



*Rhode Island Judiciary*  
2008 ANNUAL REPORT



# LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

To the Honorable Members of the General Assembly:

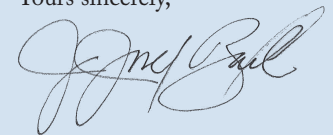
I am pleased to present to you the 2008 Annual Report of the Rhode Island Judiciary, pursuant to G.L. 1956 (1997 Reenactment) § 8-15-7.

The year 2008 was difficult financially on both a national and state level. The Judiciary recognized the need to maintain our level of services to the public with less funding and personnel. Thanks to the collective efforts of our dedicated staff, we were able to do so.

Despite the fiscal crisis and personnel shortage we experienced, the Judiciary was successful in maintaining a level of excellence. This year's accomplishments included improved security at our courthouses, expanded mediation programs, creation of a specialized alcohol calendar, upgrading our technology, increasing our outreach programs, repair and infrastructure upgrades in our buildings, and the introduction of document imaging.

Additionally, we had a changing of the guard in the Judiciary. Chief Justice Frank J. Williams retired on December 30, 2008 after nearly eight years at the helm. We wish him well in his endeavors and we look forward to welcoming a new Supreme Court Chief Justice in 2009.

Yours sincerely,



J. Joseph Baxter, Jr.  
State Court Administrator



Constance Brown

# LETTER TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

To the Honorable Members of the General Assembly:

This is my final report to you as your 50th Chief Justice. I retired on December 30, 2008 with misgivings and enormous pride for the Judiciary's service and accomplishments during my tenure – thanks in great part to your support and understanding of our joint need to serve the citizens of Rhode Island.

When I appeared before the House and Senate Judiciary Committees, prior to my confirmation, I promised you that our courts would be more user-friendly, affordable, and safe. In my inaugural address on February 9, 2001, I indicated that these goals could not be achieved unless there was judicial independence. The General Assembly understood this and in 2004 separated the Judiciary in budgetary and other responsibilities from Executive Branch control pursuant to our Constitution. This set us on a course for more efficient and effective operations.

In my position paper to then Governor Lincoln Almond, I proposed major improvements and changes in our security, outreach, technology, and infrastructure. As I reported to you in my annual State of the Judiciary address before joint sessions of the General Assembly, these goals have been achieved. This could not have been accomplished without the work and loyalty of our dedicated court employees, along with your financial support.

Access to our courts has been greatly improved by the construction of the new Kent County Courthouse and the Traffic Tribunal. We have created information kiosks in the lobbies of all courthouses that are manned by staff and volunteers for our citizens who come to our buildings. In 2004, we launched our Office of Court Interpreters to assist criminal defendants who do not speak English.

Prior to September 11, at my request, the United States Marshals of the United States District Court for the District of Rhode Island conducted, at no cost, a security audit of all of our facilities and made major recommendations for improvements. All recommendations have been implemented, including a “no weapons” policy within the perimeters of our courthouses.

When I assumed the duties of Chief Justice on February 26, 2001, we were still using the WANG system for all civil cases. The risk of losing information and files was great, and within five years, our technology was updated. Please know that the entire Judiciary is now moving toward electronic filing of all documents. Our judicial website ([www.courts.ri.gov](http://www.courts.ri.gov)) now includes our decisions, orders, dockets, and criminal records.



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During my tenure, the Judiciary has become more transparent for the media and our citizens to assist them in understanding our judicial processes. We have created judicial outreach programs including “Justice Rules” as well as meeting with the members of print and electronic media. “Justice Rules,” begun in 2003, aims to educate the state’s schoolchildren and teachers about the judicial and democratic processes, to promote positive attitudes about the third branch of government, and to promote careers in the Judiciary. The Supreme Court “rides circuit” twice a year throughout our state. We hear actual cases, and we bring the Supreme Court to the people.

In an effort to resolve disputes without the expense and trauma of litigation, the Office of Alternative Dispute Resolution was created in 2003. Appellate mediation, which began in 2004, now has an annual success rate of over 50 percent of the cases that participate.

While I have discussed administrative achievements, one must also be mindful of the jurisprudential duties and responsibilities required of the Chief Justice, the Justices, Judges, and Magistrates of all our courts. I am pleased to report that we have remained current in our cases and provide decisions in a timely fashion.

While we have had our challenges, we continued our administrative and jurisprudential work seamlessly through consensus building and diplomacy. The efforts of our capable judicial officers, court administrators, and staff made this possible. And we did all of this with just 1.4 percent of the entire state budget.

We stayed within our budget and never asked for a “supplemental.” We set priorities and we hired responsibly. In addition to being fiscally responsible and accountable, we collected an average of \$23 million annually in fines, fees, and costs for the general revenue.

It has been a deep and abiding honor to serve you and the people of our beloved state. I owe everything to our citizens who have never failed to sustain me and who understood my mission of leading the Judiciary into the 21st century.

To you, the members of the General Assembly, I owe a debt of gratitude for recognizing our duty to serve our citizens. I know you will give my successor the same support you have provided me.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Frank J. Williams".

Frank J. Williams  
Chief Justice (Retired)

# LETTER TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

To the Honorable Members of the General Assembly:

I am pleased to be part of the submission of the 2008 Annual Report for the Rhode Island Judiciary.

As Acting Chief Justice, it has been my duty to continue the many ongoing initiatives in our courts and maintain our level of services to the public, while operating within our budget as appropriated. During this time of economic hardship, this has been a challenge. I am grateful for the cooperation and spirit of the members of the Judiciary. With increased case filings and personnel reductions, I am proud to report that our work force has demonstrated a commitment to our mission and professional pride in doing more with less. To all employees in the Judiciary, I extend my thanks.



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Our state courts have benefited greatly from the leadership of retired Chief Justice Frank J. Williams. From the new and improved user-friendly facilities to the enhanced technology within our courts, his work will be appreciated for many years to come. However, Chief Justice Williams' true legacy lies in his efforts toward judicial outreach to the citizens of Rhode Island, consistent with his vision to create a more user-friendly Judiciary. The people of this state can be deeply grateful for all that he has done in their service. We bid him farewell and wish him a long and happy retirement.

Thank you for your continued support of the Judiciary.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen McKenna Goldberg  
Acting Chief Justice

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter of Transmittal	i
Letter to the General Assembly	ii
Letter to the General Assembly	iv
Table of Contents	v

## JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE

Judicial Technology Center	2
Interpreters	3
State Law Library	4
Judicial Education and Mandatory Continuing Legal Education	5
Judicial Records Center	6

## THE COURTS

Supreme Court	8
Superior Court	10
Family Court	12
District Court	14
Workers' Compensation Court	16
Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal	18

## COURT STATISTICS

At a Glance	22
Judiciary's Caseload Summary	23
Statistical Tables for all Courts	24
Court Structure	42

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# JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE



## JUDICIAL TECHNOLOGY CENTER

The Judicial Technology Center (JTC) continues to be extremely busy. In 2008, the focus was on upgrading the infrastructure components and implementing new technologies. The following presents a more detailed accounting of these accomplishments.

### **Upgrade of Key Infrastructure Components**

The fiber ring for downtown Providence is complete. This ring connects Garrahy Judicial Complex, John E. Fogarty Federal Building, and the Licht Judicial Complex. The fiber ring for the Kent County Courthouse is about 80 percent complete. This ring will connect the Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal and the Kent County Courthouse to the Garrahy Judicial Complex.

### **Exchange Server Upgrade**

The JTC has upgraded the email server from Exchange 2003 to Exchange 2007. The JTC has also set up a secondary server at the Kent County Courthouse in case the primary goes down for any reason. The JTC has completed the upgrade of the primary server and we are almost finished (90 percent) with the secondary.

### **Digital Recording**

In 2007, the JTC began the installation of digital recording technologies in the Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal courtrooms, the grand jury rooms, and two courtrooms in the Superior Court. In this past year all the District Court courtrooms and some Family Court courtrooms have been outfitted with digital recording technology. Digital recording is important for a number of reasons. First, the medium preserves a higher quality voice record of the proceedings. Second, it will not deteriorate over time as did the older analog technology. Third, specific areas of testimony can be isolated for playback. Fourth, the full record of the proceeding can be “attached” to the case management record. Finally, duplication of these new recordings is as simple as burning a CD on a computer.

### **Citrix Pilot**

The JTC has set up a Citrix Server to service clients at the Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal for testing. Citrix will allow the JTC to reuse old computers to run newer desktop software. We are still in the testing phase of this project. Also, it will allow us to purchase cheap thin clients to replace nonworking computers.

### **Backup Upgrade**

The JTC has completed the upgrade of its backup software from BackupExec to HP Data Protector. The JTC has also completed the purchase of a new tape library. The new library will allow us to backup more data much faster. The new software will allow us to backup all of our servers to the new tape library without having to physically go to each of the servers to mount tapes.

