

Court Statistics



THE RHODE ISLAND JUDICIARY'S QUARTERLY CASEFLOW REPORT

Volume 34, Number 4, December 2013

HIGHLIGHTS

IN 2013, THE STATEWIDE DISPOSITION RATE IN THE RHODE ISLAND JUDICIARY WAS 95 PERCENT.

THE SUPREME COURT PENDING CASELOAD DECREASED BY 6% COMPARED TO LAST YEAR.

IN SUPERIOR COURT, STATEWIDE FELONY FILINGS INCREASED BY 13%.

FAMILY COURT DIVORCE DISPOSITIONS EXCEEDED PETITIONS FILED STATEWIDE.

IN DISTRICT COURT SMALL CLAIMS FILINGS WERE UP 18% COMPARED TO LAST YEAR.

PETITIONS FILED IN **WORKERS' COMPENSATION COURT** INCREASED BY 3%.

TRAFFIC TRIBUNAL DISPOSITIONS EXCEEDED FILINGS FOR THE YEAR.

Supreme Court

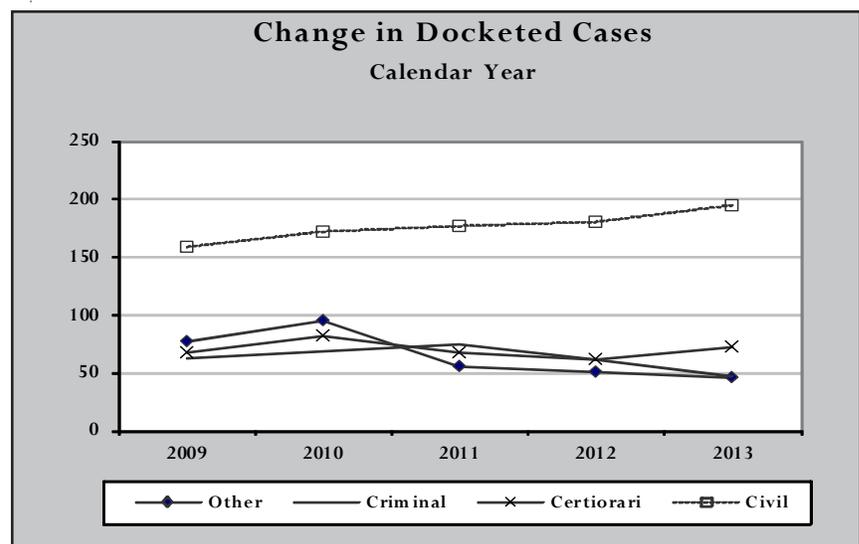
FILINGS

This report covers calendar year 2013. There were 359 Supreme Court cases docketed during the year, which is 4 (1 percent) more than those docketed last year. Compared to last year, appeals increased in the civil and certiorari categories, and decreased in the criminal and miscellaneous categories. Civil appeals rose by 14 (8 percent),

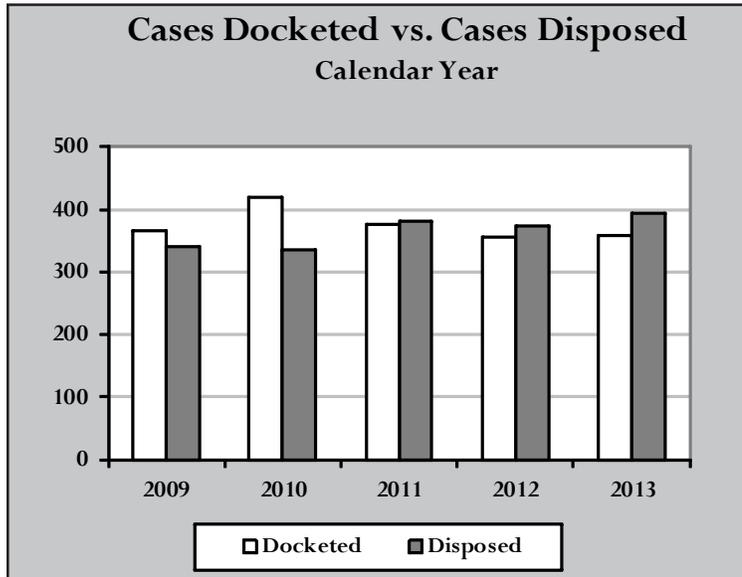
while certiorari appeals increased by 10 (16 percent). On the contrary, criminal appeals decreased by 15 (24 percent) and miscellaneous appeals dropped by 5 (10 percent).

