

2026 -- S 2982

=====  
LC005482  
=====

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: Senators Valverde, Dimitri, Lauria, Acosta, LaMountain, and Kallman

Date Introduced: March 04, 2026

Referred To: Senate 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. An  
9 order to attend a course may also include a provision to pay reasonable tuition for the course. The  
10 order shall contain findings of fact and a copy shall be submitted by the board to the chief magistrate  
11 of the traffic tribunal. Failure to comply with an order of attendance, after notice and hearing, shall  
12 result in a show cause hearing conducted before the traffic tribunal to determine whether grounds  
13 exist for the suspension or revocation of a person's license or registration. Notice and hearings  
14 before the traffic tribunal shall be pursuant to the provisions of chapter 41.1 of title 31.

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

=====  
LC005482  
=====

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.

=====  
LC005482  
=====