**Last Week at the State House**

Last week UTD featured a few bills that were scheduled for hearing in committees. All of the bills mentioned were held for further study. They are still alive and can be voted on at a later date, or never brought up again. (H.6628, An Act Relating to Corporations, Association and Partnerships, H.7112, An Act Relating to Motor and Other Vehicles, H. 7063, An Act Relating to Food and Drugs – Disposable Food Service Containers, and H.7065, An Act Relating to Health and Safety – Plastic Waste Reduction Act)

**This Week at the State House**

**On Thursday, February 3, the House Committee on Health and Human Services** will hear a number of bills that add mandated coverages to health insurance.

H.7020, An Act Relating to Health and Safety – The Breast Cancer Act, adds requires health insurance plans to cover digital breast tomosynthesis screenings <http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7020.pdf>

H.7077, An Act Relating to Insurance, would require that a participant or beneficiary of a health insurance plan incur no greater out-of-pocket costs for emergency services than they would have incurred with an in-network provider other than in-network cost sharing. <http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7077.pdf>

H.7078, An Act Relating to Insurance, requires health insurance plans to cover medically necessary residential inpatient treatment of mental health and substance use disorders. <http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7078.pdf>

H.7135, An Act Relating to Insurance, limits copays, coinsurance or office deductible services for physical therapists to the amount authorized for the services of a primary care physician or osteopath. <http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7135.pdf>

Written testimony can be submitted to [HouseHealthandHumanServices@rilegislature.gov](mailto:HouseHealthandHumanServices@rilegislature.gov) Please indicate your name, bill number, and position at the top of the message. PDF format is preferred. Written testimony must be submitted by 1:00pm Thursday, February 3rd. If you wish to testify verbally in person, go to Room 101 at approximately 4:30 pm. If you wish to testify via telephone go to the following link and sign up before 4:00 p.m. Wednesday February 2nd <https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=LBHmn1akN0aJ3A8oTO_8ZnMUMrI1W6lGqP5le-GGa29UQURYWjVFSEcwNElGWURGNk45M1g3SkdMMy4u>

**What’s in the Governor’s Budget**

**Article 7 – Energy and the Environment**. Since 2008, state law has required distribution companies to collect a demand-side surcharge on electricity and natural gas to fund renewable energy programs. The law calls for these fees to continue until 2028. The rate of surcharge must be approved by the Public Utilities Commission and is based on financial need in conjunction with the annual plan for energy efficiency programs. Article 7 expands the purpose of the fund to include clean transportation, clean heating and energy storage initiatives. The article also allocates $6 million of the fund to the Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council (EC4) for climate-related initiatives. The Chamber is meeting with various agencies to determine if the expansion of use of the funds will result in an increase in the surcharge. Since the fund was established, the distribution companies have received incentives to administer the program. Under Article 7, that incentive is eliminated as of January 1, 2023.

The Article requires the RI Office of Energy Resources (OER) to issue a request for proposals for a third-party administrator of the program. If OER does not believe the proposals are in the best interest of the state, then the distribution companies would continue to administer the program.

Article 7 also establishes an Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Program within the Office of Energy Resources and the Department of Transportation. It alludes to the use of $22.9 million from the federal Infrastructure and Investment Jobs Act. To date, the state is still waiting for the federal government to release a guidance document to confirm how federal dollars can be used by states and local governments. This guidance may not be forthcoming until late March to early May.

Lastly, this Article allows the Coastal Resources Management Council to utilize part-time hearing officers, and allows the hearing officers to be practicing attorneys or law firms, provided they not participate in any case in which they are also an interested party.

**Article 9 – Economic Development**. Article 9 begins by instructing the Executive Office of Commerce to develop a broadband strategic plan (speed, latency, affordability, access, sustainability, and digital equity), setting goals and strategies for internet access throughout the state. The plan must be completed by December 31, 2022, and updated every five years thereafter. Commerce is directed to coordinate with all agencies in this endeavor. Commerce would have the authority to create grants as well as new programs, and regulations as need. It can also delegate the regulatory authority to another agency if it is deemed appropriate. The Article calls for the hiring of a statewide broadband coordinator and support staff as needed. It also creates a 13-member broadband advisory committee.

