**At the State House**

**Supplemental Budget Passes**

The long anticipated FY2019 supplemental budget was passed by the House and the Senate Thursday evening. The bill passed the House 60-13; it passed the Senate 31-7. The legislation closed the $235 million gap through the use of $92 million in COVID19 federal money, transfer of funds from a few restricted receipt accounts to the general fund (not as much as the original supplemental budget proposed) and use of $120 million from the “rainy day” fund.

Many years ago it was standard practice to pass a supplemental budget as its own stand-alone bill; however, in the past few years, the supplemental budget has been an Article of the following year’s fiscal budget. Last week the legislature returned to the process of old – the supplemental budget only addressed closing the current year’s budget gap before June 30, 2020. Very few options were available to accomplish this required task. If taxes were raised, they could only be collected for twelve days. If cuts were made, those cuts would only count for 12 days. The FY2020 budget will be more encompassing with more true policy decisions. The decision was made to wait until July to deal with the FY2020 budget in the hopes that Congress will provide more aid to states and that the General Assembly and Governor will have a clearer picture of the revenues available. Without further aid, Rhode Island is looking at revenue shortfall over $500 million.

**Telemedicine Bill Passes Senate**

The Senate passed S.2525 SubA 38-0. As previously reported, this bill codifies in law the Governor’s emergency order to cover telemedicine visits for every healthcare discipline while banning the requirement for co-pays, cost-sharing, or preauthorization. The Chamber does not oppose the use of telemedicine. The Chamber does oppose the ban on co-pays, cost-sharing and preauthorization requirements. Without the ability to curb wasteful or ineffective treatments, the cost of healthcare will increase along with insurance premiums and self-insured companies will see increases in cost.

The following new bills were filed last week:

House Bill No. [8037](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText20/HouseText20/H8037.pdf) Jacquard, Lima, Ucci, Fellela, Shekarchi**,**AN ACT RELATING TO BUSINESSES AND PROFESSIONS -- BOARD OF MEDICAL LICENSURE AND DISCIPLINE (Increases the maximum fine amount for those found guilty of unprofessional conduct by the board of medical licensure and discipline from $10,000 to $30,000, and establishes a new chapter of the general laws which gives board the authority to levy fines.)

House Bill No. [8050](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText20/HouseText20/H8050.pdf) Casey, Phillips**,**AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- GENERAL POWERS (Authorizes the city of Woonsocket to require payment of a registration fee for businesses situated in the city of Woonsocket.)

House Bill No. [8052](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText20/HouseText20/H8052.pdf) Amore**,**AN ACT RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT - TOURISM AND DEVELOPMENT (Includes East Providence in Northern Rhode Island regional tourism district.)

House Bill No. [8054](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText20/HouseText20/H8054.pdf) Casimiro, Craven**,**AN ACT RELATING TO AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY -- HEMP GROWTH ACT (Authorizes cities and towns to enact ordinances to address and protect their citizens' public safety and welfare from the impact of hemp cultivation and any of its derivative products.)

House Bill No. [8062](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText20/HouseText20/H8062.pdf) Bennett, Price, Edwards, Quattrocchi, Lyle**,**AN ACT RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- THE GEOENGINEERING ACT (Establishes licensing procedure for persons seeking to engage in geoengineering activity from DEM to protect health/safety/environment of state.)

House Bill No. [8064](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText20/HouseText20/H8064.pdf) Lombardi, Hull, Walsh, Almeida, McKiernan**,**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.)

House Bill No. [8066](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText20/HouseText20/H8066.pdf) Williams, Shanley**,**AN ACT RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS -- WORKERS' COMPENSATION--OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES (Establishes that any public safety official/enumerated employee, including essential state workers, who contract the Coronavirus (Covid-19) shall be entitled to a presumption that the infection was caused as a result of the performance of their job duties)

Senate Bill No. [2906](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText20/SenateText20/S2906.pdf)  de la Cruz**,**AN ACT RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT - ENERGY FACILITY SITING ACT (Increases membership from 3 to 5 members/revises siting process to mandate public/municipal participation.)