States.

Section 2: Provisions

Beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, every public elementary and secondary school shall include in its curriculum at least one unit (approx. one week) of Asian American history, one unit of Native Hawaiian or Hawaiian American history, and one unit of Pacific Islander history. Each unit will be required to include several, more than two, influential or important figures from each respective group as well as contributions made from said groups to the United States. Said contributions should range from AA and NHPI additions from civil rights to American economy, social, cultural, political, etc. contributions. The study of AA and NHPI material removes, in some capacity, the risk of discrimination against those of AA and NHPI descent.

The council on elementary and secondary education, in collaboration with the commissioner, shall decide an appropriate amount of material needed for education on AA and NHPI, but must at minimum be one unit per each group, AA, NH, and PI. The curriculum on AA and NHPI history must be reviewed each year and, if needed, updated.



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Sponsors: Jana Denise Madriaga, Landon Lafrenaye, Nattapol Vongvilay

Justification: The bill emphasizes the significant historical contributions of Asian Americans to the United States and underlines the importance of adopting an inclusive educational environment. Also, it advocates for the incorporation of diverse cultural figures and events into a school's curriculum, similar to the established lessons on other minority groups in high school programs. From this approach, we can further develop a cultural understanding and provide a comprehensive education for both current and future high school students of Rhode Island, recognizing Asian American history's role as an essential aspect to the United States history.

Fiscal Implications: The funding for our bill would come from taxes, federal sources, and state government aid as well as local contributions to help signify and recognize the importance of implementing Asian American studies into school curriculums and why it is necessary to include Asian American history in schools curriculums across Rhode Island.

Environmental Implications: N/A

Effective Date: This bill will go into effect at the beginning of 2026, with each public school required to provide the curriculum by the beginning of the next school year.



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Sponsors: Jorge Sanchez, Demarcus Jackson, Alex Kapsimalis

An Act To: An act allowing students in Rhode Island public schools to take up to 7 excused mental health days.

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: - Improve the mental health and emotional wellness of students in Rhode Island's public schools by granting them the ability to take up to seven excused mental health days per academic year, without academic penalties. These days will help students manage stress better. These can be used for family vacations, stay-at-home, or play video games! They won't have to worry about any assignments during those 7 days.

- It does not have to be 7 consecutive days. These can be separated.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

- Mental Health Days: Days that students are allowed to take off from school for reasons related to emotional or mental health. These can include stress, depression or just tiredness

- Excused Absence: An absence from school that does not count against a student's attendance record, and does not affect their academic standing or grades. An absence that does not count against the student's attendance. All work missed is not counted against them

- Student: Any student in a K-12 public school in the state of Rhode Island.

- Parent/Guardian Notification: Parents or guardians have to notify the school through a signed waiver, indicating the days taken for Mental Health

Section 2: Provisions

Excused Mental Health Days: Seven mental health days are allowed every year. They are given without any penalties or marks to the attendance.

Confidentiality: Even if the reason for the absence is revealed, it will not be used against the student. Only the student if he so chooses may decide to make it public.

Parental Notification: Only students or parents may be the ones who will let the school know about the absence within the 24-hour time gap.

Support for Students: At the same time, each school will share information concerning the mental health resources the children can use where counseling services are among them.

No Academic Penalties: If you don't want to be penalized for work you missed due to your mental health, you can make up the assignments and the grades' level will be the same.



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Sponsors: Jorge Sanchez, Demarcus Jackson, Alex Kapsimalis

Justification: Mental health is a widespread problem for students, as it is known to result in a reduced performance in school and such, stress and anxiety are the major factors. The existing school attendance norms are inadequate to cater for mental health needs. Mental health days encompassing mental health learning will help students handle their mental health issues, thereby improving their academic performance and making them more satisfied overall. This act will reduce the stigma and provide the flunking students with the assistance they require.

Fiscal Implications: The fiscal cost of the bill will primarily include the administrative cost for the excused mental health days implementation and tracking, which will necessitate schools to instill systems for notifying and tracking absences. Estimated costs for administrative adjustments are very small and would be supported by the existing district budgets. The state is going to give \$500,000 for the first year as start-up money for schools to build this system, which will also include funding for staff training and the development of notification systems. Costs will be integrated into the state's main education budget, and additional funds will be allocated if mental health support services are needed in schools.

Environmental Implications: Not Applicable

Effective Date: Beginning of the 2025-2026 academic year.



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Sponsors: Ela Er, ,

An Act To: Ban Sales of Energy Drinks for Minors

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: To lower the amount of minors that are suffering from the side effects of energy drinks.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Ban shall refer to the prohibition of the sales and distribution of energy drinks for those who are under the age of 18.

Energy Drinks shall refer to drinks that contain high levels of stimulants, typically caffeine, sugar, and guarana that are formulated to boost energy levels and for better performance. This includes but is not limited to: Red Bull, Monster Energy, Celsius, Alani, Rockstar, and Bang.

Minors shall refer to any individual who has not reached the age of 18.

Retailer shall refer to any business, individual, or organization that is responsible for the sales of goods or services to customers.

Government-issued identification shall refer to any form of ID that is issued by a government authority or agency, used to verify a person's identity or age. This includes but is not limited to a Driver's License, Passport, Social Security Card, Military ID, Green Card, and National Identity Card.

Section 2: Provisions

Employee Training: All employees will be trained on this topic and will understand how to obey the law. They will be aware and they will not be selling any energy drinks to minors. This includes them checking for forms of identification during checkout.

Security System: In addition, the energy drinks will be locked up. Only a trained employee will have access to open them. There will be a button, and the employee will be there but they will also check for some form of identification as well.

Online Retailing - Delivery Personnel Training: All delivery personnel will also be trained on this topic. When the product gets shipped, it needs to have a specific packaging that mentions on it that it's an energy drink and when it gets dropped off an adult needs to be present to give a signature.

Monitoring: Regular checks will be conducted in-person by Rhode Island Department of Health to make sure everything is going how it's supposed to go and how the security measures are working out as well.



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Sponsors: Ela Er, ,

Justification: There is a responsibility as legislation to make this world safer for younger people as well as to protect our great minds. According to a study done by Johns Hopkins University, the effects of energy drinks on kids include abnormal heartbeats, seizures, diarrhea, high blood pressure, anxiety, panic attacks, and many more. Energy drinks on average contain about 100-200mg of caffeine, which exceeds the recommended amount for minors aged between 12-18. The consumption of them will worsen their health and lead to other problems such as cardiovascular and neurological diseases. The energy drinks are not giving energy, they are causing disruptive problems in students' academic performances, physical and emotional health, as well as unhealthy sleep habits. Through the passing of this bill, the minors of Rhode Island will be protected, and eventually grow up to be healthier people as well as better decision-makers.

Fiscal Implications: Through the passing of this law there will be a slight decrease in the sales of energy drinks since minors won't be allowed to purchase, and this will decrease the revenue of the energy drink businesses. In addition, this law may lead to a decrease in the tax revenues due to reduced sales.

Environmental Implications: There are no environmental implications on this bill.

Effective Date: This bill will go into effect on January 1st, 2026.



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Sponsors: Amanda Proia, ,

An Act To: An act to require a mental health unit be taught in all elementary schools in the state of Rhode Island, starting at the third grade level.

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: According to the American Psychological Association, the rising rates of mental health issues among young children has been declared a crisis. In the past 10 years alone, more young people are feeling more helpless and alone than ever before. This bill would require elementary school age students to complete a unit about understanding their mental health to help them navigate the challenges they may face in the future.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Section 2: Provisions

- All students in grades 3-5 will be required to take part in an 8 week long mental health unit within their physical education & health class.