Article 9 raises the Rebuild Rhode Island aggregate tax credit cap from $210 million to $225 million and extends the program’s sunset clause to December 31, 2023. The Article also extends the sunset for the following programs to December 31, 2023: Tax Increment Financing, Tax Stabilization Incentive, First Wave Closing Fund, I-195 Redevelopment Fund, Small Business Assistance Program, Main Street Streetscape Improvement Program, Innovation Initiative, High School, College, and Employer Partnerships, Air Service Development, Industry Cluster Grant Program, and the Qualified Jobs Tax Credit.

The RI Wavemaker Fellowship program is altered to create a separate fund from healthcare professionals. Currently, this program is dedicated to science, technology, engineering and medicine (STEM) students. According to the House Fiscal Staff analysis, the budget includes $1.6 million from general revenues for FY2023 for the existing program and $.8 million for the healthcare fund.

The following new bills have been filed:

House Resolution No. [7156](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7156.pdf) Place, Filippi, Roberts, Quattrocchi, Nardone**,**HOUSE RESOLUTION CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY THE MANNER IN WHICH HEALTH INSURANCE, DISABILITY INSURANCE, UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE, RETIREMENT PLANS AND OTHER TRADITIONAL EMPLOYER PROVIDED BENEFITS ARE ACCORDED TO UBER AND LYFT DRIVERS, SELF EMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS, AND OTHER INDIVIDUALS ENGAGED IN PROVIDING SERVICES TO THE PUBLIC (Creates a 5 member commission to study how health, disability, and unemployment plans, and other benefits are accorded to individuals providing services to the public, and would report back by January 5, 2023, and expire on March 5, 2023.) <http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7156.pdf>

House Bill No. [7171](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7171.pdf) Baginski, Shekarchi, Shallcross Smith,AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION -- BUSINESS CORPORATION TAX (Provides technical amendments to the existing Pass-through Entity Election Tax statute to allow tax practitioners and the Rhode Island Division of Taxation to comply with the provisions in practice.)

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7171.pdf>

House Bill No. [7186](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7186.pdf) Diaz, Corvese, Amore, Biah**,**AN ACT RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- PUBLIC HEALTH AND WORKPLACE SAFETY ACT (Provides that any law or regulation which protects a person from exposure to secondhand smoke would also provide protection from exposure to secondhand tobacco and marijuana smoke, regardless of how the smoke was generated.)

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7186.pdf>

House Bill No. [7199](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7199.pdf) Place, Chippendale**,**AN ACT RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS -- RIGHT TO EARN A LIVING ACT (Establishes procedures to ensure that agency regulations do not unjustly restrict individuals from entering into businesses, professions or public services, requiring articulable, legitimate public health, safety and welfare objectives.)

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7199.pdf>

House Bill No. [7200](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7200.pdf) Diaz, Slater, Amore, Morales, Biah, Alzate, Cortvriend, Kazarian, Batista**,**AN ACT RELATING TO PUBLIC PROPERTY AND WORKS -- BUILDING SERVICE WORK (Requires that janitors and security guards employed, pursuant to state contracts worth more than one thousand dollars ($1,000) of janitorial or security services, be paid a standard compensation rate.)

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7200.pdf>

House Bill No. [7202](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7202.pdf) Place, Quattrocchi**,**AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- ZONING ORDINANCES (Allows the operation of a home-based business, which meets criteria for home office IRS income tax deduction, without securing approval from the municipality with no storage of chemicals/park heavy equipment/not more than 10% of premises used for parking.)

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7202.pdf>

House Bill No. [7209](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7209.pdf) Baginski, McEntee**,**AN ACT RELATING TO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES -- MANUFACTURING AND WHOLESALE LICENSES -- RETAIL LICENSES (Repeals 3/1/22 sunset provision allowing Class B/brew pub licensees to sell wine/beer/mixed drinks with food takeout orders only.)

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7209.pdf>

House Resolution No. [7210](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7210.pdf) Carson, McEntee, Cortvriend, Caldwell**,**HOUSE RESOLUTION CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY AND REVIEW THE IMPACT OF EXISTING RULES AND REGULATIONS ON THE CREATION OF NEW BUSINESSES, AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS TO REVISE LAWS IN ORDER TO ELIMINATE BARRIERS (Creates a 17 member commission to study the impact of rules and regulations on new businesses, and make recommendations that would eliminate barriers, and who would report back by January 4, 2023, and expire on March 4, 2023.)