### **Collections**

In 2008, the Judiciary continued with the state Division of Taxation to intercept income tax refunds headed toward people who owe the Judiciary money. The Judiciary collected \$474,777.65 in 2008 from the tax intercept program. The JTC has also collected \$109,670.00 in data sales and reports in 2008.

## INTERPRETERS

During 2008, the Office of Court Interpreters (OCI) provided interpreting and translating services to 8,068 court users, a 10 percent increase compared to last year's numbers. These services included termination of parental rights, arraignments, divorces, violation hearings, trials, etc. The OCI continued assisting the Pretrial Services Unit and expanded its services to the Mental Health Clinic, both housed at the Garrahy Judicial Complex. The office had a more proactive role in making arrangements to provide interpreting services in languages other than Spanish. Language services arranged through the OCI were, among others, Armenian, Russian, Cape Verdean, Portuguese, and Arabic. They were provided at courthouses in all counties.

The OCI continued working with the Interpreting and Translating Program held at the Community College of Rhode Island by making our office available to their students during the course of their internship. Our interpreters also gave presentations at the Rhode Island Bar Association's annual meeting and the new lawyers' program. We maintained membership in the Supreme Court Permanent Advisory Committee on Women and Minorities in the Courts and participated actively in various subcommittees. During 2008, we also added translation services to the Disciplinary Board when complaints were submitted to that entity. The OCI continued translating court forms, notices, and court related materials as requested.

## STATE LAW LIBRARY

In 2008, the State Law Library advanced its mission to serve the research and reference needs of the bench and the bar and reinforced its commitment to provide every citizen with access to legal information.

Thanks to the Champlin Foundations, the library embarked on repair and infrastructure upgrades that will restore the library's former brilliance and ensure its proper place in the historic Frank Licht Judicial Complex. The grant enabled the library to make energy efficient and eco-friendly improvements to the lighting in the library. Wood end caps upgraded the utilitarian stacks and enhanced their warmth and beauty. Attractive and functional signage provided directional assistance and improved accessibility.

The grant also provided the library with funding to join the Higher Education Library Information Network (HELIN), a consortium of research institutions in Rhode Island. By enfoldng the library's collection with those of the leading research institutions of the state, the library becomes part of a larger statewide network that brings Rhode Island one step closer to the goal of a true statewide catalog. Our partnership with HELIN will facilitate the sharing of library materials and resources with these prestigious institutions.

The library is an integral part of the Justice Rules program and together with the Office of Community Outreach and Public Relations, offer courthouse tours and library visits to students from throughout the state. The program, entitled *Justice Rules in Rhode Island - An Educational Collaborative*, was the recipient of the American Association of Law Libraries Marketing Award in 2008. The library was nationally recognized for this innovative program which introduces students to basic legal principles and cultivates positive attitudes about the Judiciary and justice system.

The library has not been sheltered from the harsh economic climate engulfing our economy and our state. Difficult decisions are made daily to ensure that the library operates in a fiscally responsible manner while maintaining the integrity of a collection that is an integral ingredient in providing access to justice. Pursuing the correct balance of print and electronic resources, implementing cost-saving measures with the minimum of harm to valuable collections, and superior service continue to be our ultimate goals despite the economic climate.

## JUDICIAL EDUCATION AND MANDATORY CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION

The Rhode Island Supreme Court hosted the New England Appellate Judges Conference in November 2008. Appellate judges from around New England heard from national experts on subjects essential to dispensing justice for all. Subjects included discussion of media coverage in highly publicized cases, perspectives on neuroscience and the law, the legal impact of advances in psychology, and historical reflections on the late United States Supreme Court Justice William J. Brennan.

All state court justices, judges, and magistrates attended the court's annual judicial conferences held in March, June, and September. Topics were selected to further the excellence of judicial service for our citizens. Guest speakers from the Gruter Institute for Law and Behavioral Research discussed the legal implications of the latest in scientific research. Prominent Washington, D.C. attorney David Kendall reflected on inspiring judicial moments that shape our legal system. Judge Amy Karan of Florida's 11th Judicial Circuit, lectured in legal evidence.

Since the integration of the Mandatory Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) database with the attorney registration database, the MCLE Commission has streamlined communications and compliance outreach efforts, making 2008 a banner year for attorney Continuing Legal Education (CLE) carryover accrual and overall participation. 3,070 attorneys accrued copious CLE credits and received carryover transcripts indicating their surplus credits on account for 2009. This growth can be attributed to the direct interface between MCLE data and attorney registration data as well as the number of attorneys participating in distance-learning opportunities via live webcast, teleconferences, and online courses.

Rhode Island Supreme Court MCLE Commission Executive Director Holly Hitchcock, M.Ed., continued work on the national CLE Critical Issues Summit titled, *Equipping Our Lawyers: Law School Education, Continuing Education, and Legal Practice in the 21st Century*, scheduled for October 2009. Ms. Hitchcock has been invited to serve as facilitator at the summit, which will bring together 150 high-ranking legal educators for cutting-edge discussion and resulting publication. They will analyze the present and future educational needs of attorneys.

## JUDICIAL RECORDS CENTER

The Judicial Records Center (JRC) provides secure storage for the semi-active, inactive, and archival records of the Rhode Island Judiciary. The JRC also provides efficient reference services for the courts, members of the bar, and members of the public who require court records for research purposes.

In 2008, the JRC took possession of 136,268 case files in 3,022 boxes. The JRC now stores over 4,650,565 case files in 83,213 cubic foot boxes and 5,124 manuscript court docket, minute, and record books. The JRC staff responded to over 87,116 requests for records during the year. These included over 35,000 individual records that were viewed at the JRC. Staff also provided access to an additional 28,500 case files for researchers for credit agencies and social policy institutes.

There were over 8,700 archival requests. The archives staff is also continuing to work on a database of all 18th century court cases and has begun flat-filing 18th century court files with the assistance of a grant from the Rhode Island Foundation. A number of graduate students continue to conduct research in the archival court records. Sara Damiano of Brown University used 18th century Newport County court files from the archives for researching her thesis *From the Shadows of the Bar: Law and Women's Legal Literacy in Eighteenth-Century Newport*. She was awarded the John Thomas Memorial Award for Best Student Thesis for this work.

Professional historians also continue to mine Rhode Island court records to produce important new studies. Most notably, the University of Pennsylvania Press has just published *The Ties That Buy: Women and Commerce in Revolutionary America* by Dr. Ellen Hartigan-O'Connor, Assistant Professor of History at the University of California at Davis. Professor Hartigan-O'Connor's book uses evidence from the Newport County civil court records from 1750 to 1820 to trace the lives of urban women in early America to reveal how they were both affected by and used shifting forms of credit and cash to shape consumer culture in a transitioning economy. Historians have praised this study as an important contribution to both women's history and to economic history. One reviewer noted that the book is "a creative and important work" that "challenges our assumptions about the 18th-century American marketplace and the world of commerce." Another historian praised *The Ties that Buy* as a "nuanced and innovative book . . . that moves female economic life from the margins of society to the center – where it belongs."



## THE COURTS







The Rhode Island Supreme Court, with Chief Justice Frank J. Williams, seated, and standing, left to right, Justice Francis X. Flaherty, Justice Paul A. Suttell, Justice William P. Robinson III, and Justice Maureen McKenna Goldberg.

Constance Brown

## SUPREME COURT

### Community Outreach and Public Relations

The Office of Community Outreach and Public Relations continued to build on its ties with the Rhode Island Department of Education's network of school-based coordinators, as well as its relationships with public and private schools throughout the state. The office administers the Judiciary's court education program "Justice Rules" with a K-12 curriculum to teach children the basic principles of the legal system; to cultivate positive attitudes about the third branch of government; and to promote interest in careers in the Judiciary.

The Supreme Court continued its twice yearly practice of "riding the circuit" to conduct oral arguments of actual cases in the outlying cities and towns. In 2008, the court sat in Warwick at Bishop Hendricken High School and in Newport at Salve Regina University.

### Appellate Mediation Program

Despite a decrease in the number of cases that were eligible for mediation, the Appellate Mediation Program maintained its resolution rate of over 50 percent for the fourth straight year. Three new mediators were added to the program, two of whom completed an intensive certification training. Based on anonymous surveys submitted by participants in the Appellate Mediation Program, the satisfaction rate rose to its highest level since the program's inception in 2003.

### Law Clerk Department

The Law Clerk Department's 15 members worked on approximately 167 assignments through the course of the year. Overall, the law clerks provided legal research and writing assistance to the general trial calendar, encompassing civil, criminal, and administrative matters.

In 2008, the department expanded its use of interns from summers to the entire year. This initiative enabled the law clerks to accomplish more work and learn more about the court system. Additionally, the department increased collaboration among law clerks in the counties and those based in Providence to promote a more equal distribution of workloads to avoid backlogs. Finally, the law clerk assigned to the Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal now has an office from which to work on Appeals Panel days or as needed, increasing the efficiency of that rotation.