- All working physical education teachers in the state of Rhode Island will be required to take a two week long course for a certification in order to teach this topic to students

- The state of Rhode Island must issue grants for funding the training course for teachers

- All schools must re-evaluate their curriculum to implement this program within the health education program

- At the end of the unit, schools will submit a report to the state that will include the student feedback from an assesment

Justification: In our country, young people have been impacted by mental health problems now more than ever. In 2017, the Youth Risk Behavior Survey reported that about 26% of middle school and high school students live with constant feelings of sadness and hopelessness sparking from a mental health issue. This percentage has only risen since then. This rise is due to social media and the building pressure placed on students to fit into cliques and limit their horizons. In October of 2021, adolescent mental health was declared a national emergency. Despite this, very little has been done to help students understand just how important it is to take care of their mental health, and how a mental health issue could be so detrimental to their quality of life later on. If young people were taught how to understand their feelings, manage stress, and support themselves and their friends from a young age in a mental health centered class unit, then they will



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Sponsors: Amanda Proia, ,

39 know how to navigate any mental health related changes they might face as they
40 grow up in a world that is changing rapidly. If students can help each other, they
41 will feel less alone, as well as more safe and protected by their school community.
42 The purpose of education is to prepare students for their lives, so we must
43 understand how we can help them become the best possible versions of
44 themselves. They are our future, and we cannot give up on them.

45
46 **Fiscal Implications:** The cost of a two week mental health training course may
47 range from \$1,500- \$2,000 per individual. Currently, no public data is available on
48 how many physical education teachers there are in the state of Rhode Island, so an
49 exact amount of money necessary is not able to be calculated at the moment.

50
51 **Environmental Implications:** N/A

52
53 **Effective Date:** 46631
54



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Sponsors: Anna Lancellotta, Mark Goldberg, Jeremy Rice

An Act To: Allow Crocs and other attire in physical education

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: Allow students to wear Crocs in P.E and have participation grading or any grading not dependent on what you wear.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

P.E(Physical Education) shall refer to: instruction in physical exercise and games

Crocs shall refer to: Shoes made from a soft comfortable material

Contingent shall refer to: Occurring or existing only if (certain circumstances) are the case; dependent upon

Curriculum shall refer to: The subjects comprising a course of study in a school or college

Section 2: Provisions

Students can wear Crocs and any other type of shoes as long as it doesn't interfere with sports or activities. Participation grade will not be contingent upon clothing, and attire doesn't decide how well you perform in a P.E class. If necessary, a presentation grade can be introduced to the school P.E curriculum

Justification: Currently, participation in P.E is estimated based upon the attire of each individual, which is a biased approach toward the grading system. A participation grade should not be dependent on clothing principles nor should it decide how well you perform in a P.E class.

Fiscal Implications: None

Environmental Implications: None

Effective Date: The beginning of the 2025-2026 school year



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Sponsors: Eli Turgeon, ,

An Act To: Thereby, the use of generative Artificial Intelligence or deepfakes to impersonate a public or political figure in an attempt to spread misinformation shall be prohibited.

The People of the State of Connecticut, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose: In recent years, the development of generative artificial intelligence and “deepfakes” has led to dangerous opportunities for misinformation. To prevent this danger, this bill will prohibit and prosecute the use of AI or deepfakes to impersonate a public or political figure in a malicious way.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Artificial Intelligence (AI): Artificial intelligence, for the purposes of this bill, refers to generative AI materials.

Deepfake: Deepfakes are a form of impersonation utilizing video editing software, in which an actor completes an action, before their face and features are digitally replaced to resemble a public or political figure.

Impersonate: In this bill, impersonate means to take appearance of for the purposes of misinformation, not comedy or satire. It also holds that the image must reasonably appear to be that person.

Political or Public Figure: This is a figure who either holds a political office, or is intentionally well-known.

Section 2: Provisions

1. By August 1st, 2026, the use of generative AI and deepfakes to impersonate public or political individuals will be prohibited.

2. Prior to this date, large-scale AI companies and projects will be notified of the changes which would need to be made to their programs. This would include the following:

a. A warning placed when referencing political or public figures of the legislations surrounding the use of AI in this context.

b. Prohibiting the creation of realistic impersonations of public or political figures.

3. If the prohibition is violated, the punishment will be placed under the standards of Identity Fraud, as defined under Title 11-49.1 of Rhode Island law.

Justification: In the changing political and technological landscape of today, misinformation spreads rapidly. One of the tools, developing at the fastest rate, is Artificial Intelligence. AI-generated media, from videos and voice recordings, which is still distinguishable (in most cases) from reality. However, this may change soon.



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Sponsors: Eli Turgeon, ,

Today, a more pressing issue is the use of deepfakes, which have already been attempted by the Russian government in the 2022 Russo-Ukrainian War, impersonating President Zelensky in an attempt to cause surrenders. In light of these developments, strong action is needed before the midterm elections. With the fast developments of AI technology, it will not be long before it is near-impossible to distinguish what is said by an actual politician. The ability of anyone in the United States with access to the internet to create this destructive content without consequence leaves a massive hole in the protection of election security.

Fiscal Implications: Surveillance for prohibited material will cost approximately \$700-1500 a month, with additional costs to prosecute. This is based on extrapolated costs of corporate surveillance of social medias.

Environmental Implications: N/A

Effective Date: August 1st, 2026

An Act to Require Elementary Foreign Language Education
Introduced by Representative Elizabeth Palmieri
Liberal, Barrington High School

Section 1

Public elementary schools shall refer to a publicly funded school that provides elementary education

Foreign language shall refer to non English languages. Examples in schools districts often include Spanish and French

Curriculum shall refer to the course of studies in elementary schools

Rhode Island Department of Education shall refer to a state agency in Rhode Island that oversees the elementary and secondary education system from pre-Kindergarten through twelfth grade

Section 2

- a. All public elementary schools in Rhode Island are required to include a foreign language class in the school's curriculum
- b. Grades required to teach the foreign language curriculum are 3rd-5th grade

Section 3

- a. Upon the first offense, school districts that fail to adhere to this law will receive a warning from the Rhode Island Department of Education.
- b. Upon the second offense, school districts that fail to adhere to this law will receive a 5% cut in state funding,

Section 4

This act shall take effect on August 20th, 2025.

Section 5

This bill will not amend any previous legislation.

Section 6

Young children are far more likely to retain foreign language skills than older students. Cognitive scientists have found that the best time for people to learn a foreign language is before the age of 10. After the age of 10, the ability to learn a new language is more difficult and hard to maintain throughout one's life. Therefore, beginning foreign language classes in 3rd grade is an ideal time for optimal success in retaining information. If this legislation passes, students in Rhode Island will experience greater success in their language classes at the high school level or after graduation. Additionally, learning a foreign language at a young age has proven to be beneficial for one's English grammar and vocabulary. Teaching young students a foreign language is vital for their overall success in the language classroom and as a general student.

An Act to Allow Permitted Concealed Carry Users to Carry and
Own Magazines Containing More Than 10 Rounds.

Introduced by: Representative Matthew Zielinski
Conservative, Exeter West Greenwich High School

Section 1-

Rounds - Projectiles or “Bullets” often used in firearms.

Magazines - A chamber used in a firearm or other device used to contain projectiles.

Concealed - To keep something in possession secret or hidden.

Permitted - To have consent and/or be allowed to do something.

Federally licensed firearm dealer- A person who holds a valid federal firearms dealers license issued pursuant to U.S.C. § 923(a).

Large capacity feeding device- Means a magazine, box, drum, tube, belt, feed strip, or other ammunition feeding device which is capable of holding, or can readily be extended to hold, more than ten (10) rounds of ammunition to be fed continuously and directly therefrom into a semi-automatic firearm. The term shall not include an attached tubular device which is capable of holding only .22 caliber rimfire ammunition.

Section 2- This Act will allow for a concealable handgun magazine to extend up to, but not exceeding 18 rounds, to be carried by a person who has passed a background check and has obtained a concealed carry permit authorized by the state Attorney General or Town Police Chief, or Sheriff.

