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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 DELINQUENT AND DEPENDENT CHILDREN -- RESTRAINT OF  
JUVENILES

Introduced By: Senators Vargas, Kallman, Lauria, Mack, and Bissaillon

Date Introduced: March 04, 2026

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1           SECTION 1. Chapter 14-1 of the General Laws entitled "Proceedings in Family Court" is  
2 hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

3           **14-1-72. Restraint of juveniles.**

4           (a) No handcuffs, shackles, chains, irons, or other restraints shall be used on a juvenile  
5 during transport to or from a court proceeding, during transport to any facility outside of the Rhode  
6 Island training school for youth, or while appearing in a court proceeding, except in accordance  
7 with the provisions of this section.

8           (b) A juvenile shall not be placed in physical restraints during transportation unless there  
9 is a determination that such restraints are necessary due to one or more of the following  
10 circumstances:

11           (1) There is reason to believe that the juvenile presents an immediate and credible risk of  
12 escape that cannot be adequately mitigated through less restrictive means; or

13           (2) The juvenile poses a threat to the juvenile's own safety or to the safety of others.

14           (3) If restraints are used on a juvenile pursuant to this section, the sheriff shall submit to  
15 the director of the department of public safety within five (5) days a report articulating the grounds  
16 that dictated the use of restraints.

17           (4) The department shall submit to the general assembly in January of each year a report  
18 disclosing the number of juveniles who were subjected to restraints pursuant to this section, and

1 the grounds for their use. No individually identifying information of any juvenile shall be included  
2 in the report.

3 (c) A juvenile shall not be placed in physical restraints during any court proceeding unless  
4 the court presiding over the proceeding makes a specific finding, on the record, that such restraints  
5 are necessary due to one or more of the following circumstances:

6 (1) The court has reason to believe that the juvenile presents an immediate and credible  
7 risk of escape that cannot be adequately mitigated through less restrictive means; or

8 (2) The juvenile poses a threat to the juvenile's own safety or to the safety of other persons  
9 present in the courtroom.

10 (3) The use of restraints is reasonably necessary to maintain order and security in the  
11 courtroom.

12 (4) The court shall submit to the general assembly in January of each year a report  
13 disclosing the number of juveniles who were subjected to restraints pursuant to this section, and  
14 the grounds for their use. No individually identifying information of any juvenile shall be included  
15 in the report.

16 (d) If a determination is made that restraints are necessary, the least restrictive form of  
17 restraint shall be used consistent with the legitimate security needs of each juvenile.

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

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

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1           This act would limit use of restraints on juveniles in transport and court proceedings to  
2 safety or escape risks, require least restrictive methods, and mandate reporting on when and why  
3 restraints were used.

4           This act would take effect upon passage.

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