The department also continued many of its previous initiatives. At the outset of the judicial term, the law clerks participated in a more comprehensive orientation program, incorporating the trial judges as speakers, to effect a smooth transition from the outgoing to the incoming staff.

### Facilities and Operations

The 2008 project list in Facilities and Operations focused on a variety of health and safety issues, including many heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) and security upgrades. The office replaced three air handlers at the Garrahy Judicial Complex and four air handlers at the Licht Judicial Complex. These replacements greatly improved the quality of air circulation throughout the buildings, run more efficiently, and saved energy.

Facilities and Operations also focused on improving security in each of our buildings. Surveillance cameras were added to the public corridors at each building, providing an additional level of safety to the occupants of each facility. Exterior cameras were also installed, along with cameras in cash rooms at the Garrahy Judicial Complex and a wireless duress system at the Murray Judicial Complex. The Judicial Records Center was the last building tied into our digital video recorder (DVR) system and we can now monitor cameras that are in place there. All of the Judiciary's surveillance is now stored on DVR, completely eliminating the use of VHS tapes.

In an effort to boost cell phone reception at the Kent County Courthouse, the Judiciary has installed 50 antennas throughout the building. Cell phone providers Verizon, T-Mobile, and AT&T are the companies that participated in this project. The first floor, second floor, and part of the third floor (rooms 3001 to 3005) have voice coverage. Data downloads are available throughout the courthouse.



*Bottom - Left to right:* O. Rogerlee Thompson, Edward C. Clifton, Judith C. Savage, Melanie Wilk Thunberg, Alice Bridget Gibney, Joseph F. Rodgers, Jr. (Presiding Justice), Robert D. Krause, Francis J. Darigan, Jr., Michael A. Silverstein, Netti C. Vogel, and Gilbert V. Indeglia.

*Top - Left to right:* Gordon M. Smith, Patricia L. Harwood, Bennett R. Gallo, Allen P. Rubine, Daniel A. Procaccini, Edwin J. Gale, Stephen P. Nugent, Susan E. McGuiri, Jeffrey A. Lanphear, William E. Carnes, Jr., William J. McAtee, and Susan L. Revens.

## SUPERIOR COURT

### Medical Malpractice Mediation

As part of a joint project with the Superior Court Bench/Bar Committee of the Rhode Island Bar Association, the Superior Court in October 2005 instituted a mandatory mediation program for all medical malpractice actions pending trial in Providence County Superior Court. In September 2007, the mandatory mediation program was extended to include cases filed in Kent, Washington, and Newport Counties.

Between April and September 2008, nine pending cases were mediated. The mediation of the relatively few cases in Providence County during the most recent session should not be taken as any indication that the program has not been worthwhile. Most of the cases not reached for mediation on the scheduled date and time were postponed because of other engagements by counsel or an essential party or because discovery had not yet been concluded, even in cases several years old. We have learned that there is no point to forcing an unwilling or unready participant to mediation.

### Gun Court

The Rhode Island Gun Court, which heard its first case on September 12, 1994, has been a tremendous success, emulated by as many as 20 other jurisdictions. All Providence/Bristol County cases with firearms charges as specified in G.L. 1956 (1997 Reenactment) § 8-2-15.1 are assigned to the Gun Court calendar. Trial is then scheduled within 60 days of the completion of discovery. No continuances are granted except for good cause shown. Necessary continuances are granted for the shortest practicable time.

The dramatic impact on the prosecution of gun crimes is seen in the reduction of the disposition rate for these cases, from an average of 18 months to merely four months from time of filing a case. In calendar year 2008, 174 cases were disposed on the Gun Court calendar, with an average disposition rate of 205 days. In addition, 1,313 jail terms have been imposed since the program's inception and 84 percent of cases result in the imposition of a sentence.

### Adult Drug Court

The Rhode Island Drug Court provides a mechanism for nonviolent felony offenders suffering from addiction to be referred to the appropriate level of substance abuse counseling and ultimately adopt a drug-free lifestyle. In 2008, the Adult Drug Court continued to evolve with over 150 active participants and 90 persons being actively reviewed at any given time.

Seven years of operation have resulted in impressive and measurable successes in changing the course of many lives that may have otherwise been lost to a lifetime of drug or alcohol addiction. Defendants have successfully matriculated through the program resulting in over 160 participants having graduated by compliance with the rigid terms and conditions enumerated in the Adult Drug Court Contract. Utilizing the resources available through the program, participants often are able to return to school, gain meaningful employment, and become re-engaged with family and friends that they had lost due to their addictions.

### The Sexually Violent Predator Calendar

The Superior Court has a separate calendar to hear sexually violent predator determinations as well as community notification issues relating to sexual crimes. In sexually violent predator determinations, the Department of Attorney General files a petition on behalf of the State seeking a court determination of the "sexually violent predator" status of a defendant who has been convicted of one of the statutorily designated crimes. The court must render its decision with the assistance of a report from the Board of Review of Sexually Violent Predatory Behavior. During the year 2008, the court handled 83 of these cases. Since its inception, 315 cases have been filed on this calendar.

For community notification issues, the court is called upon to implement the provisions of what is commonly known as Megan's Law. An offender who has been convicted of a sexually violent offense and has been designated by the Parole Board, independent of whether or not the offender has applied for parole, as a Level I, II, or III sexual offender (Level III being the highest risk of re-offense) may appeal to the court for a review of his/her designation. As the system develops and more of these cases are brought to the court for review, the number of these appeals may be quite significant.



*Bottom - Left to right: John A. Mutter, Kathleen A. Voccola, Raymond E. Shawcross, Jeremiah S. Jeremiah, Jr. (Chief Judge), Haiganush R. Bedrosian, Michael B. Forte, and Francis J. Murray, Jr.*

*Top - Left to right: Jeanne L. Shepard, George N. DiMuro, Edward H. Newman, Thomas Wright, Patricia K. Asquith, Stephen J. Capineri, Laureen D'Ambra, Debra E. DiSegna, and Armando Monaco, II.*

*Not pictured: Angela M. Paulhus, John J. O'Brien, Jr., Colleen M. Hastings.*

## FAMILY COURT

### Mediation Program

Chief Judge Jeremiah S. Jeremiah, Jr., has recently expanded the mediation program to service all counties. Cases involving custody, visitation, and child support will now be referred to a mediator within 24 hours with an eye toward engaging the litigants prior to the next court event. The Family Court has been mediating miscellaneous cases in Providence County since 1997. This program has proven to be a great success in allowing parties to address their issues and work together to solve problems.

### Continuous Contested Calendar

The Family Court has altered the current case management system in Providence County to provide for a continuous contested calendar. Under this new system, the parties are afforded a number of opportunities to resolve their case before a judge. Once the court determines that the matter needs to be decided, a single judge of the court schedules the matter for a pretrial conference and eventually trial. The trial will proceed on a daily basis until complete.

A case manager is assigned to oversee the travel of the case through the process. This case manager works with the attorneys to ensure that each court event is meaningful to the clients and the court. In addition, the court will refer the matter to a mediator when appropriate to further assist the parties. This new system has demonstrated early success since its inception by Chief Judge Jeremiah in October.

### CASA is celebrating its 30th Year!

The Office of the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) is an advocacy program that trains Rhode Island community members to become court advocates for abused and neglected children statewide. Approximately 3,000 children are in the care of the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) as victims of abuse and/or neglect. CASA operates under the auspices of the Rhode Island Family Court and has done so for 30 years. CASA's mission is to help ensure safe environments, as well as a voice in court for these children. The children CASA represents are involved with two very large but separate systems, the Rhode Island Family Court and DCYF. The role of the CASA volunteer is to bridge the gap between these two systems and represent the best interest of the child in court.

### Adoption Day

Chief Judge Jeremiah hosted a very special event on November 17, 2008 in recognition of the 5th Annual National Adoption Day. Rhode Island's celebration coincided with events being held across the United States on this day to draw attention to the adoption process and the large number of children available for adoption. The court finalized 17 adoptions with 17 different families. The celebration was supported by many sponsors and community agencies. Over 250 participants were welcomed to the event. The Family Court performs over 500 adoptions a year.

### Specialized Alcohol Calendar

Due to recent deaths and serious consequences as a result of underage drinking, Chief Judge Jeremiah continues to hold a Specialized Alcohol Calendar. The goal of this calendar is to enroll at-risk juveniles in several programs that address both the offense and treatment needs. Established programs such as the Juvenile Drug Court, the Special Community Outreach Education (SCORE) program, and Reducing Youthful Dangerous Driving (RYDD) have been combined to address not only the therapeutic needs of a juvenile but also the greater need for awareness on the potential consequences of underage drinking. In addition to these proven models, Chief Judge Jeremiah has stressed the importance of family involvement. Increased efforts have been made at family therapy and mediation. At this level, a juvenile's substance use is viewed in the context of a family system that requires all individuals to make necessary adjustments in order to ensure a juvenile's health, safety, and future.