Section 3- This Act does not protect any person without a valid conceal carry permit. If a person was to be in violation of this act, they may be susceptible to face prosecution in accordance with existing state statutes.

Section 4- This Act may be enacted immediately upon passage by the Rhode Island Legislature

Section 5-

This law would amend §-11-47.1-3. (*Large Capacity Feeding Device Ban of 2022*)

Section 6- In Rhode Island, those who carry concealed firearms are restricted to only 10 rounds due to the ban of high capacity magazines. Despite it being a measure of gun control within the State of Rhode Island, it creates a severe disadvantage when a criminal enters an occupied building with malicious intent to inflict injury or death upon another human being. When a law abiding citizen “carries” in public and encounters an armed criminal, or potentially multiple armed criminals who have illegally achieved a high capacity magazine, and is trapped inside a domain. The situation ultimately puts the odds in the criminals favor. As in a skirmish between the criminal and the legal citizen. The criminal would need to reload much less and later than the “carrying” citizen. Potentially costing the citizen his life. The purpose of the concealed handgun

is similar to a Fire Extinguisher. The fire extinguisher is meant to put out a fire at a moment's notice, no matter how much of the canister you use. A significant restriction on a handgun's magazine capacity is similar to a restriction to the size of a fire extinguisher. If there's a big fire, or in this case a group of unafraid criminals, the fire extinguisher can only do so much before it's useless and you have to grab or find another one. That's the equivalent of reloading your self defense weapon in a gunfight.

An Act to Make A Physician of a Physician-Assisted Suicide Receive A Life Penalty based on
the Severity of the Situation

Introduced by: Representative Shreya Kumaraguru
Liberal, Exeter West Greenwich Senior High School

Section 1-

Physician means a health professional who practices medicine, which is concerned with promoting, maintaining or restoring health through the study, diagnosis, prognosis and treatment of disease, injury, and other physical and mental impairments.

Assisted suicide means suicide effected with the assistance of another person, especially the taking of lethal drugs provided by a doctor for the purpose by a patient with a terminal illness or incurable condition.

Accidental death means an unnatural death that is caused by an accident, such as a slip and fall, traffic collision, or accidental poisoning.

Extreme suffering means acute mental or physical pain.

Terminal illness means a disease(s) that cannot be cured or adequately treated and is expected to result in the death of the patient. This term is more commonly used for progressive diseases such as cancer, rather than fatal injury.

Congestive heart failure means a weakness of the heart that leads to a buildup of fluid in the lungs and surrounding body tissues. The final stage of this illness is Stage D heart failure with reduced ejection fraction, where the use of any type of treatment will not cure or reverse any damage from the illness.

Active euthanasia means the deliberate act of ending a patient's life through direct intervention, typically by administering a lethal substance, to relieve suffering from a terminal or incurable condition.

Depression is a mental health disorder characterized by a persistent feeling of sadness or lack of interest in external activities. It can significantly affect how a person feels, thinks, and handles daily activities. Over time, depression can contribute to suicidal thoughts and/or actions.

Deadly medication examples could be Fentanyl, Hydrocodone, Morphine, and Oxycodone.

Section 2-

This bill proposes to make physicians of physician-assisted suicide receive obligatory punishment of a life penalty, though the punishment is based on the severity of the situation. If the physician accidentally hands out the wrong dose of a medicine to a patient or deliberately kills or helps in a patient's suicide, they will be put on trial for their murder and immediately

receive a life penalty. Physicians would be deliberately involved in the patient's suicide by knowing that the patient wants/wanted to kill themselves cause of their depression for example, or the physician wants/wanted to kill the patient. However, in cases where the patient is extremely suffering with terminal illnesses like congestive heart failure, the act of active euthanasia will result in the physician receiving no penalty.

The physician will be put on trial if they are suspected to have murdered a patient, and if charged that they are guilty, they will receive their life-long punishment.

Section 3-

If the physician(s) violate the bill, the state attorney general would begin prosecution, and the physician(s) will likely end up being found as guilty. Their punishment would be a life-long penalty in prison.

Section 4 -

This bill will go into effect on January 1, 2026.

Section 5-

This bill will amend R.I. Gen. Laws § 11-60-3 by changing the maximum sentence of imprisonment from ten (10) years to a life sentence.

Section 6-

This bill should be enforced as it can make physicians more focused on allocating the correct doses for medicine/medicine supplies and not handing out medicine for the patient to take home which will let them have the ability to take their life. With more effort in making sure there are no accidents in adding too much of a medication or too much of a dose prescribed, there will be less deaths occurring from physician-assisted suicides. It can also stop physicians from handing out any deadly medications like Fentanyl to patients— Fentanyl could be substituted with a different pain reliever. Overall, this bill will be a factor in reducing the suicides assisted by physicians.

An Act to Ban Sales of Energy Drinks for Minors
Introduced by Senator Ela Er
Liberal, Barrington High School

Section 1:

Ban shall refer to the prohibition of the sales and distribution of energy drinks for those who are under the age of 18.

Energy Drinks shall refer to drinks that contain high levels of stimulants, typically caffeine, sugar, and guarana that are formulated to boost energy levels and for better performance. This includes but is not limited to: Red Bull, Monster Energy, Celsius, Alani, Rockstar, and Bang.

Minors shall refer to any individual who has not reached the age of 18.

Retailer shall refer to any business, individual, or organization that is responsible for the sales of goods or services to customers.

Government-issued identification shall refer to any form of ID that is issued by a government authority or agency, used to verify a person's identity or age. This includes but is not limited to a Driver's License, Passport, Social Security Card, Military ID, Green Card, and National Identity Card.

Section 2:

All retailers within the state of Rhode Island shall be prohibited from selling, distributing, or offering energy drinks for sale to any minors under the age of 18. Retailers should be trained and must be responsible for taking appropriate measures to identify the age of any customer who wishes to buy an energy drink through government-issued identification. For online deliveries to locations in Rhode Island, there should be an adult present to give a signature.

Section 3:

All retailers who break this bill upon first conviction shall receive a fine of one thousand dollars (\$1,000). Upon repeating it for the second time (within 18 months), retailers shall receive a fine of two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500). If the subsequent violation (within 36 months) continues, the fine shall double.

Section 4:

This bill will go into effect on January 1st, 2026.

Section 5:

This bill does not amend any pre-existing legislation in the state of Rhode Island.

Section 6:

There is a responsibility as legislation to make this world safer for younger people as well as to protect our great minds. According to a study done by Johns Hopkins University, the effects of energy drinks on kids include abnormal heartbeats, seizures, diarrhea, high blood pressure, anxiety, panic attacks, and many more. Energy drinks on average contain about 100-200mg of caffeine, which exceeds the recommended amount for minors aged between 12-18. The consumption of them will worsen their health and lead to other problems such as cardiovascular and neurological diseases. The energy drinks are not giving energy, they are causing disruptive problems in students' academic performances, physical and emotional health, as well as unhealthy sleep habits. Through the passing of this bill, the minors of Rhode Island will be protected, and eventually grow up to be healthier people as well as better decision-makers.

An Act to Allow Permitted Concealed Carry Users to Carry and
Own Magazines Containing More Than 10 Rounds.

Introduced by: Representative Matthew Zielinski
Conservative, Exeter West Greenwich High School

Section 1-

Rounds - Projectiles or “Bullets” often used in firearms.

Magazines - A chamber used in a firearm or other device used to contain projectiles.

Concealed - To keep something in possession secret or hidden.

Permitted - To have consent and/or be allowed to do something.