DISPOSITIONS

Like last year, dispositions exceeded new appeals in 2013. The number of appeals disposed was 393, which was 34 more than were docketed, resulting in a disposition



rate exceeding 100 percent. As explained in more detail below, 33 (8 percent) of the 393 dispositions occurred



during some stage of the Appellate Mediation Program (AMP).

A breakdown of dispositions by stage showed that 226 (57 percent) were disposed before argument. There were 93 appeals disposed as a result of the motion calendar, accounting for another 24 percent; and there were 74 appeals disposed after full oral argument on the merits, representing the remaining 19 percent. During calendar year 2013, the Supreme Court published 167 written decisions, including 12 orders and 155 opinions.

PENDING CASELOAD

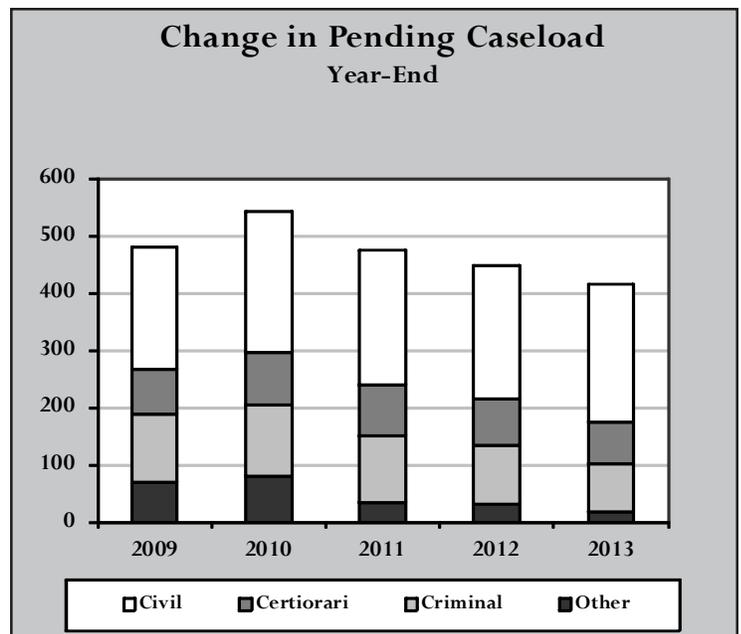
At year-end, the pending caseload was 416, which is 31 (7 percent) fewer than last year, due to a decrease in all categories of pending cases, with the

exception of civil appeals, which rose by 10 (4 percent). Pending criminal appeals decreased by 17 percent (17), writs of certiorari by 11 percent (9), and pending miscellaneous appeals decreased by 47 percent (15) compared to last year.

APPELLATE MEDIATION

During calendar year 2013, there were 188 new cases screened through the AMP. Of the 188 new cases screened, 109 were deemed either ineligible or inappropriate for mediation. During this time period, 33 cases were disposed at some stage in the mediation process, representing a 42 percent disposition rate.

Twenty-seven of the 33 dispositions were settled at or after mediation, while the remaining 6 were dismissed or withdrawn at an earlier stage in the mediation process. As of December 31, 2013, there were 34 cases active in the program.



Superior Court

FELONY FILINGS

Superior Court filings (for all case types, statewide) decreased slightly by 1 percent from 14,302 in 2012 to 14,175 in 2013. Statewide felony filings increased by 629 (13 percent) from 4,788 last year to 5,417. Felony filings increased in all counties, with the exception of Newport County, where they dropped by 2 percent (7). In Providence/Bristol County felony filings rose by 533 (16 percent); in Kent County by 91 (13 percent); and in Washington County by 12 (3 percent), compared to last year.

FELONY DISPOSITIONS

Overall, the statewide disposition rate for felonies was 96 percent. Providence/Bristol County had a disposition rate of 95 percent, in Kent County the rate was 97 percent, and in Washington County it was 92 percent. In Newport County dispositions exceeded felony filings, resulting in a disposition rate over 100 percent.