### Child Support Collections

The Family Court Child Support/Collections Office collected \$84,499,824.34 for 2008, an increase of 7 percent from last year's collections. This office also continues to work with the Department of Human Services to increase the participation of Electronic Fund Transfers.



*Bottom - Left to right:* Elaine T. Bucci, Stephen P. Erickson, Michael A. Higgins, Frank J. Cenerini, and Madeline Quirk.

*Top - Left to right:* Joseph P. Ippolito, Jr., Mary E. McCaffrey, Raphael Ovalles, Jeanne E. LaFazia, William Clifton, Pamela Woodcock Pfeiffer, Anthony Capraro, Jr., and Christine S. Jabour.

## DISTRICT COURT

### Passing Of Chief Judge Albert E. DeRobbio

On December 22, 2008 the Honorable Albert E. DeRobbio, who served for almost 22 years as the Chief Judge of the District Court, passed away at the age of 79. He was survived by his wife Barbara, his five children, and his 13 grandchildren. He also left a legacy of excellence in public service.

Chief Judge DeRobbio was a graduate of Classical High, Boston College, and Boston University Law School. While engaging in the practice of law, he first entered state service in the Department of Welfare. He then served as an Assistant Attorney General under three Attorneys General, rising to the position of Chief of the Criminal Division. As a prosecutor he made his mark in the war against organized crime, personally trying many high-profile cases. Appointed to the District Court in 1976 by Governor Philip Noel, he then served nine years as an Associate Justice of the Superior Court before returning to the District Court in February of 1987 as Chief Judge.

Chief Judge DeRobbio, who had earned a reputation as a hard-working trial judge dissolving backlogs wherever he was assigned, immediately became known as a dynamic court leader, streamlining calendars and implementing new systems, such

as a revamped small claims procedure. In 1999, at the request of Chief Justice Weisberger, he took over the traffic court (refounded as the Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal) and in eight years turned a troubled court into a model court.

Chief Judge DeRobbio was extremely proud of the 35 judges and magistrates who served under his leadership in the District Court. He led his court by example, keeping a full calendar caseload until his death.

Upon his passing, the Honorable Michael A. Higgins, senior judge of the District Court, became Acting Chief Judge.

### District Court Welcomes Three Associate Judges

During 2008 Governor Carcieri appointed three new Associate Judges to the District Court: the Honorable Pamela Woodcock Pfeiffer; the Honorable Mary McCaffrey; and the Honorable Anthony Capraro.

Associate Judge Pfeiffer, who took her oath of office at the old State House in Bristol on June 16, 2008, came to the District Court after serving for five years as Clerk of the Rhode Island Supreme Court. She is a graduate of Hofstra University and the University of Connecticut School of Law. After engaging in the practice of law in New York and Massachusetts, Associate Judge Pfeiffer became a Rhode Island Special Assistant Attorney General in 1997. In that position she not only served as a general criminal prosecutor but also headed the Medicaid Fraud and Patient Abuse Unit.

Associate Judge McCaffrey was sworn in at a State House ceremony on June 27, 2008. At the time of her appointment to the District Court she was serving as a Family Court Magistrate, a position to which she was appointed by Chief Judge Jeremiah S. Jeremiah, Jr. in 2005. Associate Judge McCaffrey is a graduate of Georgetown University and the Boston University School of Law. Associate Judge McCaffrey practiced law in Warwick and had prior judicial experience as a judge of the Warwick Municipal Court for two years and the Warwick Probate Court for 11 years.

Anthony Capraro took the oath of office as an Associate Judge of the District Court on September 30, 2008. After graduating from Bishop Hendricken High School, Providence College, and the University of Bridgeport School of Law, he began a 21 year career in the Office of the Public Defender. In January 2000, he was appointed Chief of the Trial Division. In that position, he personally tried many capital cases and was a mentor to a generation of criminal defense counsel.



*Bottom - Left to right:* Janette A. Bertness, Debra L. Olsson, George E. Healy, Jr. (Chief Judge), Bruce Q. Morin, and Edward P. Sowa, Jr.

*Top - Left to right:* Robert E. Hardman, Jr., George T. Salem, Jr., Dianne M. Connor, Hugo L. Ricci, and Robert M. Ferrieri.

## WORKERS' COMPENSATION COURT

Since its creation, the Workers' Compensation Court has focused upon the concept of service as the overarching goal of its mission. The court's paramount mission is to provide efficient litigation management of all filed petitions. Second, we must continue to focus upon our outreach efforts to educate members of the public about their specific rights and duties under the Workers' Compensation Act and the role of the Judiciary in their lives in general. If we perform both functions adequately, we will be able to provide high quality public service to the people of Rhode Island.

The court has long been recognized for the high degree of efficiency with which it addresses litigation. While the judges and administrators of the court are proud of this achievement, we readily acknowledge that this could never be accomplished without the devoted service of the court's staff. The employees in the clerk's office, the data unit, the Medical Advisory Board, the court secretaries, and the court reporters consistently demonstrate a solid commitment to the success of the court's mission. Cases received in the clerk's office are immediately assigned to the appropriate calendar. The calendars are prepared and posted to the court's website within seven days. Basic case information is entered on pretrial orders, and the order placed in the file prior to the time the case is reached for hearing.

The court's statistics have remained stable or improved in every management category. For example, the cases resolved at pretrial conference within 90 days of filing increased to the remarkable level of 90 percent. Fifty-six percent of the cases, at both pretrial and trial stages, were resolved within 31 days of the date of filing and 71 percent of the caseload was closed within 60 days.

As the court became more efficient, we have been able to direct our efforts to improving our efficiency at the trial stage of the proceeding. The improvement of our case management procedures has allowed individual judges to devote more time and resources to their trial calendars. This has, in turn, resulted in dramatic improvements in the length of time cases remain at trial. In 2006, 26 percent of the cases pending at trial were more than one year old. While this was a limited number of cases, the judges and staff agreed that this category required our attention. The court focused upon these cases and attempted to reduce the time they were continued for trial. The increase in the number of hearing rooms assigned to the court and the construction of a smaller hearing room, in which formal matters could be addressed, allowed the court to assign more judges to sit on the trial calendar on a regular basis. Finally, the administration was successful in devising a schedule which maximized the use of the rooms available to the court. All these changes allowed the court to improve this statistic dramatically. Consequently in 2008, only 19 percent of the cases remained pending at trial for more than one year.

In addition to the improvement in our statistical results, the Workers' Compensation Court continues to take great pride in our outreach efforts. The judges and staff of this court believe that judicial education efforts and community outreach are not simply goodwill gestures but, more importantly, fulfill our oath to serve the people of Rhode Island to the best of our talents and abilities. We have, therefore, volunteered to appear on Hispanic radio shows and at school job fairs. On May 19, 2008, the court hosted an educational program for community organizers who serve the immigrant community to instruct them about the rights of injured workers and the court process. Judges from the court also attended community forums in the immigrant community to help non-English speaking employees to understand their rights under the law and to assure them that the court remains committed to serving them.

Perhaps the most remarkable outreach effort sponsored by the court is the YES-RI Program. Since its creation in 2005, this initiative has been a remarkable partnership among the bench, the compensation bar, and safety professionals to educate young workers about their right to a safe workplace and their right to compensation benefits if they are injured. In 2008, the YES-RI Program had 19 school visits and educated approximately 1,500 students. This program empowers our youngest workers and reinforces our basic message that the Judiciary is committed to serving all who seek its assistance.



Left to right: Albert Ciullo, R. David Cruise, Lillian Almeida, William R. Guglietta (Chief Magistrate), Domenic DiSandro, III, William Noonan, Alan R. Goulart, and Edward Parker.

## RHODE ISLAND TRAFFIC TRIBUNAL

The calendar year of 2008 will be remembered at the Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal (RITT) as one of great change. For the first time since 1998 the RITT is under the supervision of the Chief Magistrate who shall be the administrative head of the court. In February of 2008, William R. Guglietta was appointed to be the RITT's first Chief Magistrate. Additionally, in the fall, two additional magistrates were appointed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. With the additions of these two magistrates the RITT for the first time in several years was at its full complement of Judges and Magistrates.

Operating with a full court was extremely important to the RITT in 2008. For the sixth straight year, the court heard over 100,000 violations. Although the number of violations was lower in 2008 than 2007, the RITT collected over \$1.2 million more in fines and costs than it had the previous year. In fact, the RITT collected over 83 percent of the costs that were assessed during the calendar year. This 83 percent figure is one of the highest rates for collections in traffic courts in the nation. Also significant to the RITT is the disposition rate of cases heard before the court. The RITT disposed of 103 percent of the cases during 2008. This continues the trend of disposing of more cases than are filed in a given calendar year.

Moreover, the amount of money that is collected by the RITT far outweighs the state's expenditure to operate the court. For each dollar that is spent on the operations at the RITT, the court collects \$1.70. These figures are based on both expenditures and fines and costs collected by the RITT in 2008.

