

2026 -- H 8547 SUBSTITUTE A

LC006413/SUB A

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

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

3 **8-2-15.2. Domestic violence calendar.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

18 (c) Assignment of personnel. The presiding justice of the superior court shall assign
19 personnel to the extent warranted to hear cases on the domestic violence calendar and may provide

1 for the consistent assignment of such cases in order to promote continuity of judicial oversight.
2 where practicable.

3 (d) Magistrate. There is hereby created within the superior court the position magistrate,
4 who shall be appointed by the presiding justice of the superior court, with advice and consent of
5 the senate, for a period of ten (10) years, and until a successor is appointed and qualified. Nothing
6 contained herein shall be construed to prohibit the reappointment of a magistrate for one or more
7 additional ten (10) year terms, subject to the advice and consent of the senate. The person appointed
8 to serve as magistrate shall be a member of the bar of the State of Rhode Island. The magistrate
9 shall have the duties, responsibilities, powers and benefits as authorized in § 8-2-11.1.

10 (e) 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 (f) 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 the 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 (g) 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 (h) 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 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 COURTS AND CIVIL PROCEDURE--COURTS -- SUPERIOR COURT

- 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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