**Last Week At the State House**

Last week, the House voted to pass H.5445 SubA, the 2021 Act on Climate, 53-22. To sustain a Governor’s veto requires 50 votes in the House. The House bill is scheduled for a vote on Wednesday at 3:00 pm in the Senate Committee on Environment and Agriculture. The Senate companion bill – S.78 SubA – is scheduled for a vote in the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee Tuesday at the Rise (following session). This most likely means the bills will come up for a final vote on the House and Senate floors April 6th. Watch your emails over the upcoming weeks for a potential call to action!

If both bills pass, Governor McKee could have the bills on his desk the week of April 5th. The Chamber would like to thank the following Representatives who voted against passage of H.5445 SubA:

Rep. Sam Azzinaro Rep. Steve Lima Rep. David Place

Rep. Steve Casey Rep. Jim McLaughlin Rep. Justin Price

Rep. Mike Chippendale Rep. Patricia Morgan Rep. Robert Quattrocchi

Rep. Arthur Corvese Rep. George Nardone Rep. Sherry Roberts

Rep. Greg Constantino Rep. Brian Newberry Rep. Camille Vella-Wilkinson

Rep. Blake Filippi Rep. Tom Noret Rep. Anastasia Williams

Rep. Bernie Hawkins Rep. Ramon Perez

Rep. Charlene LimaRep. Bob Phillips

Please extend your thanks to them as well.

**This Week at the State House**

**House Finance – Contractors and Broker/Dealer Fee Proposal**

On Tuesday, At the Rise, the House Finance Committee will take testimony on two proposals submitted as part of Governor McKee’s FY2022 budget - Article 6 sections 1-3. Article 6 sections 1 and 2 change the Contractor’s Registration License - from $200 to $150, but it is an annual license instead of bi-annual; and changes the Roofing Contractor Registration fee – the $400 registration must be renewed every two years at a new renewal fee of $200. Article 6, section 3, increases the fee for a Uniform Securities sales representative license from $75 to $100.

Written testimony may be submitted via HouseFinance@rilegislature.gov Indicate your name, reference bill number H.6122, Article 6 and section number, and viewpoint (for/against/neither) at top of message. This inbox is for written testimony only. DEADLINE: Written testimony should be submitted no later than 1:00 p.m. Tuesday, March 29th.  The deadline to sign up for verbal testimony has passed (Sunday at 4:00 p.m.)

**Senate Labor – Real Jobs Bill**

The Senate Labor Committee is scheduled to hear S.613, An Act Relating to Labor and Labor Relations – Real Jobs Act, on Wednesday at 5:00 p.m. Senate President Ruggerio is the sponsor of this bill that statutorily creates a Real Jobs program under the direction of the Department of Labor and in consultation with the Governor’s Workforce Board. The program is funded through appropriation in the budget effective July 1, 2022. Grants would be available on a competitive basis for training programs in “high demand” occupations defined as: “occupations that have a significant presence within target industries, that are in demand by employers, and that pay or lead to payment of a family sustaining wage.” Monies can be used for occupational skills development, GED preparation, literacy advancement, financial stability services including financial coaching, credit counseling, transportation and child care to facilitate training.

Written testimony can be submitted to the committee by emailing it to:
slegislation@rilegislature.gov \*Written Testimony must be submitted prior to 2:00 PM on Wednesday, March 31, 2021, in order for it to be provided to the members of the committee at the hearing and to be included in the meeting records. Members of the public can request to provide verbal testimony to the committee through the following link:[VERBAL TESTIMONY](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=LBHmn1akN0aJ3A8oTO_8ZrrkHo3ATJRAp4ByeeV8cWRUM1JIM1NRNElHRFNFN0dFTEFMODNHWjFVUy4u)

\*Requests to provide verbal testimony must be submitted by 4:00 PM on Tuesday,
March 30, 2021.

**Senate Finance – Marijuana Legalization**

The Senate Finance Committee will take testimony Thursday at 3:00 p.m. on S.568, An Act Relating to Food and Drugs – Cannabis Authorization, Regulation and Taxation (CART). Much of the following synopsis of the bill was written by one of our interns, Cory Lee, Juris Doctorate Candidate, Class of 2021, Roger Williams University School of Law.

CART’s intent is to regulate cannabis in a more effective way that would limit minors’

access to cannabis, reduce criminal activity and violence associated with illegal cannabis

cultivation, smuggling, and sale, provide for the public health and safety, and raise funds to

address and discourage substance abuse, encourage social justice, and support drug education

and awareness. Anyone who wishes to be a cannabis cultivator has to apply through the

cannabis control commission yearly, may only sell cannabis to an entity licensed through this

statute, and is subject to various requirements. Anyone who wishes to be a cannabis product manufacturer or wholesaler must apply through the cannabis control commission, unless they are already a licensed cultivator. The annual fee associated with any cannabis wholesaler license is $5,000.