TIME TO DISPOSITION: FELONIES

The Superior Court established a goal of 180 days for the disposition of felony cases and achieved this in roughly 62 percent of the cases

<i>Felony Filings</i>	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Providence/Bristol	3,716	3,915	3,766	3,343	3,876
Kent	776	775	901	695	786
Washington	389	499	390	411	423
Newport	275	354	336	339	332
Total	5,156	5,543	5,393	4,788	5,417
<i>Misdemeanor Filings</i>					
Providence/Bristol	87	122	118	111	142
Kent	25	49	30	43	23
Washington	30	26	36	45	53
Newport	75	54	19	25	31
Total	217	251	203	224	249
<i>Civil Filings</i>					
Total	10,778	11,286	10,351	9,290	8,509
<i>Civil Cases Added to the Trial Calendar</i>					
Providence/Bristol	1,216	1,160	810	599	520
Kent	289	269	227	193	163
Washington	169	159	122	105	72
Newport	107	95	87	61	55
Total	1,781	1,683	1,246	958	810

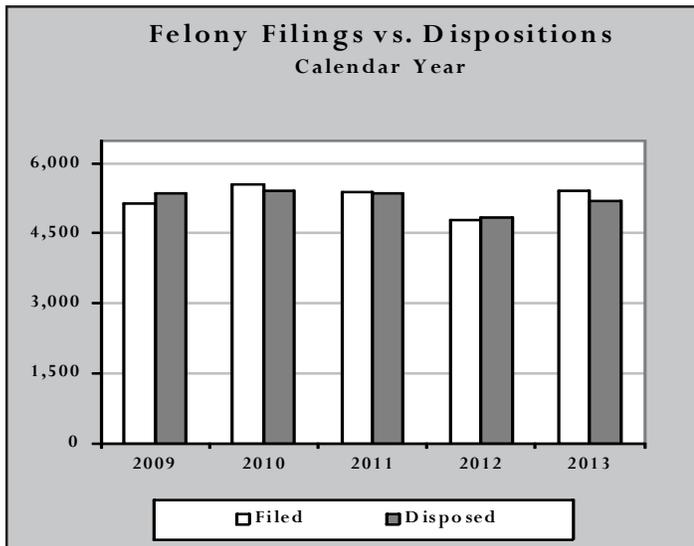
during 2013. This goal measures the time from when a felony is filed to the case disposition. Kent County handled 73 percent of its felony caseload within 180 days, while Washington County met the 180 day guideline in 65 percent of the cases. Newport County met the guideline in 62 percent of the cases, and in Providence/Bristol County, the figure was 60 percent.

PENDING FELONY CASELOAD

The number of felonies pending statewide totaled 2,976 at year-end, and 48 percent had been pending over 180 days from filing. Providence/Bristol County had 1,290 cases over 180 days old. Kent County had 63; Washington County, 54; and Newport County, 36.

MISDEMEANOR FILINGS

Statewide, the total number of misdemeanor filings in 2013 was 249, increasing by 25 (11 percent) compared to last year. This increase occurred in all counties except Kent, which had a 47 percent decline in



misdeemeanor filings. There was an 18 percent increase in misdemeanor cases filed in Washington County, and in Providence/Bristol and Newport Counties, misdemeanor filings rose by 28 and 24 percent, respectively.

MISDEMEANOR DISPOSITIONS

Collectively, the statewide disposition rate for misdemeanors was 92 percent. Additionally, the disposition rate in Providence/Bristol County was 85 percent, in Washington County it was 89 percent, and in Newport County it was 94 percent. Misdemeanor dispositions exceeded filings in Kent County in 2013.

TIME TO DISPOSITION: MISDEMEANORS

Statewide, the Superior Court disposed 30 percent of its misdemeanors within 90 days, which is Superior Court’s goal for handling misdemeanor filings from filing to disposition. Washington County had the largest percentage (68 percent), while Newport County handled 50 percent of its misdemeanors within 90 days. In Providence/Bristol County, 10 percent of misdemeanors were disposed within 90 days, and in Kent County it was 39 percent.