Federally licensed firearm dealer- *A person who holds a valid federal firearms dealers license issued pursuant to U.S.C. § 923(a).*

Large capacity feeding device- *Means a magazine, box, drum, tube, belt, feed strip, or other ammunition feeding device which is capable of holding, or can readily be extended to hold, more than ten (10) rounds of ammunition to be fed continuously and directly therefrom into a semi-automatic firearm. The term shall not include an attached tubular device which is capable of holding only .22 caliber rimfire ammunition.*

Section 2- This Act will allow for a concealable handgun magazine to extend up to, but not exceeding 18 rounds, to be carried by a person who has passed a background check and has obtained a concealed carry permit authorized by the state Attorney General or Town Police Chief, or Sheriff.

Section 3- This Act does not protect any person without a valid conceal carry permit. If a person was to be in violation of this act, they may be susceptible to face prosecution in accordance with existing state statutes.

Section 4- This Act may be enacted immediately upon passage by the Rhode Island Legislature

Section 5-

This law would amend §-11-47.1-3. (*Large Capacity Feeding Device Ban of 2022*)

Section 6- In Rhode Island, those who carry concealed firearms are restricted to only 10 rounds due to the ban of high capacity magazines. Despite it being a measure of gun control within the State of Rhode Island, it creates a severe disadvantage when a criminal enters an occupied building with malicious intent to inflict injury or death upon another human being. When a law abiding citizen “carries” in public and encounters an armed criminal, or potentially multiple armed criminals who have illegally achieved a high capacity magazine, and is trapped inside a domain. The situation ultimately puts the odds in the criminals favor. As in a skirmish between the criminal and the legal citizen. The criminal would need to reload much less and later than the “carrying” citizen. Potentially costing the citizen his life. The purpose of the concealed handgun

is similar to a Fire Extinguisher. The fire extinguisher is meant to put out a fire at a moment's notice, no matter how much of the canister you use. A significant restriction on a handgun's magazine capacity is similar to a restriction to the size of a fire extinguisher. If there's a big fire, or in this case a group of unafraid criminals, the fire extinguisher can only do so much before it's useless and you have to grab or find another one. That's the equivalent of reloading your self defense weapon in a gunfight.

An Act To Mandate The Carrying of Epinephrine Autoinjectors by Police Officers

Introduced by Representative Izzy Woodmansee

Liberal, The Prout School

Section I:

Epinephrine refers to a hormone/medication which is used to regulate visceral functions and reduce/treat patients who are in anaphylactic shock.

Epinephrine autoinjector shall refer to the device used to administer a premeasured dose of epinephrine to treat one suffering from anaphylactic shock.

Anaphylactic shock or *Anaphylaxis* shall refer to the severe allergic reaction which causes swelling of the tongue/throat, trouble breathing, weak pulse, death, etc.

Police Officer shall refer to any state or municipal police officer serving in Rhode Island.

Police Vehicles shall refer to any motor vehicle used by police officers.

Police Station/Precinct shall refer to any building which is used to accommodate police officers and other members of police staff.

Police Department shall refer to any state or municipal department with jurisdiction within Rhode Island.

EMS shall refer to all Emergency Medical services in Rhode Island.

Section II:

- a) All police officers with jurisdiction under the state of Rhode Island shall henceforth be authorized to administer epinephrine autoinjectors.
- b) All police officers will be required to carry epinephrine autoinjectors in their police vehicles.
- c) If an officer does not have a police vehicle, they will be required to carry an epinephrine autoinjector on their person.
- d) All police officers will be required to attend biannual mandatory training on the use of epinephrine autoinjectors.
- e) The cost of epinephrine autoinjectors will be mandated into the budget of each police department.
 - i. Police departments must cover all epinephrine autoinjectors necessary to enforce the bill.

Section III:

a) If a police officer fails to carry an epinephrine autoinjector due to their own negligence, they will be subject to department disciplinary action.

1. Each shift without an epinephrine autoinjector will count as a separate infraction.

b) If a police station or precinct fails to distribute epinephrine autoinjectors or enforce this bill, there will be a \$5,000 fine per month of nonregulation.

Section IV:

This bill will go into effect at the beginning of the next fiscal year.

Section V:

This bill will override any existing legislation barring police officials from administering epinephrine autoinjectors, which fall under the category of prescription drugs.

Section VI:

This bill is a necessary course of action that is needed to improve the safety of those in the State of Rhode Island. While EMS employees, vehicles, and stations all carry epinephrine autoinjectors, police officers are more likely to respond to a scene first. Saving time can save lives, and mandating police officers to carry epinephrine autoinjectors will greatly reduce the complications and fatalities from anaphylaxis. Many allergens are unknown, whether by the patient or someone around them, and anaphylaxis can set in quickly depending on the severity of the allergy. The longer the patient's throat is closed, the longer their body goes without receiving oxygen, which can lead to organ failure, brain damage, and even death. That means that the time spent waiting for EMS to arrive can mean the difference between full recovery and death. Additionally, police officers are often patrolling the streets of Rhode Island, unlike EMS, and may notice or be drawn to an anaphylactic emergency in their district. Having no way to help the patient(s) other than calling for EMS is a dangerous risk to take. Having an epinephrine autoinjector available, as well as the skills necessary to administer it, is incredibly important when there is no time to be wasted. It can be argued that the cost of epinephrine autoinjectors is too great for all police departments to be able to fund. The cost is exactly why many Rhode Islanders do not have access to this form of lifesaving care. Many Americans may risk their lives in order to cut costs. To some, an epinephrine autoinjector is not worth the cost of rent, and therefore the risk of fatality from anaphylaxis increases. Considering the fact that the cost of epinephrine autoinjectors is not likely to go down before this bill is in effect, it is the duty of the State of Rhode Island to save the lives of those who have not been given proper aid to afford this life saving care.

An Act to Lower the State Sales Tax
Introduced by: Representative Jack Iredale
Independent, The Prout School

Section 1:

Sales Tax shall refer to the sales tax on goods and services in the state of Rhode Island.

Bill shall refer to the act to lower the sales tax.

Section 2:

- A. This bill aims to lower the state sales tax from 7% to 6.25%.

Section 3:

- A. Penalties on businesses for not implementing this new sales tax shall be an increase of 10% of the taxes that are due from the business and/or organization. This penalty aims to enforce the use of the new sales tax, giving businesses the opportunity to remain as low as possible in their expenses.

Section 4:

- A. This act to lower the sales tax from 7% to 6.25% will go into effect at the beginning of the 2025-2026 calendar for Rhode Island Model Legislature.

Section 5:

- A. This law would amend § 44-18-18.

Section 6:

This bill is important because of the high sales tax that is currently in place in the state of Rhode Island. Other states like Massachusetts and Connecticut have a lower sales tax rate at 6.25% and 6.35% respectively. New Hampshire has no sales tax whatsoever and the state government functions just fine without these heavy taxes. Rhode Island has no reason at all for having a ludicrous sales tax of 7%. This bill would create an incentive for people to buy more in retail and for others to buy more in the state of Rhode Island, generating more revenue for the state. This bill also aims to lower that tax in order for the common people of Rhode Island to live comfortably and not worry about extra money being given to the government if they do not wish for it. The first focus of the government should be to the people of the United States.

An Act to Pay Teachers What They Earn
Introduced by Representative Lillian Weinstein
Barrington High School

Section 1:

“Teachers” refers to all education professionals including, but not limited to, teachers, instructors, administrators, counselors, and principals.

“Salary increase system” refers to the system through which regional school districts determine annual teacher salary increases.

“Individual performance” refers to the conduct, capabilities, and success of individual teachers, as measured by a combination of administrative evaluations, student performance, and student evaluations.

Section 2:

Every municipality and regional school district shall establish and put into full effect, a salary increase system based upon individual performance for all teachers regularly employed in the public schools.

