**An Update from the State House**

The General Assembly is on break this week. Hearings for the week of April 22 – 26 will be released at the end of this week. Members of the House and Senate leadership teams have been making the speaking circuit. Marijuana legalization appears to be receiving a cool reception as the ability to implement and oversee the vast regulatory program required still appears to be in question. The Governor’s proposed new programs also seem to be in question as the early projected revenues for FY2020 are difficult.

If you attended either of the Eggs and Issues Legislative Breakfasts, then you heard loud and clear a request from legislative leaders worth noting in this edition of Under the Dome. A request has been made to the members of the Chamber of Commerce – please be consistent with your messages to the Governor’s office as well as to the House and Senate offices. If an issue is positive to your business, please share that equally with all branches of government. If an issue will harm your business, please convey that message to the Governor, the Senate Leadership and the House Leadership. While it sounds like a small request, it has been made clear to the Chamber that it is an extremely important request.

**Senate Passes Workplace Bills**

**S.90**, known as the **Workplace Bullying bill**, was passed on the Senate floor 32-6 (Voting no – Algiere, De la Cruz, McKenney, Morgan, Paolino, Rogers). The bill makes employers vicariously liable for any unlawful employment practice committed by their employee. Employers are responsible for preventing and promptly correcting any bullying in the workplace which includes both physical and psychological bullying. The definition of harm is vague, leaving employers open to lawsuits.

**S.330** which requires employers of 4 or more employees to conduct **sexual harassment programs** for new employees within 1 month of the date of hire and all employees by September 1, 2019, also passed the Senate floor 31-7 (Voting no – Algiere, De la Cruz, McKenney, Morgan, Paolino, Raptakis, Rogers).

Both bills have been assigned to the House Labor Committee.

**May Revenue Estimating Conference Meetings Set**

The May Revenue Estimating Conference begins April 26th and ends May 10th with the adoption of a final agreement on the revenue available for the FY2020 budget. All meetings take place in Room 35 of the State House. The conference panel is comprised of budget analysts from the Governor’s office, the House budget office and the Senate budget office. Experts are already warning that the numbers – expected to be down – may be down even more than originally anticipated.

**Friday, April 26, 2019** – Testimony **9:00 AM** Cash Assistance and Medical Caseloads – Department of Human Services and Executive Office of Health and Human Services

**Wednesday, May 1, 2019** – Follow-up Testimony **9:00 AM** Cash Assistance and Medical Caseloads – Department of Human Services and Executive Office of Health and Human Services

**Friday, May 3, 2019** – Economic Overview and Testimony **9:00 AM** (1) US and RI Economic Forecasts – IHS Markit Michael Lynch, Economist. (2) RI Labor Market Conditions-Department of Labor and Training Donna Murray, Assistant Director, Labor Market Information Unit (3) Consensus Economic Forecast

**10:30 AM** Unclaimed Property - Office of the General Treasurer Historic Structures Tax Credits - Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission Motion Picture Production Tax Credits - RI Film and Television Office Lottery Receipts - Department of Revenue, Division of Lottery Commerce Corporation Tax Credits – Commerce Corporation

**1:00 PM** (1) Tax Collections – Department of Revenue, Division of Taxation Neena Savage, State Tax Administrator. (2) Accruals – Accounts and Controls Peter Keenan, State Controller

**Monday, May 6, 2019** - Caseload Estimating Conference **9:00 AM** Caseload Estimating Conference

**Wednesday, May 8, 2019** Follow-up Testimony (if necessary) **9:00 AM** (1) Tax Collections – Department of Revenue, Division of Taxation Neena Savage, State Tax Administrator (2) Accruals – Accounts and Controls Peter Keenan, State Controller

**Friday, May 10, 2019** – Revenue Estimating Conference **9:00 AM** Revenue Estimating Conference

The following bills were filed last week:

House Bill No. [5989](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText19/HouseText19/H5989.pdf) Ucci, Corvese**,**AN ACT RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY - STATE BUILDING CODE - NEW BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES (Allows a contractor or builder to hire a qualified third-party assistant or state inspector to perform an inspection if a building official fails to perform an inspection within forty-eight (48) hours after notification.)

House Bill No. [5993](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText19/HouseText19/H5993.pdf) Caldwell**,**AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION - LEVY AND ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL TAXES (Allows the town of East Greenwich to adopt a flexible tiered tax classification system regardless of whether it is a revaluation or update year and also to provide an exemption to small businesses for tangible personal property taxes.)

House Bill No. [5996](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText19/HouseText19/H5996.pdf) Slater, Kislak, Almeida, Diaz, Hull**,**AN ACT RELATING TO COURTS AND CIVIL PROCEDURE--PROCEDURE GENERALLY -- JUDGMENTS, ORDERS, AND DECREES (Provides interest on civil actions be calculated at a rate equal to weekly average one year constant maturity Treasury yield, as published by Board of Governors of Federal Reserve System, for the calendar week preceding the date of the judgment.)

House Bill No. [6004](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText19/HouseText19/H6004.pdf) Phillips, Shekarchi, Corvese, Edwards, Solomon**,**AN ACT RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES -- REGISTRATION OF VEHICLES (Permits the division of motor vehicles to suspend the registration of a motor carrier upon receiving notice that the carrier has failed to obtain workers' compensation insurance.)

Senate Bill No. [803](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText19/SenateText19/S0803.pdf) Ruggerio, McCaffrey, Lynch Prata, Conley, Ciccone**,**AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES (Establishes special economic development districts.)