PENDING MISDEMEANOR CASELOAD

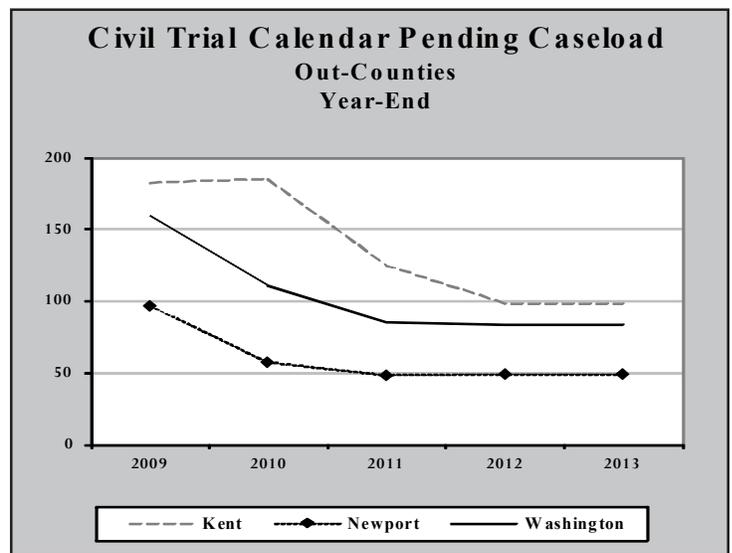
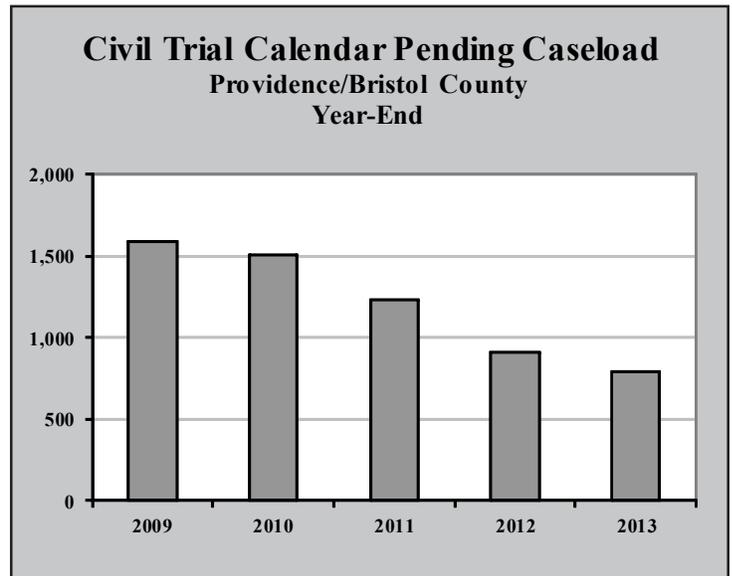
At the end of 2013, there were 149 misdemeanors pending statewide, and 69 percent (103) were over 90 days old.

CIVIL FILINGS AND DISPOSITIONS

Civil filings decreased by 8 percent from 9,290 in 2012 to 8,509 in 2013. In addition, civil dispositions in 2013 totaled 6,703, resulting in a 79 percent disposition rate.

CIVIL CASES ADDED AND DISPOSED: TRIAL CALENDAR

Statewide, the number of cases added to the civil trial calendar in 2013 decreased by 148 (15 percent) with a decline in all four counties. The number of cases added in Providence/Bristol County dropped by 13 percent; Kent by 16 percent; Washington by 31 percent; and Newport by 10 percent. All counties disposed more



civil cases than were added to the calendar in 2013, resulting in disposition rates exceeding 100 percent.

PENDING CIVIL CASELOAD: TRIAL CALENDAR

Statewide, assigned civil cases pending at year end decreased by 16 percent to 961 compared to last year (1,145). At the end of the calendar year, there were 32 cases pending trial in Newport County, 17 fewer (35 percent) than last year. The number of assigned cases pending trial dropped by 26 (31 percent) in Washington County, by 124 (14 percent) in Providence/Bristol County, and by 17 (17 percent) in Kent County.

Family Court

JUVENILE FILINGS

Total Family Court filings decreased by 631 (3 percent) from 19,222 in 2012 to 18,591 in 2013. Despite the decline in filings, the Family Court conducted 82,136 hearings during this time period. There was an overall decline in juvenile filings, dropping by 508 (7 percent) compared to last year. Filings decreased in all case categories, with the exception of termination of parental rights (TPR), where they increased by 14 (7 percent). Wayward/delinquent filings dropped by 10 percent (410); dependency/neglect/abuse (DNA) petitions by 1 percent (9); adoption/guardianship by 9 percent (41); violations by 5 percent (36); and the general category of other by 39 percent (26) in 2013.