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7210.pdf>

Senate Bill No. [2053](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2053.pdf) Bell**,**AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION - AGREEMENT TO PHASE OUT CORPORATE INCENTIVES COMPACT ACT (Establishes a compact agreement among at least two (2) states to prohibit the use of subsidies to selectively retain industry or company entice relocation from one state to another state or to open a new facility.)

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2053.pdf>

Senate Bill No. [2060](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2060.pdf) Raptakis, Murray, Anderson, Lombardi, Felag, McCaffrey**,**AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION -- LEVY AND ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL TAXES -- INTEREST CHARGES ON OVERDUE PROPERTY TAX (Establishes a statewide limit of twelve percent (12%) per year on interest charged by cities and towns on delinquent taxes.)

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2060.pdf>

Senate Bill No. [2075](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2075.pdf) Lawson, DiMario, Valverde, Miller, Coyne, Burke, Murray, Cano, Quezada**,**AN ACT RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY - CATASTROPHIC ILLNESS IN CHILDREN RELIEF FUND (Establishes Children's Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund to provide finance assistance to families for medical expenses not covered by state or federal programs or insurance contract.)

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2075.pdf>

Senate Bill No. [2076](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2076.pdf) DiPalma, Miller, Ruggerio, McCaffrey, Goodwin, Algiere, de la Cruz, DiMario, Lawson**,**AN ACT RELATING TO FOOD AND DRUGS -- PRESCRIPTION DRUG COST PROTECTION (Prohibits the state, ERISA or any health plans to purchase referenced drugs for a cost higher than the referenced rate.)

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2076.pdf>

Senate Bill No. [2080](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2080.pdf) Miller, Ruggerio, Goodwin, McCaffrey, Archambault, Murray, Valverde, DiPalma, Lawson, Gallo**,**AN ACT RELATING TO INSURANCE -- INDIVIDUAL HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE (Requires individual health insurers, large group health insurers and small employer health insurers to provide coverage for ten (10) categories of essential health benefits listed in the act.)

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2080.pdf>

Senate Bill No. [2093](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2093.pdf) Lombardi, Archambault, McCaffrey, Euer**,**AN ACT RELATING TO COURTS AND CIVIL PROCEDURE -- PROCEDURE IN PARTICULAR ACTIONS -- RHODE ISLAND COMMERCIAL RECEIVERSHIP ACT (Creates temporary non-liquidating receivership program for businesses with substantial revenue decline after declared emergency/suspended/ceased substantial part of operation resulting by emergency police/regulatory powers.)

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2093.pdf>

Senate Bill No. [2104](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2104.pdf) Lawson, Murray, DiMario, Valverde, Burke, Quezada, Euer, Kallman**,**AN ACT RELATING TO COMMERCIAL LAW--GENERAL REGULATORY PROVISIONS -- UNFAIR SALES PRACTICES (Requires all persons or entities collecting social security and other personal identification numbers to create and publicly display a privacy protection policy. Violations of this requirement would incur a civil penalty of five-hundred dollars ($500).)

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2104.pdf>

Senate Bill No. [2127](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2127.pdf) Lawson, Murray, DiMario, Burke, Quezada, Euer, Kallman, Ciccone, Lombardi**,**AN ACT RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS -- IMPLANTATION DEVICES AS CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT (Prohibits an employer from subjecting its employees or prospective employees to the implantation of an implantation device and creates criminal penalties as well as civil damages, that may be assessed against violating employers.)

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2127.pdf>

Senate Bill No. [2130](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2130.pdf) Lawson, Euer, Cano, Burke, Murray, DiMario, Kallman, Ciccone, Lombardi**,**AN ACT RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS -- THE "COMMUTER TRANSPORTATION BENEFITS ACT" (Establishes the commuter transportation benefit act. Employers with five hundred (500) or more employees provide a pre-tax transportation fringe benefit program or provide transportation to the employees.)

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2130.pdf>

Senate Bill No. [2147](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2147.pdf) Bell**,**AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION -- PERSONAL INCOME TAX (Increases the tax rates for individuals, bankruptcy estates, trusts and estates.)

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2147.pdf>

Senate Bill No. [2149](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2149.pdf) Bell**,**AN ACT RELATING TO INSURANCE -- COVID-19 PANDEMIC INSURANCE RECOVERY ACT (Allows businesses that had an insurance policy in place for business interruption as of March 9, 2019 to recover from their insurance companies for a COVID-19 business impact.)

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2149.pdf>