In addition to the amount of revenue raised by the RITT, several judicial functions were expanded to assist the court in handling the thousands of citizens appearing on its calendars. The Chief Magistrate added afternoon calendars to allow for additional trials and motions. Additionally, all appellate decisions that are rendered by the RITT's Appeals Panel are placed on the Judiciary's website. These two new additions for 2008 will make it more convenient for motorists to have access to the court as well as being able to view our website for access to important legal decisions.

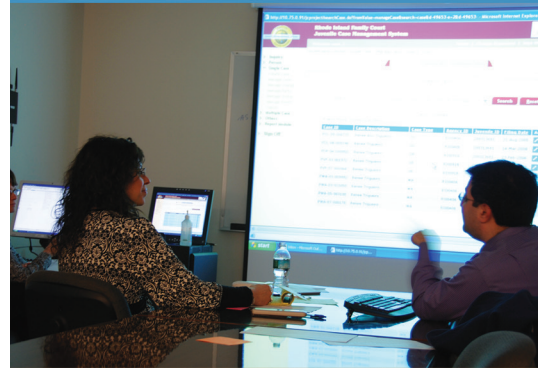
Also, 2008 brought an expanded oversight role for the RITT over the numerous municipal courts in the cities and towns of our state. In September, all judges and magistrates of the RITT met with the municipal court judges to discuss many of the issues that affect both court systems. This is the first time in several years that members of the RITT met with judges of the municipal courts. This relationship will expand in 2009 in an effort to bring more uniformity and continuity in the administration of justice between these two court systems.

The RITT has continued progress with the E-citation project. In 2008, as a result of the pilot project with the State Police and five local departments, several programming changes were made to improve the process. While the changes were being made there was a moratorium on new departments deploying the application. With the programming changes completed, we are now beginning further expansion of this project into the City of Pawtucket. Additional agencies have expressed interest and should become involved in 2009.

Lastly, the RITT embarked on a new project in an effort to become the state's first paperless court. In a project that may have historic ramifications for the Judiciary, the project encompasses the scanning of traffic citations and related documentation into a new FileNet Enterprise Content Management System in order to improve the operational efficiency in customer service at the RITT. Implementation of hardware and software components are completed and the RITT has completed the imaging of all 05 and 07 series municipal court summonses and is now focusing on the imaging of older suspended summonses and the implementation of selected automated workflow components.



# STATISTICS



## AT A GLANCE

Filings/ Hearings.....	223,075
Disposed.....	204,306

### FISCAL YEAR 2009 BUDGET - ENACTED

	ALL FUNDS	GENERAL REVENUE
Supreme Court	\$ 28,954,189	\$ 25,925,078
Defense of Indigent Persons	\$ 3,065,689	\$ 3,065,689
Superior Court	\$ 20,257,910	\$ 20,157,910
Family Court	\$ 19,842,332	\$ 18,148,020
District Court	\$ 10,264,212	\$ 10,264,212
Workers' Compensation Court	\$ 7,526,297 (restricted)	\$
Traffic Tribunal	\$ 7,439,091	\$ 7,439,091
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 97,349,720</b>	<b>\$ 85,000,000</b>

#### JUDGES

65 Judges (6 vacancies)

4 Minorities

21 Female

21 Magistrates (1 vacancy)

7 Female

#### EMPLOYEES

FTE Count = 729.3

#### FACILITIES

6 Courthouses

81 Courtrooms

(including 4 Grand Jury rooms)

### FISCAL YEAR 2008 RECEIPTS - ALL FUNDS

	Civil	Criminal/Traffic/Juvenile Fines/Fees/Costs	Grants and Miscellaneous
Supreme Court	\$ 14,900	\$ N/A	\$ 1,399,308
Superior Court	\$ 2,445,733	\$ 1,221,990	\$ 213,219
Family Court	\$ 496,165	\$ 854	\$ 1,478,882
District Court	\$ 2,037,008	\$ 4,919,455	
Workers' Compensation Court	\$ 160,190	\$ N/A	
Traffic Tribunal	\$ N/A	\$ 10,961,948	
<b>Total Receipts Generated</b>	<b>\$ 5,170,416</b>	<b>\$ 17,104,247</b>	<b>\$ 3,091,409</b>

#### Subtotal Receipts

**\$25,366,072**

Receipts Collected for Other Agencies

Department of Health

\$ 477,371

General Treasurer - Violent Crimes Compensation

\$ 1,733,842

Division of Fire Safety

\$ 250

**Total Receipts Collected for Other Agencies**

**\$ 2,211,463**

#### TOTAL RECEIPTS FISCAL YEAR 2008

**\$27,577,535**

## JUDICIARY'S CASELOAD SUMMARY

COURT	CASE TYPE	FILING/ HEARINGS	DISPOSITIONS
Supreme Court	Appellate Mediation	323	273
		90	46
Superior Court	Felony	5,499	5,621
	Misdemeanor	240	342
	Civil	11,855	*7,149
Family Court	Juvenile	10,370	10,891
	Divorce	3,840	3,846
	Miscellaneous Petitions	756	
	Abuse	2,225	2,298
	Child Support	**4,697	
	Support Hearings	***26,729	
District Court	Misdemeanors	28,158	26,509
	Small Claims	21,316	18,840
	Civil	25,201	19,058
	Abuse	952	
	Mental Health/Other	664	
	Administrative Appeals	186	
Workers' Compensation Court		8,296	8,389
Traffic Tribunal		98,407	101,044
<b>Total Filings and Dispositions</b>		<b>223,075</b>	<b>204,306</b>
Including Support Hearings		249,804	

\* Please note, unlike 2003 and 2004, there was no mass dismissal of cases with no action in five years during 2005, 2006, 2007, or 2008.

\*\* Reciprocal filings stay open until age of majority of child unless otherwise ordered by court.

\*\*\* Support hearings represent the number of hearings held. Therefore, the same case may be counted more than once.



## SUPREME COURT APPELLATE CASELOAD

<b>Criminal</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Docketed	80	69	64	74	54
Disposed	62	71	71	70	61
Pending	123	125	129	134	129
<b>Civil</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Docketed	174	157	157	147	127
Disposed	194	159	155	153	128
Pending	231	222	237	223	221
<b>Certiorari</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Docketed	87	80	83	100	76
Disposed	64	88	63	88	82
Pending	80	63	110	96	87
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Docketed	53	38	37	37	66
Disposed	66	40	31	42	48
Pending	43	32	51	39	58
<b>All Cases</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Docketed	394	344	341	358	323
Disposed	386	358	320	353	319
Pending	477	442	527	492	495

## SUPREME COURT MANNER OF DISPOSITION

<b>Before Argument</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Withdrawn	54	60	57	76	62
Dismissed	64	27	21	37	20
Petition Granted	7	6	4	10	8
Petition Denied	69	73	53	67	69
Other	25	24	17	39	31
<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>190</b>
<b>After Argument/ Motion Calendar</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Withdrawn	3	0	2	1	1
Affirmed	75	65	78	53	49
Modified	4	4	4	3	2
Reversed	16	16	8	12	8
Other	2	6	2	2	4
Orders	13	20	38	27	13
Opinions	87	71	56	44	51
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>After Argument/Merits</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Withdrawn	1	1	6	1	3
Affirmed	43	41	48	31	42
Modified	6	12	1	7	2
Reversed	17	22	20	13	16
Other	*	1	0	1	2
Orders	*	5	7	2	7
Opinions	*	72	68	51	58
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Total Dispositions</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>353</b>	<b>319</b>
% Disposed of Within 300 Days of Docketing	46%	48%	38%	48%	52%

\* not available

## SUPERIOR COURT CIVIL CASELOAD

CIVIL ACTIONS					
Providence/ Bristol County	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Cases Filed	6,908	6,689	6,696	6,913	8,433
Cases Disposed	17,650	4,120	4,360	4,335	4,750
<i>Trial Calendar Summary</i>					
Cases Added	1,548	1,460	1,409	1,189	1,336
Cases Disposed	1,653	1,443	1,408	1,291	1,321
Pending at Year-End	1,567	1,428	1,573	1,559	1,556
<b>Kent County</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Cases Filed	1,099	1,168	1,208	1,355	1,761
Cases Disposed	2,520	920	911	953	1,164
<i>Trial Calendar Summary</i>					
Cases Added	337	312	309	272	321
Cases Disposed	387	426	433	367	323
Pending at Year-End	337	150	132	152	173
<b>Washington County</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Cases Filed	796	772	765	866	939
Cases Disposed	1,551	604	614	656	693
<i>Trial Calendar Summary</i>					
Cases Added	182	214	181	188	179
Cases Disposed	205	265	257	230	202
Pending at Year-End	248	177	147	132	142
<b>Newport County</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Cases Filed	614	586	630	677	722
Cases Disposed	1,425	581	483	420	542
<i>Trial Calendar Summary</i>					
Cases Added	126	158	152	142	148
Cases Disposed	158	252	160	154	159
Pending at Year-End	206	107	123	124	146
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Cases Filed	9,417	9,215	9,299	9,811	11,855
Cases Disposed	23,146	6,225	6,368	6,364	7,149
<i>Trial Calendar Summary</i>					
Cases Added	2,193	2,144	2,051	1,791	1,984
Cases Disposed	2,403	2,386	2,258	2,042	2,005
Pending at Year-End	2,358	1,862	1,975	1,967	2,017

