

2026 -- H 7757

=====
LC004846
=====

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

—————
A N A C T

RELATING TO COURTS AND CIVIL PROCEDURE -- COURTS -- FAMILY COURT

Introduced By: Representatives Caldwell, McEntee, Dawson, Batista, Casimiro, and
Kazarian

Date Introduced: February 12, 2026

Referred To: House Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 8-10-23.1 of the General Laws in Chapter 8-10 entitled "Family
2 Court" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **8-10-23.1. Statewide juvenile hearing board.**

4 (a) The chief judge of the family court shall appoint a statewide juvenile hearing board
5 coordinator who is qualified by education, training, previous experience in professional social
6 welfare, personality, character, and special aptitude for the work, to serve at the pleasure of the
7 chief judge. The juvenile hearing board coordinator shall provide education, training, data
8 collection and analysis, coordination, and assistance to cities and towns in the establishment and
9 maintenance of juvenile hearing boards and teen courts. Juvenile hearing boards and/or teen courts
10 shall report any data deemed necessary by the family court to perform the functions of the juvenile
11 hearing board coordinator. No juvenile hearing board or teen court in the State of Rhode Island
12 shall hear, or dispose of offenses that constitute felony offenses if committed by an adult, except
13 by the express written consent of the chief justice of the family court; nor shall any juvenile hearing
14 board or teen court hear or dispose of any offense which has been amended from a felony offense
15 to a misdemeanor offense, except by the express written consent of the chief justice of the family
16 court. Juveniles, wherever they may live, upon a decision to refer the juvenile to the juvenile
17 hearing board or teen court, shall be referred to the hearing board or teen court in the city or town
18 where the offense was committed; provided, however, if the city or town does not have a hearing
19 board or teen court, the juvenile shall be referred to the hearing board or teen court where the

1 juvenile resides. The Statewide hearing board coordinator is responsible for setting up a statewide
2 community service program which may be utilized by any hearing board or teen court.

3 (b) The position of statewide juvenile hearing board coordinator is a pilot program which
4 shall commence on July 1, 1998 and terminate on June 30, 2001, unless extended by the general
5 assembly.

6 (c) The juvenile hearing board may order a juvenile to attend a rehabilitative driving course
7 operated under the jurisdiction of a college or university accredited by the State of Rhode Island if
8 the circumstances of the offense indicate these programs would be beneficial to the juvenile. The
9 hearing board, in its discretion, may include in its order a provision to pay reasonable tuition for
10 the course unless the juvenile demonstrates an inability to pay. The order shall contain findings of
11 fact and a copy shall be submitted by the board to the chief magistrate of the traffic tribunal. Failure
12 to comply with an order of attendance, after notice and hearing, shall result in a show cause hearing
13 conducted before the traffic tribunal to determine whether grounds exist for the suspension or
14 revocation of a person's license or registration. Notice and hearings before the traffic tribunal shall
15 be pursuant to the provisions of chapter 41.1 of title 31.

16 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

=====
LC004846
=====

EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO COURTS AND CIVIL PROCEDURE -- COURTS -- FAMILY COURT

- 1 This act would give statewide juvenile hearing boards the authority to refer a juvenile
- 2 offender to a rehabilitative driving course, as part of a disposition of an offense before the board.
- 3 The order may be enforced by the traffic tribunal.
- 4 This act would take effect upon passage.

=====
LC004846
=====