Section 3:

All municipalities and regional school districts that do not comply with the terms herein shall receive a fifteen percent (15%) reduction of state funding until they comply with all terms as mentioned above. All municipalities and regional school districts that do not comply with the terms herein, for three (3) consecutive years, shall receive an additional fifteen percent (15%) reduction of state funding until they comply with all terms as mentioned above.

Section 4:

This bill will go into effect on July 1st, 2026.

Section 5:

This bill amends RI 16-7-29.

Section 6:

Teachers are responsible for educating the future of our country. It isn't good enough for them to be paid based solely on a set schedule, without regard for their achievements. This bill would have two main benefits; it would lead to teachers being paid more fairly for the work they put in and teachers being greater incentivized to help students succeed. Most teachers receive unjustly low compensation for the hard work they put in which is a direct result of our state's current system. This bill would implement a new system that would directly reward teachers for

everything they do. Although most teachers are exemplary, there are the occasional teachers who would benefit from an additional incentive. This bill would ensure that teachers' performance is taken into account when deciding on salary increases. This would ensure that students are not suffering as a result of unmotivated teachers. This would ensure that both students and teachers are given all of the resources and motivation they need to succeed.

An Act to Improve Environmental Education in Schools

Introduced by: Representative Priyal Patel
Conservative, Exeter-West Greenwich Regional School District

Section 1: *Environmental Education* - the process of learning about the environment, including the understanding of natural systems, sustainability, and ecological conservation efforts.

Public Schools - any educational institution operated by the state or local government, which includes primary, middle, and secondary schools.

Section 2: The Bill is fixed to incorporate the comprehensive environmental curriculum in the mainstream curriculum for public schools, highlighting sustainability, climate change, and conservation practices. Starting, schools would be required to implement environmental education courses or modules so that they can disseminate knowledge relevant to the environment for the benefit of the students. The objective is to catalyze student thought regarding handling the planet.

Section 3: If a school does not implement the prescribed environmental education programs required to be completed by the specified date, the penalties constituted for the school for each year of non-compliance will lead to a reduction in state funding that is allocated for extracurricular programs, culminating in a review for non-compliance after three years.

Section 4: This bill will go into effect in August 2026, to allow schools sufficient time to plan and implement the new educational requirements.

Section 5: This law would replace the bill of S-2356 of the Education Code (Environmental Education Act) that was tabled in June of 2024.

Section 6: Most environmental issues have featured prominently on top of national and global consciousness; still, many students have not gained enough knowledge to comprehend and tackle these issues. This is a sincerity to prompt oneself that the introduction of environmental education should be compulsory in schools, ensuring extensive awareness among generations to come, engagement, and capability in creating sustainable alternatives. It will begin instilling the importance of environmental stewardship in students from a very early age, creating a sense of responsibility toward their order that will prepare them to take significant steps in their communities. Simultaneously, this proposition contributes to various concerns such as climate change and environmental degradation-it aims to ensure that kids are endowed with knowledge relevant to the planet that they will inherit.



Rhode Island YMCA

Youth And Government

FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Committee Assignment:

Bill #:

Sponsors: Alexandra Lopes, Nicholas Healey

An Act To- An act that requires all social workers in Rhode Island high schools to send emails to students and parents about their resources, along with yearly school-wide assemblies revolving around mental health and substance abuse.

The People of the State of Rhode Island, represented in the Senate and House of Representatives do enact as follows:

Purpose- This bill aims to enhance access to school resources and ensure that students are consistently informed about the available services by requiring the distribution of monthly emails and regular assemblies led by school social workers.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1-

Mental Health: A person's condition concerning their psychological and emotional well-being.

School social worker: A specialized area of social work concerned with the psychosocial functioning of students to promote and maintain their health and well-being while assisting students to access their academic potential.

Substance abuse: Overindulgence in or dependence on an addictive substance, especially alcohol or drugs

Section 2-

1. All high school social workers located in Rhode Island are required to send quarterly emails to students and their parents
2. A yearly assembly in each school shall be held regarding the social workers and the help they can give

Changes to make this bill aren't much, but they include the state informing the school boards of the new law, then the school boards informing and enforcing this rule among the school social workers state wide.

Justification

According to Rhode Island Kids Count Factbook, 19% children from ages 6 to 17 have a diagnosable mental health problem and of that 19% only about 22% reported receiving the help they needed. As you can see from the data, not a lot of high school students have reached out for help. They may not know where to seek help or may feel unsure about how to access mental health services. Quarterly emails and yearly assemblies



Rhode Island YMCA

Youth And Government

FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
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FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Committee Assignment:

Bill #:

would provide regular updates on available resources, including the contact information of the school social workers and mental health programs. Since mental health challenges are often stigmatized, students may feel too ashamed to reach out for help. By receiving these emails and attending assemblies, students can see that mental health issues are common and that they are not alone. The consistency of communication can help students feel supported throughout the school year, rather than just during a crisis.

According to Rhode Island Kids Count Factbook, in 2022 262 teenagers, ages 13 to 19, were hospitalized after a suicide attempt. 19% of the 64 teenage deaths (12) caused by injury were suicide. Yearly assemblies would offer an opportunity for in-depth conversations on mental health topics, such as suicide prevention, coping strategies, and how to support a friend in crisis. By increasing awareness of the seriousness of mental health issues, these initiatives can empower students to act before a crisis escalates. An important component in a students mental health is through creating a supportive school culture. By making mental health a more discussed topic in school systems, the importance of communities, friendship, and safety will be fostered. If students feel safe and welcome to feel vulnerable, less issues will occur.

Adolescence is a crucial period of emotional, social, and cognitive development. Mental health struggles during this time can effect academic performances, relationships and ones well-being. It is imperative that mental health in teenagers is addressed to prevent self-harm, suicide, and overall struggles.

Fiscal Implications- There is no financial impact of this bill

Effective Date - September 5th, 2025 (Start of next school year)

An Act to Reduce the Number of Years after Production a Foreign-Sold Vehicle can be Imported

Introduced by: Representative Eben Bambery
Conservative, Exeter-West Greenwich Senior High School

Section 1-

Vehicle - every device in, upon, or by which any person or property is or may be transported or drawn upon a highway, except devices used exclusively upon stationary rails or tracks.

Foreign vehicle - every vehicle brought into this state from another state, territory or country, other than in the ordinary course of business by or through a manufacturer or dealer, and not registered in this state.

Import- with respect to any article, any bringing in or introduction of such article into any area (whether or not such bringing in or introduction constitutes an importation within the meaning of the tariff laws of the United States).

FMVSS - Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards

Date of Manufacture - the month and year during which work was completed at the place of main assembly of the vehicle

Section 2-

The aim of this bill is to exempt foreign vehicles, 15 years after Date of Manufacture or older, purchased for import into Rhode Island from the restrictions of the “Imported Vehicle Safety Compliance Act of 1988”.

Section 3-

Vehicles imported in violation of this bill, and the “Imported Vehicle Safety Compliance Act of 1988” will be subject to one or more of the following; refused admission into the United States, exportation, or abandonment to the United States. Only under joint authorization from the Rhode Island General Treasurer and the Rhode Island Secretary of Commerce may a vehicle be imported in violation, under the agreement that it will be conformed to FMVSS standards within 120 days after entering the United States.

Section 4-

This bill will go into effect on January 1st, 2026.

Section 5-

This law would amend Pub. L. 100-562, Oct. 31, 1988, 102 Stat. 2818 *Imported Vehicle Safety Compliance Act of 1988*

Section 6-

Currently, only those exempt from the restrictions of the “Imported Vehicle Safety Compliance Act of 1988” are vehicles 25 years old or older (which qualify as “classic or antique”), or with authorization from the Secretary of Commerce, exemption for purposes of research, investigation, study, demonstration, training, or competitive racing events. The current restrictions are in place to comply with the FMVSS. In Canada, there are very similar laws in place, though their restriction is only 15 years after manufacture date that a vehicle can be exempt, which it would make sense to match. The main concern, especially within car communities, is that 25 years is outright an unreasonable amount of time needed to wait until being able to own certain vehicles.