## SUPERIOR COURT MANNER OF DISPOSITION CIVIL TRIAL CALENDAR

CIVIL ACTIONS					
Providence/ Bristol County	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Verdicts	69	25	23	21	10
Judicial Decisions	50	17	7	7	6
Total Trials	119	42	30	28	16
Dismissed/Settled/Other Arbitration/ Other Exceptions	1,066	1,240	944	902	857
Total Disposed	1,653	1,443	1,408	1,291	1,321
<b>Kent County</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Verdicts	18	14	4	4	0
Judicial Decisions	20	15	5	2	1
Total Trials	38	29	9	6	1
Dismissed/Settled/Other Arbitration/ Other Exceptions	252	359	332	255	231
Total Disposed	387	426	433	367	323
<b>Washington County</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Verdicts	8	17	8	9	5
Judicial Decisions	3	6	4	6	5
Total Trials	11	23	12	15	10
Dismissed/Settled/Other Arbitration/ Other Exceptions	164	225	186	155	125
Total Disposed	205	265	257	230	202
<b>Newport County</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Verdicts	2	6	11	2	1
Judicial Decisions	6	10	7	10	8
Total Trials	8	16	18	12	9
Dismissed/Settled/Other Arbitration/ Other Exceptions	114	227	116	121	123
Total Disposed	158	252	160	154	159
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Verdicts	97	62	46	36	16
Judicial Decisions	79	48	23	25	20
Total Trials	176	110	69	61	36
Dismissed/Settled/Other Arbitration/ Other Exceptions	1,596	2,051	1,578	1,433	1,336
Total Disposed	2,403	2,386	2,258	2,042	2,005

## SUPERIOR COURT FELONY CASELOAD

<b>FELONIES</b>					
<b>Providence/ Bristol County</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Cases Filed	4,271	3,909	4,293	4,521	4,060
Cases Disposed	4,074	4,010	4,267	4,429	4,171
Total Pending Cases	1,838	1,791	1,843	1,708	2,075
% Over 180 Days Old	42%	50%	43%	44%	47%

<b>Kent County</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Cases Filed	751	745	765	676	676
Cases Disposed	762	939	707	760	712
Total Pending Cases	193	199	254	154	123
% Over 180 Days Old	17%	22%	34%	31%	20%

<b>Washington County</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Cases Filed	413	434	571	453	438
Cases Disposed	359	413	557	490	446
Total Pending Cases	135	127	126	104	118
% Over 180 Days Old	13%	17%	27%	19%	26%

<b>Newport County</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Cases Filed	287	421	332	296	325
Cases Disposed	279	347	351	275	292
Total Pending Cases	64	99	89	109	115
% Over 180 Days Old	13%	9%	22%	18%	30%

<b>Statewide</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Cases Filed	5,722	5,509	5,961	5,946	5,499
Cases Disposed	5,474	5,709	5,882	5,954	5,621
Total Pending Cases	2,230	2,216	2,312	2,075	2,431
% Over 180 Days Old	37%	44%	40%	40%	44%

## SUPERIOR COURT MANNER OF DISPOSITION FELONIES

<b>FELONIES</b>					
<b>Providence/ Bristol County</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Pled	3,689	3,624	3,936	4,078	3,843
Filed	3	8	1	1	2
Dismissed	331	338	264	300	281
Trial	51	40	66	49	45
Other	0	0	0	1	0
Total	4,074	4,010	4,267	4,429	4,171
% Disposed of Within 180 Days of Filing	69%	68%	70%	72%	62%

<b>Kent County</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Pled	700	679	650	713	642
Filed	21	18	17	0	1
Dismissed	35	237	33	35	56
Trial	6	5	7	11	13
Other	0	0	0	1	0
Total	762	939	707	760	712
% Disposed of Within 180 Days of Filing	85%	66%	83%	80%	80%

<b>Washington County</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Pled	290	354	490	438	393
Filed	14	11	7	1	0
Dismissed	47	36	42	47	50
Trial	7	10	14	4	3
Other	1	2	4	0	0
Total	359	413	557	490	446
% Disposed of Within 180 Days of Filing	84%	86%	82%	81%	79%

<b>Newport County</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Pled	223	289	298	249	254
Filed	7	10	10	6	3
Dismissed	42	42	35	18	29
Trial	7	6	7	2	6
Other	0	0	1	0	0
Total	279	347	351	275	292
% Disposed of Within 180 Days of Filing	64%	80%	86%	77%	76%

<b>Statewide</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Pled	4,902	4,946	5,374	5,478	5,132
Filed	45	47	35	8	6
Dismissed	455	653	374	400	416
Trial	71	61	94	66	67
Other	1	2	5	2	0
Total	5,474	5,709	5,882	5,954	5,621
% Disposed of Within 180 Days of Filing	72%	70%	74%	74%	67%

## SUPERIOR COURT MISDEMEANOR CASELOAD

<b>MISDEMEANORS</b>					
<b>Providence/ Bristol County</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Cases Filed	135	173	155	149	132
Cases Disposed	130	117	101	93	211
Total Pending Cases	69	59	91	111	142
% Over 90 Days Old	67%	83%	66%	74%	80%
<b>Kent County</b>					
Cases Filed	44	47	38	56	42
Cases Disposed	45	45	52	50	53
Total Pending Cases	8	23	9	15	10
% Over 90 Days Old	88%	52%	89%	53%	50%
<b>Washington County</b>					
Cases Filed	49	41	47	36	23
Cases Disposed	68	53	60	30	26
Total Pending Cases	14	12	4	8	5
% Over 90 Days Old	43%	33%	0%	13%	60%
<b>Newport County</b>					
Cases Filed	42	13	32	46	43
Cases Disposed	64	30	25	29	52
Total Pending Cases	6	2	10	17	15
% Over 90 Days Old	33%	0%	0%	53%	73%
<b>Statewide</b>					
Cases Filed	270	274	272	287	240
Cases Disposed	307	245	238	202	342
Total Pending Cases	97	96	114	151	172
% Over 90 Days Old	63%	68%	60%	66%	77%

## SUPERIOR COURT MANNER OF DISPOSITION MISDEMEANORS

<b>MISDEMEANORS</b>					
<b>Providence/ Bristol County</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Pled	77	74	65	58	167
Filed	3	8	6	10	3
Dismissed	44	30	27	19	21
Trial	6	5	3	6	20
Other	0	0	0	0	0
Total	130	117	101	93	211
% Disposed of Within 90 Days of Filing	34%	28%	24%	19%	22%
<b>Kent County</b>					
Pled	25	21	32	34	42
Filed	6	7	11	1	1
Dismissed	9	17	7	12	8
Trial	3	0	1	2	2
Other	2	0	1	1	0
Total	45	45	52	50	53
% Disposed of Within 90 Days of Filing	94%	47%	67%	73%	51%
<b>Washington County</b>					
Pled	39	37	33	23	19
Filed	10	3	9	0	1
Dismissed	17	10	16	6	4
Trial	1	2	0	0	0
Other	1	1	2	1	2
Total	68	53	60	30	26
% Disposed of Within 90 Days of Filing	82%	81%	81%	90%	89%
<b>Newport County</b>					
Pled	26	11	7	12	35
Filed	9	4	2	2	2
Dismissed	29	14	13	9	9
Trial	0	1	0	2	3
Other	0	0	3	4	3
Total	64	30	25	29	52
% Disposed of Within 90 Days of Filing	56%	33%	85%	89%	47%
<b>Statewide</b>					
Pled	167	143	137	127	263
Filed	28	22	28	13	7
Dismissed	99	71	63	46	42
Trial	10	8	4	10	25
Other	3	1	6	6	5
Total	307	245	238	202	342
% Disposed of Within 90 Days of Filing	63%	41%	50%	47%	41%

## FAMILY COURT DOMESTIC RELATIONS

<b>DOMESTIC</b>					
<b>Providence/ Bristol County</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Filed	3,158	3,096	3,062	2,935	2,995
Filed - Divorce Only	2,694	2,630	2,558	2,479	2,472
Disposed	2,789	2,761	2,457	2,542	2,433
Cases Greater than 360 Days Old	4	3	19	15	37
<b>Kent County</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Filed	821	805	763	761	764
Filed - Divorce Only	727	714	678	666	671
Disposed	730	729	735	710	672
Cases Greater than 360 Days Old	10	7	10	0	3
<b>Washington County</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Filed	555	561	577	505	503
Filed - Divorce Only	488	483	509	444	421
Disposed	510	549	460	480	456
Cases Greater than 360 Days Old	2	0	0	0	2
<b>Newport County</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Filed	381	329	377	348	334
Filed - Divorce Only	326	263	316	289	276
Disposed	317	292	315	271	285
Cases Greater than 360 Days Old	3	10	8	9	4
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Filed	4,915	4,791	4,779	4,549	4,596
Filed - Divorce Only	4,235	4,090	4,061	3,878	3,840
Disposed	4,346	4,331	3,967	4,003	3,846
Cases Greater than 360 Days Old	19	20	37	24	46
<b>Abuse Complaint Filed</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Providence/Bristol County	1,933	1,736	1,806	1,669	1,705
Kent County	393	316	328	373	328
Washington County	120	112	88	94	87
Newport County	127	77	86	97	105
Statewide Total	2,573	2,241	2,308	2,233	2,225
<b>Support Petitions Filed</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Support Petitions Filed	3,602	4,551	5,307	5,442	4,697