Additionally, the State wishes to limit the number of licenses to three licenses for retail

sales of cannabis for each municipality. However, the commission may grant additional

licensing depending on population, but this restriction could hinder smaller communities, like

Lincoln or Johnston, while allowing economic growth for larger communities, like Providence.

This is even more prevalent under the “taxes” section as sales tax, a cannabis excise tax equal to

ten percent of each retail sale, and a local tax equal to three percent of each retail sale would

apply. Additionally, no one person or entity can own more than one license, so if a business

owner owned property in Providence and Lincoln, it is likely that business owner would only be

allowed one license, so the business owner would then need to choose which location to set up

their cannabis business.

“Marijuana retailer” or “cannabis retailer” is an entity licensed to purchase and deliver

cannabis and cannabis products from cannabis establishments and to deliver, sell, or otherwise

transfer cannabis and cannabis products to cannabis establishments and to consumers. A

cannabis retailer must obtain a cannabis retail sales license that is issued by the commission. To

qualify for an issuance of a license, the applicant must be at least twenty-one years old,

successfully undergone a criminal history background check, current on their tax filing

obligations, ensure the proposed location for the retail sale of cannabis complies with municipal

zoning and regulations, or has previously been approved by the municipality, and submit a

nonrefundable application fee of $500 and an annual fee of $2,000. (Cory Lee)

In addition to Cory’s analysis, it is important to note that use of marijuana would be restricted to those 21 years of age and older. The bill specifically does not allow for the smoking of cannabis in a public place; and it clearly states that employers are not required to accommodate the possession or use of recreational or medical marijuana in any workplace. Employers may have, and enforce, drug policies that ban the possession or use of marijuana at the workplace. They cannot, however, take action against an employee that uses the drug outside the workplace and who does not show up for work under the influence, unless federal law requires otherwise.

Written testimony can be submitted to the committee by emailing it to: jpbaxter@rilegislature.gov \*Written Testimony must be submitted prior to 2:00 PM on Thursday, April 1, 2021, in order for it to be provided to the members of the committee at the hearing and to be included in the meeting records. Members of the public can request to provide verbal testimony to the committee through the following link: [**VERBAL TESTIMONY**](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=LBHmn1akN0aJ3A8oTO_8ZrrkHo3ATJRAp4ByeeV8cWRURE5CSlVKWElISFdMR0w1MzM3N0k4NE02Vy4u%20) \*Requests to provide verbal testimony must be submitted by 4:00 PM on Wednesday, March 31, 2021.

The following new bills have been filed:

House Bill No. [6156](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText21/HouseText21/H6156.pdf) Morgan, Nardone**,**AN ACT RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS - MINIMUM WAGES (Eliminates the provision requiring that "paid leave" be included in the calculation of overtime pay.) <http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText21/HouseText21/H6156.pdf>

House Bill No. [6173](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText21/HouseText21/H6173.pdf) Speakman, Carson, Knight, Donovan, Cortvriend**,**AN ACT RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- REFUSE DISPOSAL (Updates and modernizes the department of environmental management’s ability to enforce environmental laws, and more specifically modifies practices regarding a notice of violation.) <http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText21/HouseText21/H6173.pdf>

Senate Bill No. [704](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText21/SenateText21/S0704.pdf) Valverde, Euer, Anderson, DiMario, Miller**,**AN ACT RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- REFUSE DISPOSAL (Requires certain businesses and educational facilities that produce at least fifty-two (52) tons of organic-waste yearly and are located within thirty (30) miles of an authorized composting facility to use authorized methods of recycling.)

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText21/SenateText21/S0704.pdf>

Senate Bill No. [736](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText21/SenateText21/S0736.pdf) Archambault, McCaffrey**,**AN ACT RELATING TO COURTS AND CIVIL PROCEDURE--PROCEDURE GENERALLY -- CAUSES OF ACTION (Products liability defense of subsequent alteration eliminated.) <http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText21/SenateText21/S0736.pdf>

Senate Bill No. [743](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText21/SenateText21/S0743.pdf) Felag**,**AN ACT RELATING TO INSURANCE -- RHODE ISLAND TITLE INSURERS ACT (Provides that only RI attorneys can act as title insurance agents and determine insurability and marketability. Limits discount title insurance premiums and restricts sharing premiums.)

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText21/SenateText21/S0743.pdf>