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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

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A N A C T

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

Introduced By: Representatives McEntee, Caldwell, and Craven

Date Introduced: May 13, 2026

Referred To: House Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Legislative findings and purpose.

2 The general assembly hereby finds and declares that domestic violence offenses present a  
3 significant threat to public safety, frequently involve repeat conduct, and require coordinated and  
4 consistent judicial oversight. The general assembly further finds that the centralized and expedited  
5 disposition of such cases within the superior court will promote the fair and efficient administration  
6 of justice, enhance victim safety, and ensure the consistent application and enforcement of bail  
7 conditions and no-contact orders.

8 SECTION 2. Chapter 8-2 of the General Laws entitled "Superior Court" is hereby amended  
9 by adding thereto the following section:

10 **8-2-15.2. Domestic violence calendar.**

11 (a) Establishment. There is hereby established within the Rhode Island superior court a  
12 separate calendar to be known as the "domestic violence calendar" for the hearing and disposition  
13 of domestic violence cases within the jurisdiction of the superior court.

14 (b) Eligible cases. The domestic violence calendar shall include the following actions  
15 within the jurisdiction of the superior court:

16 (1) All criminal proceedings alleging the commission of a felony offense constituting  
17 domestic violence, as defined in § 12-29-2;

18 (2) All felony offenses involving violations of no-contact orders or protective orders arising  
19 from domestic violence matters;

1           (3) All felony offenses involving the use, possession, or discharge of a weapon in  
2 connection with a domestic violence offense; and

3           (4) Any other criminal proceedings arising from the same act or transaction or otherwise  
4 related to a domestic violence matter, as the presiding justice or the court deems appropriate for  
5 inclusion on the domestic violence calendar.

6           (c) Assignment of personnel. The presiding justice of the superior court shall assign  
7 personnel to the extent warranted to hear cases on the domestic violence calendar and may provide  
8 for the consistent assignment of such cases in order to promote continuity of judicial oversight,  
9 where practicable.

10           (d) Priority of proceedings. Cases assigned to the domestic violence calendar shall be given  
11 priority in scheduling and disposition, consistent with the rights of the parties.

12           (e) Concurrent jurisdiction. The "domestic violence calendar" shall have concurrent  
13 jurisdiction with any other calendar of the superior court to hear and decide all criminal actions  
14 brought pursuant to the violations of chapters 5, 9, 29, 37, 47 and 68 of title 11 and any offense  
15 constituting domestic violence as provided pursuant to § 12-29-2, as long as the criminal action  
16 involves domestic violence as defined in § 15-15-1.

17           (f) Administration. The presiding justice may adopt administrative orders, rules, and  
18 protocols as are necessary to implement the provisions of this section, including coordination,  
19 where appropriate, with the Rhode Island district court and the Rhode Island family court.

20           (g) Construction. Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the authority of the  
21 superior court to control its calendar, assign cases, or otherwise manage its docket as provided by  
22 law.

23           SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
A N A C T  
RELATING TO COURTS AND CIVIL PROCEDURE--COURTS -- SUPERIOR COURT

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- 1           This act would establish a separate domestic violence calendar within the superior court to
- 2 handle felony domestic violence cases.
- 3           This act would take effect upon passage.

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