## FAMILY COURT JUVENILE CASELOAD

<b>JUVENILE FILINGS BY CATEGORY</b>					
	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Wayward/Delinquent	7,331	7,018	7,125	6,527	6,713
Dependency/Neglect/ Abuse	1,720	2,162	2,590	1,692	1,705
Termination of Parental Rights	393	424	348	371	369
Adoption/Guardianship	610	599	541	484	492
Violations	897	938	1,045	1,130	1,029
Other	80	68	74	60	62
<b>Total Filings</b>	<b>11,031</b>	<b>11,209</b>	<b>11,723</b>	<b>10,264</b>	<b>10,370</b>

<b>JUVENILE CALENDAR RESULTS FOR WAYWARD/DELINQUENT CASES</b>					
<b>Providence/ Bristol County</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Filed	5,717	5,537	5,706	5,517	5,370
Disposed	5,957	5,141	5,378	5,585	5,469
% Adjudicated Within 180 Days of Filing	74%	75%	75%	74%	73%
<b>Kent County</b>					
Filed	1,449	1,289	1,241	1,149	1,215
Disposed	1,402	1,175	1,303	1,247	1,226
% Adjudicated Within 180 Days of Filing	56%	57%	57%	65%	65%
<b>Washington County</b>					
Filed	632	728	708	561	674
Disposed	685	588	689	623	607
% Adjudicated Within 180 Days of Filing	63%	76%	76%	66%	78%
<b>Newport County</b>					
Filed	430	402	515	430	483
Disposed	464	407	443	480	507
% Adjudicated Within 180 Days of Filing	65%	61%	69%	63%	72%
<b>Statewide</b>					
Filed	8,228	7,956	8,170	7,657	7,742
Disposed	8,508	7,311	7,813	7,935	7,809
% Adjudicated Within 180 Days of Filing	70%	72%	72%	71%	72%

## FAMILY COURT CHILD PROTECTION

### JUVENILE CALENDAR RESULTS FOR CHILD PROTECTION CASES

<b>Providence/ Bristol County</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
<b>TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS</b>					
Filed	329	338	273	290	299
Disposed	300	269	296	341	324
% Adjudicated Within 180 Days of Filing	80%	68%	67%	59%	74%
<b>DEPENDENCY/NEGLECT/ ABUSE</b>					
Filed	1,305	1,626	1,915	1,250	1,266
Disposed	1,280	1,311	1,704	1,712	1,634
% Adjudicated Within 180 Days of Filing	66%	59%	52%	39%	42%
<b>OTHER</b>					
Filed	490	441	404	389	378
Disposed	422	373	431	373	385

<b>Kent County</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
<b>TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS</b>					
Filed	29	48	39	50	43
Disposed	40	36	51	28	46
% Adjudicated Within 180 Days of Filing	27%	31%	24%	59%	76%
<b>DEPENDENCY/NEGLECT/ ABUSE</b>					
Filed	177	284	352	243	192
Disposed	236	254	337	263	242
% Adjudicated Within 180 Days of Filing	51%	57%	51%	57%	73%
<b>OTHER</b>					
Filed	112	108	105	81	110
Disposed	87	116	97	83	106

<b>Washington County</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
<b>TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS</b>					
Filed	14	15	16	12	11
Disposed	21	25	14	10	11
% Adjudicated Within 180 Days of Filing	36%	33%	80%	33%	0%
<b>DEPENDENCY/NEGLECT/ ABUSE</b>					
Filed	106	115	193	132	144
Disposed	145	112	164	161	139
% Adjudicated Within 180 Days of Filing	51%	49%	62%	39%	49%
<b>OTHER</b>					
Filed	58	74	64	48	47
Disposed	57	67	68	38	59

<b>Newport County</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
<b>TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS</b>					
Filed	21	23	20	19	16
Disposed	13	16	17	19	12
% Adjudicated Within 180 Days of Filing	50%	56%	57%	46%	36%
<b>DEPENDENCY/NEGLECT/ ABUSE</b>					
Filed	132	137	130	67	103
Disposed	96	108	115	96	102
% Adjudicated Within 180 Days of Filing	66%	54%	40%	21%	29%
<b>OTHER</b>					
Filed	30	44	42	26	19
Disposed	34	32	46	22	22

<b>Statewide</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
<b>TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS</b>					
Filed	393	424	348	371	369
Disposed	374	346	378	398	393
% Adjudicated Within 180 Days of Filing	72%	60%	58%	52%	71%
<b>DEPENDENCY/NEGLECT/ ABUSE</b>					
Filed	1,720	2,162	2,590	1,692	1,705
Disposed	1,757	1,785	2,320	2,232	2,117
% Adjudicated Within 180 Days of Filing	63%	58%	52%	41%	45%
<b>OTHER</b>					
Filed	690	667	615	544	554
Disposed	600	588	642	516	572

## DISTRICT COURT SMALL CLAIMS

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
<b>Second Division Newport County</b>					
Cases Filed	833	895	808	831	957
Cases Disposed	851	1,933	1,420	1,115	797
<b>Third Division Kent County</b>					
Cases Filed	2,107	2,459	3,133	6,335	6,564
Cases Disposed	3,154	2,532	4,686	5,675	6,343
<b>Fourth Division Washington County</b>					
Cases Filed	1,103	1,094	1,152	1,335	1,500
Cases Disposed	1,719	1,787	1,563	1,815	1,388
<b>Sixth Division Providence/ Bristol County</b>					
Cases Filed	11,689	12,133	13,417	10,929	12,295
Cases Disposed	13,724	15,250	12,706	10,907	10,312
<b>Statewide</b>					
Cases Filed	15,732	16,581	18,510	19,430	21,316
Cases Disposed	19,448	21,502	20,375	19,512	18,840

### MANNER OF DISPOSITION

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Defaults	10,306	11,008	10,275	10,802	13,678
Settlements	6,901	7,448	6,535	5,462	3,509
Judgments	2,241	3,046	3,565	3,248	1,653
Total	19,448	21,502	20,375	19,512	18,840

### CASES FILED-OTHER CATEGORIES

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Domestic Abuse	765	734	741	746	952
Administrative Appeals	141	130	132	182	186
Mental Health Hearings	601	555	586	566	664

## DISTRICT COURT CIVIL CASELOAD

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
<b>Second Division Newport County</b>					
Cases Filed	1,193	1,367	1,150	1,316	1,413
Cases Disposed	1,516	1,632	1,427	1,299	1,032
<b>Third Division Kent County</b>					
Cases Filed	2,454	2,343	3,018	4,917	6,519
Cases Disposed	4,287	4,226	4,539	5,385	4,677
<b>Fourth Division Washington County</b>					
Cases Filed	1,204	1,116	1,258	1,631	1,692
Cases Disposed	1,624	1,355	1,382	1,391	1,315
<b>Sixth Division Providence/ Bristol County</b>					
Cases Filed	13,510	13,604	13,674	14,414	15,577
Cases Disposed	12,728	14,010	15,945	11,126	12,034
<b>Statewide</b>					
Cases Filed	18,361	18,430	19,100	22,278	25,201
Cases Disposed	20,155	21,223	23,293	19,201	19,058

### MANNER OF DISPOSITION

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Defaults	9,640	8,375	9,045	9,812	8,609
Settlements	5,394	7,076	8,454	3,226	3,929
Judgments	5,120	5,762	5,790	6,160	6,520
Other	1	10	4	3	0
Total	20,155	21,223	23,293	19,201	19,058