In terms of juvenile filings by location, all counties experienced a decrease compared to last year, except Newport County, where filings increased by 24 percent (109). Juvenile filings declined by 256 (5 percent) in Providence/Bristol County, by 269 (40 percent) in Washington County, and by 92 (10 percent) in Kent County.

JUVENILE DISPOSITIONS

In the wayward/delinquent category, which includes violations of probation and court orders, juvenile dispositions exceeded filings, statewide. Disposi-

<i>Juvenile Filings by Case Type</i>	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Wayward/Delinquent	6,065	5,618	5,138	4,306	3,896
Violations	874	926	767	682	646
Dependency/Neglect/Abuse	1,591	1,563	1,205	1,411	1,402
Termination of Parental Rights	301	290	202	199	213
Adoption/Guardianship	467	482	486	442	401
Other	52	80	57	66	40
Total	9,350	8,959	7,855	7,106	6,598
<i>Juvenile Filings by County</i>					
Providence/Bristol	6,577	6,429	5,643	5,027	4,771
Kent	1,353	1,155	1,068	961	869
Washington	817	806	659	665	396
Newport	603	569	485	453	562
Total	9,350	8,959	7,855	7,106	6,598
<i>Divorce Filings by County</i>					
Providence/Bristol	2,875	3,025	2,990	2,977	3,064
Kent	758	791	773	731	714
Washington	520	570	493	460	469
Newport	317	337	356	318	332
Total	4,470	4,723	4,612	4,486	4,579
<i>Abuse Filings</i>					
Courtwide	2,292	2,399	2,492	2,210	2,106

tions also exceeded filings in all counties, except Newport County where the disposition rate was 77 percent. In the child protection category, the statewide disposition rate was 90 percent. In Providence/Bristol and Newport Counties, the disposition rates were 89 percent and 61 percent, respectively. In both Kent and Washington Counties, dispositions exceeded filings, resulting in disposition rates over 100 percent.

TIME TO DISPOSITION: JUVENILE CASES

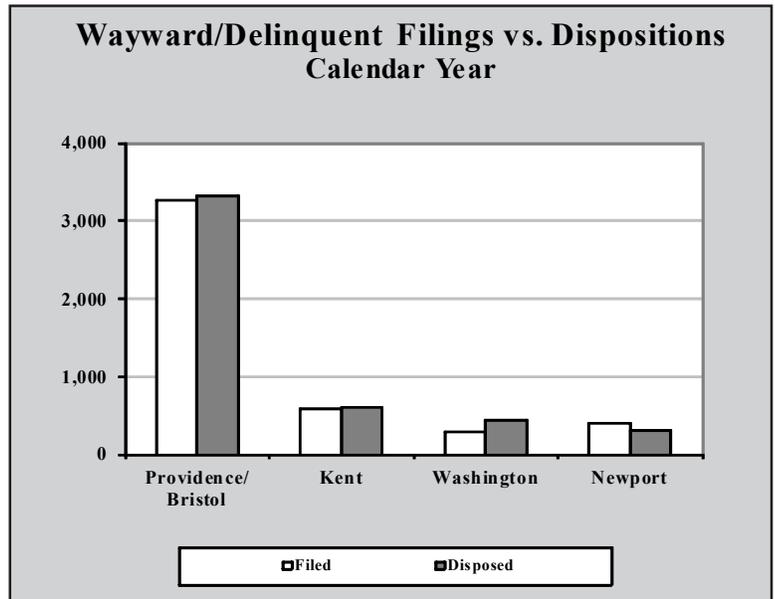
The Family Court has established a timeframe of 180 days as the goal for adjudicating juvenile cases. This goal measures the time from filing until a finding is entered, not the time to final disposition of a case. In 2013, Providence/Bristol County adjudicated 56 percent of its wayward/delinquent cases within 180 days

(again with violations included). Kent County adjudicated 49 percent of this caseload within 180 days. In Washington County, 51 percent of the cases were handled within the guideline, and in Newport County, it was 40 percent. For wayward/delinquent cases handled by the Juvenile Services Unit without court intervention, the goal is 45 days. During the calendar year, 73 percent of these cases met this goal; furthermore, 92 percent were handled within 90 days.

In child protection cases statewide, Family Court met the 180 day guideline in 78 percent of the cases for TPR and in 40 percent of the cases for DNA matters. In Providence/Bristol County, 41 percent of the DNA cases and 83 percent of the TPR matters were adjudicated within 180 days.

