**An Update from the State House**

As we enter the final phase of the 2019 legislative session (marked by the end of the General Assembly vacation break), we can expect bills to be voted on in committee and on the floor, and a budget to be released in early June. The Chamber may be asking for your help to make the voice of the business community known to legislators and to the Governor very quickly. Please watch, not only for editions of Under the Dome, but for email alerts and calls to action.

**Chamber Legislative Reception**

Don’t forget – the Chamber of Commerce Legislative Reception will be held Wednesday, April 24th at the State House. This is your opportunity to meet legislators and to share your thanks for their service as well as to express any legislative concerns.

**Timely Building Inspections**

The **House Corporations Committee** will take testimony on **H.5989**, a bill that mirrors one of the Senate economic development package bills. The hearing will be held **Tuesday, at the Rise (approximately 4:30 p.m.) in Room 203**. H.5989 allows a contractor to hire a qualified third-party assistant or state inspector to perform an inspection if a municipal building official fails to perform an inspection within forty-eight (48) hours after notification of the need for the inspection; and the contractor notifies the city/town of its intent to hire someone to complete the inspection. The contractor would pay for the third party inspection, while the city or town would pay for state inspector services. <http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText19/HouseText19/H5989.pdf>

**Senate Judiciary Faces Landlord Issues**

If you own residential rental property, **Tuesday** at approximately **4:30 p.m. in Room 313**, you may want to attend the **Senate Judiciary** hearing. Various issues will be up for hearing such as **S.30** which mandates that a landlord have a general liability policy of at least $100,000 in effect for those injured on premises due to the landlord's negligence <http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText19/SenateText19/S0030.pdf> . Failure to provide proof of insurance would preclude a landlord from proceeding on an eviction action. **S.71** prohibits residential landlords from terminating period tenancies from December 1 to February 1 and would require sixty days written notice to the elderly or disabled prior to termination of a tenancy <http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText19/SenateText19/S0071.pdf> . **S.154** imposes a penalty against a condominium association that fails to deliver a resale certificate within ten days of a request by a unit owner <http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText19/SenateText19/S0154.pdf> . **S.231** prohibits a landlord from asking about the immigration status of a tenant, prospective tenant, occupant, or prospective occupant of residential rental property <http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText19/SenateText19/S0231.pdf> . **S.479** requires real estate sellers to provide buyers with an annual building energy cost estimate and imposes a duty on sellers to conduct real estate condition inspections <http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText19/SenateText19/S0479.pdf> .

**Senate Labor Committee Addresses Misclassification of Employees**

**Wednesday**, the **Senate Labor Committee** has posted a vote on a SubA (amended version) of **S.510** which called for increasing the fines for misclassifying employees to $2000 per employee and requiring the Department of Labor and Training to suspend the ability of companies to operate in Rhode Island if a company continues to misclassify employees three times within a two year period. The Senate has posted a SubA for consideration that leaves the fine where it is today – at $400 per employee misclassified. If the employer fails to pay the penalty as required, the license would be revoked until the fine is paid. If an employer is found by the DLT to have violated the misclassification law three times within a two year period – each violation includes all of the employees determined to be misclassified at one time – then the license to operate in Rhode Island must be suspended for three years. Finally, the civil penalty for misclassification of employees changes from “up to $5000 for subsequent offenses” to “not less than $10,000 for subsequent offenses.” The SubA can be viewed at: <http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText19/Proposed19/S0510A.pdf>

**Employer Medicaid Assessment Budget Article**

The **Senate Finance Committee** will be meeting **Thursday at the Rise** (approximately 4:30 p.m.) to discuss a number of articles in the Governor’s budget. One topic is the Governor’s Medicaid Employer Assessment. This is the proposal – similar to the program in Massachusetts that will sunset December 31st of this year – that will assess an employer up to $1500 per employee that is accepting Medicaid services from the State. The assessment applies to companies with 200 or more employees and would be paid on a quarterly basis. It is important to contact your Senator if you have concerns about this budget proposal, and to let the Governor’s office know as well. The hearing will take place in **Room 211** of the State House.

The following bill was filed last week:

House Bill No. [6005](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText19/HouseText19/H6005.pdf) Fogarty, Carson, Caldwell, Cortvriend, Messier**,**AN ACT RELATING TO INSURANCE -- ACCIDENT AND SICKNESS INSURANCE POLICIES (Requires insurance carriers, nonprofit hospital service plans, nonprofit medical service corporations and health maintenance organizations to cover the costs of breast ultrasounds and or MRI breast exams.)