## DISTRICT COURT CRIMINAL CASELOAD

<b>MISDEMEANORS</b>					
<b>Second Division Newport County</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Cases Filed	2,518	2,515	2,470	2,542	2,542
Cases Disposed	2,359	2,311	2,401	2,376	2,222
Total Pending	339	510	216	312	535
% Over 60 Days Old	57%	69%	41%	54%	74%
<b>Third Division Kent County</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Cases Filed	4,911	5,369	5,600	7,468	7,221
Cases Disposed	4,633	4,986	4,970	7,019	6,858
Total Pending	513	725	1,188	1,329	1,473
% Over 60 Days Old	47%	53%	56%	59%	69%
<b>Fourth Division Washington County</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Cases Filed	4,296	4,327	4,131	3,923	3,921
Cases Disposed	4,127	4,150	3,971	3,790	3,779
Total Pending	334	339	310	397	334
% Over 60 Days Old	19%	41%	21%	32%	37%
<b>Sixth Division Providence/ Bristol County</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Cases Filed	18,277	18,357	17,747	15,674	14,474
Cases Disposed	17,618	17,029	16,332	14,968	13,650
Total Pending	1,043	1,462	1,641	1,498	1,428
% Over 60 Days Old	25%	39%	54%	48%	53%
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Cases Filed	30,002	30,568	29,948	29,607	28,158
Cases Disposed	28,737	28,476	27,674	28,153	26,509
Total Pending	2,229	3,036	3,355	3,536	3,770
% Over 60 Days Old	34%	48%	51%	51%	61%

### MANNER OF DISPOSITION

	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Pled	21,911	21,040	20,492	19,704	18,102
Filed	80	59	57	56	80
Dismissed	6,289	6,624	6,675	6,400	5,541
Trials	239	557	243	206	273
Other	218	196	207	1,787	2,513
Total	28,737	28,476	27,674	28,153	26,509
% Disposed within 60 Days	88%	88%	86%	82%	82%

### STATEWIDE FELONIES

	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Filed	7,170	7,413	8,037	7,616	7,434

## WORKERS' COMPENSATION COURT MANNER/STAGE OF DISPOSITION

<b>PRETRIAL</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Pretrial Order	3,214	3,147	3,264	3,016	2,892
Order	10	6	7	9	10
Decree	60	103	95	120	99
Consent Decree	69	69	132	227	149
Major Surgery	0	0	0	0	0
Withdrawn	2,720	2,644	2,555	2,646	2,898
Discontinued	7	18	3	8	21
Dismissed	18	74	68	67	67
Other	84	0	0	0	0
Total	6,182	6,061	6,124	6,093	6,136
<b>TRIAL</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Decision	540	1,302	1,259	1,220	1,267
Consent Decree	203	173	199	141	145
Trial Claim Withdrawn	589	694	688	615	621
Petition Withdrawn	91	128	104	119	100
Order	18	30	13	15	18
Dismissed	18	25	17	12	14
Discontinued	4	2	2	0	0
Other	690	21	22	30	35
Total	2,153	2,375	2,304	2,152	2,200
	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Appeals	94	56	51	31	53
Total Dispositions	8,429	8,492	8,479	8,276	8,389



## WORKERS' COMPENSATION COURT CASELOAD SUMMARY

<b>EMPLOYEE PETITIONS</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Original	2,899	2,783	2,654	2,586	2,589
To Review	2,165	1,951	1,857	1,763	2,071
Second Injury	0	1	1	0	0
To Enforce	983	799	976	838	949
Total	6,047	5,534	5,488	5,187	5,609
<b>EMPLOYER PETITIONS</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
To Review	1,646	1,629	1,608	1,543	1,373
<b>OTHER</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Lump Sum Settlement	669	763	827	842	864
Hospital/Physician Fees	66	131	164	172	175
Miscellaneous	136	177	287	306	275
Total	871	1,071	1,278	1,320	1,314
	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Total Petitions	8,564	8,234	8,374	8,050	8,296
Total Dispositions	8,429	8,492	8,479	8,276	8,389
Total Pending Caseload	2,374	2,141	2,027	1,797	1,700
Total Cases Pending Trial	995	1030	926	785	687
% Pending Trial More Than 270 Days	32%	37%	36%	34%	29%

## RHODE ISLAND TRAFFIC TRIBUNAL (RITT) CASELOAD

	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Total Summonses Issued*	203,207	220,338	232,176	224,569	211,153
RITT Summonses Issued	104,667	117,046	115,848	104,288	98,407
Total Violations	130,093	142,365	140,107	126,828	118,387
RITT Summonses Disposed	109,808	118,876	117,319	108,216	101,044

### BREAKDOWN OF DISPOSED SUMMONSES

	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Court Hearings	69,293	72,111	72,019	68,092	63,406
Pay by Mail	40,515	46,765	45,300	40,124	37,638
Total	109,808	118,876	117,319	108,216	101,044
% Disposed of Within 60 Days	98%	98%	97%	97%	97%

### BREATHALYZER REFUSALS

	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Filed	1,870	1,844	1,670	1,838	1,751
Disposed	1,924	1,847	1,737	1,848	1,884
% Disposed of Within 60 Days	91%	89%	88%	84%	79%

### INSURANCE

	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Filed	11,516	11,026	9,871	8,462	8,408
Disposed	12,384	11,446	10,294	8,925	8,699
% Disposed of Within 60 Days	93%	95%	94%	93%	94%

### APPEALS

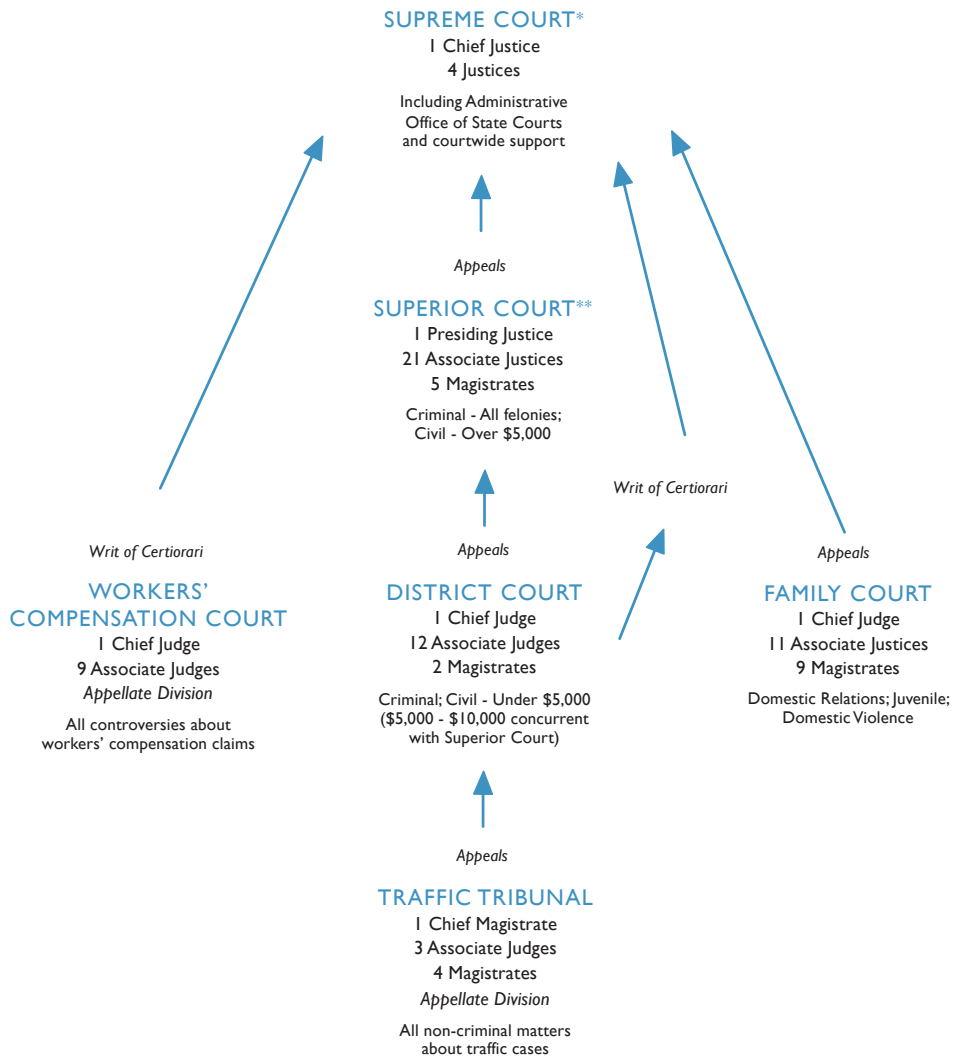
	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Filed	626	673	559	692	497
Disposed	433	458	385	330	245
Pending	67	50	54	162	18

\* includes summonses for both RITT and municipal courts.

# Rhode Island Court Structure

## ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF STATE COURTS

State Court Administrator • Finance and Budget • Employee Relations  
 State Law Library • Judicial Technology Center • Facilities and Operations/Security  
 Judicial Records Center • Domestic Violence Training and Monitoring Unit  
 Mandatory Continuing Legal Education • Community Outreach and Public Relations  
 Law Clerk Department • Judicial Planning • General Counsel and Alternative Dispute Resolution  
 Disciplinary Counsel • Supreme Court Clerk's Office • Appellate Screening  
 Administrative Assistant to Chief Justice • Interpreters' Office



\* Court of last resort  
 \*\* Court of general jurisdiction  
 All other courts have limited jurisdiction



Justice Independence Honor

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[www.courts.ri.gov](http://www.courts.ri.gov)