

2026 -- H 7431

LC004480

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

A N A C T

RELATING TO COURTS AND CIVIL PROCEDURE -- PROCEDURE GENERALLY --
CAUSES OF ACTION

Introduced By: Representatives Casimiro, McEntee, Alzate, Read, Fellela, DeSimone,
Cotter, and Craven

Date Introduced: January 30, 2026

Referred To: House Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 9-1-14 of the General Laws in Chapter 9-1 entitled "Causes of
Action" is hereby amended to read as follows:

9-1-14. Limitation of actions for words spoken or personal injuries.

(a) Actions for words spoken shall be commenced and sued within one year next after the
words spoken, and not after.

(b) Actions for injuries to the person shall be commenced and sued within three (3) years
next after the cause of action shall accrue, and not after, except as provided for otherwise in
subsection (c) herein. Notwithstanding anything herein, any claim based on sexual abuse or
exploitation of a child shall be governed by § 9-1-51 and any claim based on conduct consisting of
first degree child abuse in violation of § 11-9-5.3(b)(1), shall be commenced within the statute of
limitations contained in § 9-1-55 and any damages recovered therein shall not exceed the sum of
five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000).

(c) As to an action for personal injuries wherein an injured party is entitled to proceed
against an insurer pursuant to § 27-7-2, where an action is otherwise properly filed against an
insured within the time limitations provided for by this section, and process against the insured
tortfeasor has been returned "non est inventus" and filed with the court, then the statutory limitation
for filing an action under § 27-7-2 directly against an insurer shall be extended an additional one
hundred twenty (120) days after the expiration of the time limitation provided for in subsection (b)

1 herein.

2 SECTION 2. Chapter 9-1 of the General Laws entitled "Causes of Action" is hereby
3 amended by adding thereto the following section:

4 **9-1-55. Limitation on actions based on child abuse -- Harter's Law.**

5 (a) This section shall be known and may be referred to as "Harter's Law".

6 (b) Any civil action brought pursuant to the provisions of § 9-1-2, for injury as a result of
7 conduct, in violation of § 11-9-5.3(b)(1), shall be commenced and sued within thirty-five (35) years
8 next, after the cause of action shall accrue, and not after; provided, however, that the time limit or
9 commencement of an action under this section, shall be tolled for a child, until the child reaches
10 eighteen (18) years of age.

11 SECTION 3. 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 create "Harter's Law" to extend the civil statute of limitations, for injuries
2 resulting from first degree child abuse, to thirty-five (35) years and cap civil damages recovery at
3 five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000).

4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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