The Humane Cosmetics Act

Introduced by: Representative Ariana Bobiak, Liberal, St. Mary Academy Bayview

Introduced by: Representative Sophie Sullivan, Liberal, St. Mary Academy Bayview

Section 1:

Cosmetics: shall refer to any product applied to the body, in order to improve an individual's appearance.

Animal: shall refer to a living organism

Animal testing: shall refer to a scientific experiment in which an animal would be forced to undergo something that will cause them pain, distress, or lasting harm.

Manufacturer: shall refer to a person or company that makes goods for sales.

Company: shall refer to a commercial business.

Constituent: shall refer to a component or part of something.

Substantiated: shall refer to providing evidence of the truth.

Section 2:

This bill will prohibit the sale of any cosmetics that use animal testing as a way to test product(s). A manufacturer may not sell any cosmetics that have been developed or manufactured by the use of animal testing in the state of Rhode Island. We are enforcing the **Human Cosmetic Act** that has already been passed in 12 states and 41 countries.

Section 3:

This bill does not apply to:

1. Any animal testing that has been conducted outside of the United States.
2. If the company is certain that there is no other way to determine the cosmetic is safe for human application.
3. "Is of a product or ingredient for a drug or device subject to regulation by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA)"
4. There is proof of the non-cosmetic purpose of the test.
5. If the cosmetic ingredient or nonfunctional constituent poses a risk towards human health, then you may be allowed to use animal testing if it is justified. If this is the case, then the company must support their case with a detailed research paper indicating why they must use animal testing to test your cosmetic ingredient or nonfunctional constituent.

6. The cosmetic ingredient or nonfunctional constituent is in wide use and is unable to be replaced by a different ingredient that has a similar function.
7. Cosmetics that were made prior to January 1st, 2026 will be acceptable. Any cosmetic that was made after January 1st, 2026 will be prohibited from being sold on shelves, if it violates this section.
8. If a cosmetic ingredient tested on animals before January 1, 2026, it is eligible, even if the ingredient is manufactured on or after that date, as long as no new cosmetic animal testings take place, in violation of this section occurred on or after January 1, 2026;
9. Any online purchases that are shipped through companies nationally or internationally.

Section 4:

If a manufacturer or company violates *section 2*, and continues selling cosmetics that have been subject to animal cruelty, then they will receive a fine of \$2500. There will be an additional \$500 added onto each day if the violation continues.

Section 5:

This law will go into effect January 1st, 2026. This provides time for manufacturers to change the methods of testing and also allow for time to remove products out of stores.

Section 6:

The purpose of this bill is to prohibit the use of cosmetics that have been made subject to animal testing. This bill will help protect the health of animals such as rabbits, guinea pigs and others that can be used for physically safer scientific work.

Work Cited:

[StatesWhoHavePassedTheHumaneCosmeticsAct](#)

An Act For a Greener Rhode Island
Introduced by: Senator Graeme Griffiths
Liberal, Exeter West Greenwich Senior High School

Section 1-

Independent surveys- Surveys of solar energy potential conducted by groups who have no incentive to alter the outcome.

Government property- Property owned by the federal government, state government or local governments. Examples include schools, office buildings, fire houses, and other similar buildings.

Solarization- The installation of solar panels on the roof of a building and connecting those panels to the building's power system.

Parking lots- Paved areas meant to house motor vehicles which can accommodate 9 or more motor vehicles.

Section 2-

a) This program would seek to raise the excise tax on beer from \$0.10 a gallon to \$0.30 cents a gallon, with the additional revenue going towards the solar program outlined below.

b) The funds generated from the previous section will be used to fund a new solar program. This new program will use pre-existing data and *independent surveys* to assess every *government property* in the state and evaluate its solar energy potential. If the property can generate enough energy to consistently power itself or more it will receive a government offer. The government will pay for the panels installation and the controlling agency can keep the energy needed to power their building. In exchange the government owns the excess energy and resells it on the open market at 75% market cost. The funds generated from this program are then reinvested back into the project.

b1) First priority for *solarization* is given to *state government buildings* as those buildings don't require outside permission to modify, second priority is given to local government buildings. Third priority will be given to federal government buildings.

b2) In addition to solar arrays being installed on the roofs of buildings, this legislation would also allow for government entities to install solar arrays over *parking lots* owned by said agencies. The energy generated from such arrays would first be diverted to buildings owned by the group which owns the parking lot with excess power going to the government for resale.

c) Buildings that already have solar arrays or that are being used by other green energy programs will not be considered for the program unless they request to be included.

c1) Upon this program having *solarized* 95% percent of all eligible buildings 50% of funds generated in subsection a will revert back to the general state budget to be used how the state desires. Internal revenue generated by the program will be split with 60% going back to the state budget and 40% going back into the program for the repair, expansion and modernization of existing solar arrays and the construction of new arrays. In addition upon reaching the 85% threshold the beer tax will drop from 0.30 cents per gallon to 0.20 cents per gallon.

Section 3-

This is not a statute which requires criminal penalties.

Section 4-

Section 2 subsection a) would go into effect at the start of the 2026 fiscal year. Section b would go into effect at the start of the 2027 fiscal year.

Section 5-

This section would amend R.I. General Laws § 3-10-1 Manufacturing tax rates — Exemption of religious uses. It would change subsection a) by doubling the tax from \$3.30 per 31 gallons to \$9.90 per 31 gallons.

Section 6

Rhode Island is seeking to make itself a leader in clean energy and this bill futhers that goal. What this bill seeks to do is make government facilities in Rhode Island energy efficient by installing solar panels on as many government buildings as possible. As well as generating extra revenue for future use by reselling excess energy at reduced cost. This is an important step in showing that Rhode Island is serious in its commitment to green energy. This would make the state government a role model for the citizens of Rhode Island by stepping up and investing in a greener future.

An Act to ban school sporting events during school breaks

Introduced by: Jake Daigle
Independent, The Prout School

Section 1:

Event in regards to Sports refers to any of the official contests organized by a school sports league

Ban refers to prohibiting, forbidding, or barring.

Break refers to time off from school.

School refers to the required education that children (18 and under) participate in.

School in regards to type refers to a public, private, or prep institute of learning.

League in regards to sports specific to Rhode Island include RIIL, RIPCOA, CAL, Coastal Prep league and more.

Section 2:

- a) This bill aims to preserve the time that families spend together and give students time off from sports they participate in.
- b) It gives the family an opportunity to go on a vacation if they wish, without the student worrying about having problems with their coaches and/or teams.
- c) This bill will prohibit school sports leagues from scheduling or conducting sporting events that fall in the time frame of the school break.
- d) This would result in either less played games throughout the sports season, or an increased season to make up for the games.

Section 3:

- a) Leagues who violate this bill will be fined a total of \$150 per illegal sporting event held.
- b) Schools who participate in illegal games will not be fined, but will all forfeit the illegal game, making it a complete waste of everyone's time.
- c) Individuals will not be penalized for participating in the games as it is their choice at that point.

Section 4:

- a) This bill will go into effect at the start of the following school year after the bill is passed.
- b) If the bill is passed in between school years, it will go into effect at the start of the upcoming school year.

Section 5:

- a) This bill does not cross paths or interfere with any state legislature as of 1/28/25

Section 6:

This bill is meant to preserve a student's time designated as a break from school. It allows for a chance to travel with family and receive no consequences for the student in their respective sport. It will allow for a break from very competitive sports and allow the student's family to have time together, which gets harder to do the older children get. This bill was written because it is an issue that if resolved, can increase the happiness of families if they can spend quality time together with no consequences that the student will receive for doing so.

