

2026 -- S 2602

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LC004680  
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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 CRIMINAL PROCEDURE -- PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS IN DISTRICT  
COURTS

Introduced By: Senators LaMountain, Bissaillon, and Burke

Date Introduced: February 13, 2026

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1           SECTION 1. Section 12-10-12 of the General Laws in Chapter 12-10 entitled "Preliminary  
2 Proceedings in District Courts" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3           **12-10-12. Filing of complaints.**

4           (a) Subject to any other provisions of law relative to the filing of complaints for particular  
5 crimes, any judge of the district court or superior court may place on file any complaint in a criminal  
6 case other than a complaint for the commission of a felony ~~or a complaint against a person who has~~  
7 ~~been convicted of a felony or a private complaint.~~ The court may, in its discretion, determine the  
8 length of time in which the case will be on file but in no event shall it be longer than the maximum  
9 jail sentence allowed by law. The court may in its discretion require, as a condition of the filing,  
10 the performance of services for the public good or may attach any other conditions to it that the  
11 court shall determine; provided, in cases where the court ordered restitution totals less than two  
12 hundred dollars (\$200) to an injured party pursuant to this section or § 12-19-34, the court shall  
13 require that full restitution be made at the time of sentencing if the court determines that the  
14 defendant has the present ability to make the restitution.

15           (b) Express conditions of any filing in accordance with this section shall be that the  
16 defendant at all times during the period of filing keep the peace and be of good behavior and shall  
17 have paid all outstanding court-imposed or court-related fees, fines, costs, assessments, charges,  
18 and/or any other monetary obligations unless reduced or waived by order of the court. A violation

1 of any condition set by the court may be deemed a violation of the filing and the matter that was  
2 filed may be resurrected by the court, or the court may impose a sanction. A determination of  
3 whether a violation has occurred shall be made by the court in accordance with the procedures  
4 relating to a violation of probation, §§ 12-19-9 and 12-19-14.

5 (c) In the event the complaint was originally filed under this section subsequent to the  
6 defendant's plea of guilty or nolo contendere to the charges, the court, if it finds there to have been  
7 a violation but does not impose a sanction, may sentence the defendant. In the event the court filed  
8 the complaint under this section while the defendant maintained a plea of not guilty, if the court  
9 finds there to have been a violation but does not impose a sanction, it may proceed to the further  
10 disposition of the complaint according to law. If no action is taken on the complaint during the  
11 period of filing, the complaint shall be automatically expunged. No criminal record shall result;  
12 provided, that in any civil action for a tort, a plea of guilty or a finding of guilty should be admissible  
13 notwithstanding the fact that the complaint has been filed.

14 (d) Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions of this section, in the event a complaint for a  
15 crime involving domestic violence was originally filed under this section subsequent to the  
16 defendant's plea of guilty or nolo contendere to the charges, the court, if it finds there to have been  
17 a violation, may sentence the defendant. In the event the court filed the complaint for a crime  
18 involving domestic violence under this section while the defendant maintained a plea of not guilty,  
19 if the court finds there to have been a violation, it may proceed to the further disposition of the  
20 complaint for a crime involving domestic violence according to law. If, during the period of filing,  
21 the defendant is not charged with a violation pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, the filed  
22 complaint for the crime involving domestic violence shall be automatically quashed and shall not  
23 be resurrected. If, for a period of three (3) years after the date of filing, the defendant is not charged  
24 with a crime involving domestic violence, or if so charged, is acquitted or the complaint is  
25 dismissed, all records relating to the filed complaint for a crime involving domestic violence shall  
26 be expunged without the requirement of filing a motion pursuant to chapter 1.3 of title 12. No  
27 criminal records shall result, unless in any civil action for a tort, in which a plea of guilty or a  
28 finding of guilty is admissible notwithstanding the fact that the complaint has been filed. Provided,  
29 however, that in sentencing a defendant for a crime involving domestic violence of which the  
30 defendant was charged within three (3) years after the filing of a prior crime involving domestic  
31 violence to which the defendant pleaded guilty or nolo contendere, the court may take the plea into  
32 consideration.

33 (e) The defendant shall be advised that any and all bail money relating to a case that remains  
34 on deposit and is not claimed at the time of expungement shall be escheated to the state's general

1 treasury in accordance with chapter 12 of title 8.

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

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
A N A C T  
RELATING TO CRIMINAL PROCEDURE -- PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS IN DISTRICT  
COURTS

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- 1           This act would allow someone convicted of a previous felony or a private complaint to be
- 2 eligible under § 12-10-12 for a misdemeanor filing.
- 3           This act would take effect upon passage.

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