An Act to Expand Democracy
Introduced by: Senator Graeme Griffiths
Liberal, Exeter-West Greenwich

Section 1- *Instant Runoff Voting*- A system of voting where a voter ranks the candidates from 1 to however many individuals are running for office. The votes are then tabulated counting every voter's first choice. If no candidate receives a majority then the candidate with the least votes is eliminated from consideration and the votes redistributed to each voter's second choice, this process continues until a candidate reaches a majority.

Reapportion- To redraw the boundaries of federal congressional districts and/or state senate/house districts.

Section 2- a) The Electors of President and Vice President shall be distributed as follows: One elector shall be elected by the legal voters of each of Rhode Island's Congressional Districts with the remaining electors being elected by the voters of the entire state. If Rhode Island possesses only one congressional district then the electors will be elected by the voters in the territory which formerly comprised the two congressional districts with the remaining elector being elected by the voters of the entire state. If Rhode Island gains an additional congressional district the new elector shall be elected by the voters of that district.

b) The method of voting employed in all primary elections shall be *Instant Runoff Voting*.

c) 10 years from November 2026 a ballot question will be offered: "Shall *Instant Runoff Voting* be adopted for General Elections" a majority vote of yes would implement this method starting with the 2037 elections.

d) Whenever it becomes necessary to *reapportion* federal or state elected office districts, a commission of 18 individuals will be formed. These individuals may not hold any office in federal, state, or local government. The Speaker of the House and President of the Senate will each appoint 4 members, the minority leaders of the House and Senate will each appoint 3 members of the committee. The remaining 4 members of the committee will be chosen by the Rhode Island Board of Elections. An individual may serve on the committee more than once if reappointed.

Section 3- This law doesn't require any punishments.

Section 4- This law would go into effect on January 1st 2026 with section c coming into effect on the designated date.

Section 5- This law would amend § 17-4-10, § 17-12.1-8, § 17-12.1-11

Section 6- Democracy is meant to represent the people and typically it does. However it can always work better, that is what this bill aims to do. Instant runoff voting ensures that a candidate must get 50% or more of the vote to win and prevents "spoiler candidates" which allows more

people to run in party primaries. Meanwhile, adopting “The Maine and Nebraska” system of presidential elector distribution and strengthening anti-gerrymandering laws gives the minority party more of a chance and incentives higher voter turnout thus making Rhode Island democracy more functional for everyone. I ask only that you thoroughly consider the provisions of this law and then vote as you wish, that is the point of democracy after all.

An Act to Legalize Psilocybin Mushrooms

Representative Dennis Gallagher, Liberal, Hendricken.

Section 1

Psilocybin- psychedelic compound found in certain mushrooms that can affect mood, perception, and cognition.

Personal Use - Possessing, using, growing, or sharing psilocybin mushrooms without selling them.

"Licensed Facility" - A business approved by the state to sell or provide supervised psilocybin use.

Section 2

This act would repeal Rhode Island Uniform Controlled Substances Act which makes the possession, sale, or distribution of Psilocybin mushrooms illegal and punishable by fines and imprisonment. This in effect would legalize the possession, growth, and use of psilocybin mushrooms (Under one ounce) for Rhode Islanders over the age of 21.

Section 3

No penalties needed for this bill.

Section 4

The act will be in effect upon its passage

Section 5

This act will amend Rhode Island Uniform Controlled Substances Act (R.I. Gen. Laws § 21-28-2.08).

Section 6

Psilocybin mushrooms have been used for thousands of years for both medicinal and recreational purposes. Recent studies have shown that psilocybin can help treat mental health conditions like depression, PTSD, and addiction, giving people new options for care. Additionally, psilocybin mushrooms have been proven to be one of the safest recreational drugs. A global drug survey in 2017 found that psilocybin users had the lowest rate of emergency medical treatment compared to other substances. Psilocybin is non-addictive, and there is no known lethal dose. There have also been studies that have found that psilocybin mushrooms promote neuroplasticity, which helps brain cells form new connections.

An Act to Redefine Healthy

Introduced by: Senator Graeme Griffiths
Liberal, Exeter West Greenwich High School

Section 1- *Foods and Beverages:* Food encompasses the term meal as defined in RI sales tax guidelines and any other item sold for the purpose of consumption which isn't for medical purposes. The definition of beverage is also derived from RI sales tax guidelines. *Added:* That is put into the product when they are processed or prepared. *Product:* Item for commercial sale. *Recommendations:* Advice that isn't legally enforced by an institution but strongly endorsed. *Marketing:* Promotion or packaging of the product. *Daily Consumption:* How much of a substance you should consume in a 24 hour period. *Unit Sold:* The minimum commercially available quantity of a product, for example a 12 pack of an energy drink will constitute one application of the tax rather than per can. *Company which produces the product:* The company which is in ultimate legal control of the product, for example if a soda had enough sugar in it to qualify for the tax; then the company that produced the soda would be taxed not the grocery store that sells the product. *Absolutely necessary:* If the lack of any of these regulated substances will materially alter the core taste of the product then the product is exempt from the tax. Products that qualify for exemptions would include desserts such as cakes, lollipops, hard candy, chocolates and dessert drinks and other luxury food items ; sodas, fast food, snack foods (like chips, nuts and pretzels) and essential staples such as bread, soup, canned goods, premade sauces, broths and cereals/ oatmeals don't qualify for exceptions. *Liquid assets:* Assets that are or can easily be converted into currency, examples include stocks, bonds, and foreign currencies.

Section 2- This legislation requires that *foods and beverages* which contain over 3 grams of added sugar, sodium, and caffeine per serving to be labeled as such prominently on the front of the container. For example if a can of Campbell's tomato soup contains 8 grams of added sugar the warning would state, **Warning this product contains 8 grams of added sugar.** The recommended daily intake numbers will be based on FDA *recommendations*. These *products* will also be barred from using the phrase "healthy" in their *marketing* of the *product*. If the amount of added substances are more than recommended *daily consumption* of said substances then a tax of 30 cents per *unit sold* will be enforced upon the *company which produces the product*. Companies may apply for exceptions to the tax if the quantity of added substance is *absolutely necessary* to the product.

Section 3- Companies that fail to comply with these regulations or intentionally manipulate serving sizes to fall within the law may be prosecuted by the state of Rhode Island and if found guilty will be fined \$1,000 dollars per infraction and be forced to donate all funds earned by products in violation of the law to Nutrition International or other similar charities. As well as writing an apology letter to the citizens of Rhode Island and reading this letter into the public

record in court. Companies who violate the law will be placed on a list which will be available for public viewing on the Rhode Island state website. If these infractions occur more than once the fines are raised to \$2,000. If the violations occur more than 5 times the fines double with each infraction. Any specific individuals who deliberately perpetrated the fraud will be sentenced to a maximum of 5 years in jail and a fine of 3 to 6 percent of their *liquid assets*.

Section 4- The new labeling requirements come into effect January 2026. The tax comes into effect in April 2026 in order to allow companies time to file for exceptions.

Section 5- There are no laws in the state of Rhode Island regulating the amount of non-toxic additives in commercially sold foods.

Section 6- Rhode Islanders consume many products billed as healthy, yet not many are. Americans consume 126.4 grams of sugar daily per capita which is over 20 grams more than the second largest consumer. Similar lopsided statistics are found with other unhealthy ingredients such as salt and caffeine. The reason for this difference is in part the prevalence of added additives. These added additives appear in most products, even ones marketed as healthy. For example Campbells "Healthy Request Tomato Soup" still contains 8 grams of added sugar. Whilst there are legitimate reasons to add sugar to food, it still has negative health impacts and shouldn't be marketed as healthy.

An Act to Restrict Access to Burner Phone Applications
Introduced by: Deputy Speaker Cole Rossi - Representative Faith Rossi
Conservative, The Prout School - Liberal, The Prout School

Section I:

- Burner Phone Application shall refer to any online application and tool designed to replicate an inexpensive mobile phone for temporary and anonymous utilization, oftentimes being destroyed shortly thereafter.
- Traced shall refer to the measure employed by law enforcement agencies with the intent of tracking down/locating the personal information relating to the original occupant of the burner phone number.
- Phone Number shall refer to the number assigned to a telephone line for a specific phone or set of phones that is used to call that number
- Mobile Phone shall refer to any telephone with access to any cellular radio system so that it can be used without a physical connection to any network.

Section II:

- E. All Burner Phone Applications equipped with the potential for disclosing and subsequently providing protection for individuals involved in the manipulation of any occupant of a phone number shall no longer be available to individuals within the state of Rhode Island.
- F. The use of any temporary cellular device in correspondence with disclosing the identity of primary occupant shall be henceforth restricted unless endowed with such a privilege via Court or otherwise necessary for the safety of its occupant or their finances.
- G. The failure and subsequent neglect of the responsibility of properly reporting the use of a Burner Phone Number or burner Mobile Phone to authorities shall be met with the corresponding punishments imposed in this legislation.

Section III:

1. Should any individual, be they a resident or voyager to the state of Rhode Island, be found guilty of possessing a Burner Phone Number or burner Mobile Phone with the intent of hiding their identity for purposes not derived of the protection of themselves or their finances and/or not have permission via court shall be subject to either a \$2,500(two thousand five hundred) dollar fine or anywhere up to six months imprisonment.
2. The operation of any Burner Phone Application based in the state of Rhode Island shall be met with a \$10,000(ten-thousand) dollar fine, and any functioning Burner Phone

Application within the state of Rhode Island, as well as the fine, shall be forced to cease their business.

Section IV:

- *This law shall not amend any current legislation in the state of Rhode Island.*

Section V:

- *This Legislation shall go into effect at the beginning of Rhode Island Fiscal Year 2026*

Section VI:

- Over the past few years, and due to the contemporary development of cellular technology, methods by which criminals have hidden their identity have evolved exponentially, and now those seeking to resort to harassment have enlisted a series of burner phone applications, commonly found on Google. One of which, being the “Burner” app, provides temporary phone numbers accessible *only* by whomever had purchased a subscription to the app, making it nearly impossible for law enforcement to detect the original applicant. Therefore, the overall goal of this piece of legislation is to end the harassment of anyone, anywhere in the world, coming from Rhode Island.

An Act to Charge A Physician of a Physician-Assisted Suicide Guilty of a Life Sentence based on the Severity of the Situation

Introduced by: Representative Shreya Kumaraguru
Liberal, Exeter West Greenwich Senior High School

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Section 1-

Physician means a health professional who practices medicine, which is concerned with promoting, maintaining or restoring health through the study, diagnosis, prognosis and treatment of disease, injury, and other physical and mental impairments.

Assisted suicide means suicide effected with the assistance of another person, especially the taking of lethal drugs provided by a doctor for the purpose by a patient with a terminal illness or incurable condition.

Extreme suffering means acute mental or physical pain.

Terminal illness means a disease(s) that cannot be cured or adequately treated and is expected to result in the death of the patient. This term is more commonly used for progressive diseases such as cancer, rather than fatal injury.

Congestive heart failure means a weakness of the heart that leads to a buildup of fluid in the lungs and surrounding body tissues. The final stage of this illness is Stage D heart failure with reduced ejection fraction, where the use of any type of treatment will not cure or reverse any damage from the illness.

Active euthanasia means the deliberate act of ending a patient's life through direct intervention, typically by administering a lethal substance, to relieve suffering from a terminal or incurable condition.

Depression is a mental health disorder characterized by a persistent feeling of sadness or lack of interest in external activities. It can significantly affect how a person feels, thinks, and handles daily activities. Over time, depression can contribute to suicidal thoughts and/or actions.

Severity of the situation means the level of seriousness or intensity of the situation, based on factors such as consequences or intent. In this case, the severity of the situation would depend on the patient's circumstances like having a terminal illness(es), and that would affect the bill.

Section 2-

This bill proposes to make physicians of physician-assisted suicide receive obligatory punishment of a life sentence, though the punishment is based on the severity of the situation. If the physician/nurse/care-taker/pharmacist deliberately kills or helps in a patient's suicide, they will be put on trial for their murder and their fate will be decided by the jury. Physicians would be deliberately involved in the patient's suicide by knowing that the patient wants/wanted to kill themselves because of their depression for example, or the physician wants/wanted to kill the patient. However, in cases where the patient is extremely suffering with a terminal illness(es)

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like Stage D Congestive Heart Failure, the act of active euthanasia will result in the physician receiving no penalty.

The physician will be put on trial if they are suspected to have murdered a patient, and if charged that they are guilty, they will receive their life-long punishment.

Section 3-

If the physician(s) violate the bill, the state attorney general would begin prosecution, and the physician(s) will likely end up being found as guilty by the jury. Their punishment would be a life-long sentence in prison.

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Section 4 -

This bill will go into effect on January 1, 2026.

Section 5-

This bill will amend R.I. Gen. Laws § 11-60-3 by changing the maximum sentence of imprisonment from ten (10) years to a life sentence.

Section 6-

This bill is necessary as it will deter medical professionals in helping patients to commit suicide as they could be charged or will be charged if they have been found guilty in a trial, with strict legal consequences.

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Rhode Island Fair Work Act

Introduced by: Representative Liam O'Connor

Liberal, Prout High School

Section 1:

- a) 'Bill' shall refer to the Rhode Island Fair Work Act which is set out to enable protections and benefits for gig and part-time workers within the state of Rhode Island.
- b) 'Gig worker' shall refer to an individual that completes tasks for a client using various digital platforms like rideshare or food delivery services.
- c) 'Part-time worker' shall refer to an employee working for less than the number of working hours for full-time positions as provided by Rhode Island labor laws.
- d) 'Fair wages' shall refer to a certain set of earnings that can be paid to workers and increases according to the inflation every year and in this case, is always a guaranteed standard in Rhode Island.
- e) 'Portable benefits account' shall refer to a savings vehicle for workers that goes with them from one employer to another, or between jobs and that provides access to

employees' benefits including health insurance, retirement savings, and sick leave benefits.

Section 2:

- a) The Rhode Island Fair Work Act requires that all gig and part-time workers be paid at least the state's living wage after accounting for employer fees and deductions.
- b) The bill requires gig platforms and part-time employers to contribute to portable benefits accounts for their workers.
- c) Provide in writing to gig and part-time workers their schedules at least two weeks in advance; compensation for last-minute cancellations or changes.
- d) Companies should provide workers with clear, itemized pay statements so that they understand their earnings, including fees and deductions.
- e) The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training shall establish a hotline and online portal for workers to report violations.

Section 3:

- a) Any employer who fails to adhere to the provisions in this bill shall be fined from \$1,000 to \$10,000 for each violation, depending on the severity and frequency.
- b) Employers who are found to have misclassified workers as independent contractors will be required to retroactively compensate them for wages and benefits owed under this bill.

Section 4:

- a) This bill will go into effect on January 1, 2026, to allow employers adequate time to implement necessary changes.

Section 5:

This bill amends Rhode Island General Laws § 28-12-1: Minimum Wages to include gig and part-time workers under its protection.

Section 6:

The Rhode Island Fair Work Act is essential to address the growing inequality faced by gig and part-time workers who lack access to fair wages and basic protections. By ensuring economic stability and transparency, this bill aims to reduce poverty and strengthen the state's workforce, fostering a more equitable and prosperous Rhode Island.

An Act to Charge A Physician of a Physician-Assisted Suicide Guilty with a Life Sentence based on the Severity of the Situation (UPDATED)

Introduced by: Representative Shreya Kumaraguru
Liberal, Exeter West Greenwich Senior High School

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