PENDING TPR CASELOAD

A specific area the court monitors closely is the cases pending on the contested TPR calendar in Providence/Bristol County. At the end of the year, 30 cases, representing 19 families, remained on this calendar. Of those 30 cases, 16 cases (representing 9 families) were over 180 days old.



DOMESTIC FILINGS AND DISPOSITIONS

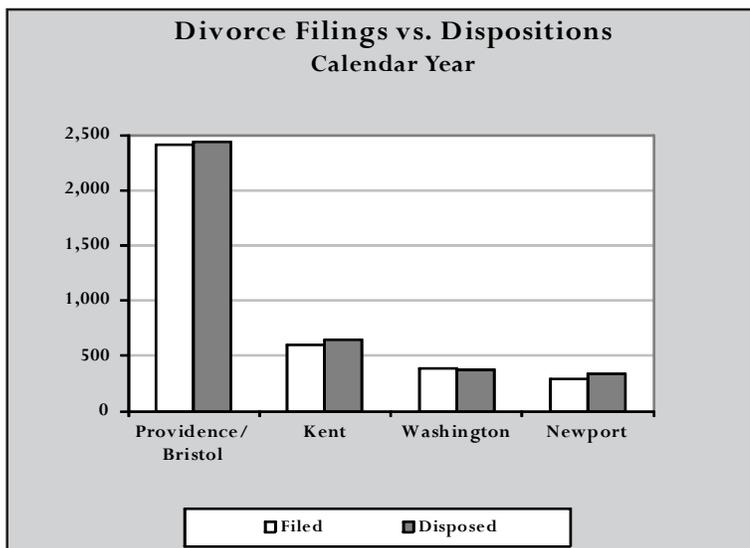
On the domestic side, divorce filings increased compared to last year, rising by 93 (2 percent) statewide. Filings increased in all counties, but Kent, where they dropped by 2 percent (17). In Providence/Bristol County, divorce filings rose by 3 percent (87), in Washington County by 2 percent (9), and in Newport County by 4 percent (14), compared to last year. Divorce dispositions exceeded filings statewide and in each county, with the exception of Washington County, which had a disposition rate of 97 percent.

PENDING DIVORCE CASELOAD

At year-end, the total number of divorce cases pending over a year was 43 statewide. Newport had 10 divorce cases pending over a year, while Providence/Bristol County had 25. Both Kent and Washington Counties had 4 cases pending over one year.

ABUSE AND SUPPORT CASELOAD

Abuse complaints dropped by 5 percent this year, from 2,210 to 2,106. Support petitions decreased in 2013 by 112 (2 percent) from 5,420 to 5,308.



District Court

<i>Misdemeanor Filings</i>	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Second	2,483	2,757	2,605	2,534	2,273
Third	7,270	7,398	8,276	10,649	10,057
Fourth	3,379	3,266	2,889	2,993	2,461
Sixth	13,469	13,390	12,242	11,464	10,340
Total	26,601	26,811	26,012	27,640	25,131
<i>Felony Filings</i>					
Courtwide	7,186	7,415	7,384	7,280	7,078
<i>Civil Filings</i>					
Second	1,304	1,379	1,378	1,261	1,085
Third	6,678	6,696	7,110	8,152	7,450
Fourth	1,707	1,805	1,569	1,156	1,062
Sixth	14,116	14,062	13,510	12,400	11,823
Total	23,805	23,942	23,567	22,969	21,420
<i>Small Claims</i>					
Second	521	730	602	584	677
Third	9,871	4,208	3,791	4,644	5,604
Fourth	1,002	979	872	749	806
Sixth	7,824	8,015	6,279	5,153	5,998
Total	19,218	13,932	11,544	11,130	13,085
<i>Other Categories</i>					
Courtwide	1,919	2,169	1,613	1,452	1,493

2,461 misdemeanor cases filed in the Fourth Division included 3,409 counts, and in the Sixth Division, the 10,340 misdemeanor case filings were comprised of 14,230 counts.

MISDEMEANOR DISPOSITIONS

In 2013, the District Court continued to handle its misdemeanor caseload in a timely and efficient manner. Overall, the statewide disposition rate for misdemeanors was 95 percent. The disposition rate in the Second Division was 98 percent, while the Third Division had a rate of 93 percent. In the Sixth Division, the disposition rate was 95 percent, but in the Fourth Division, dispositions exceeded filings, resulting in a disposition rate over 100 percent.

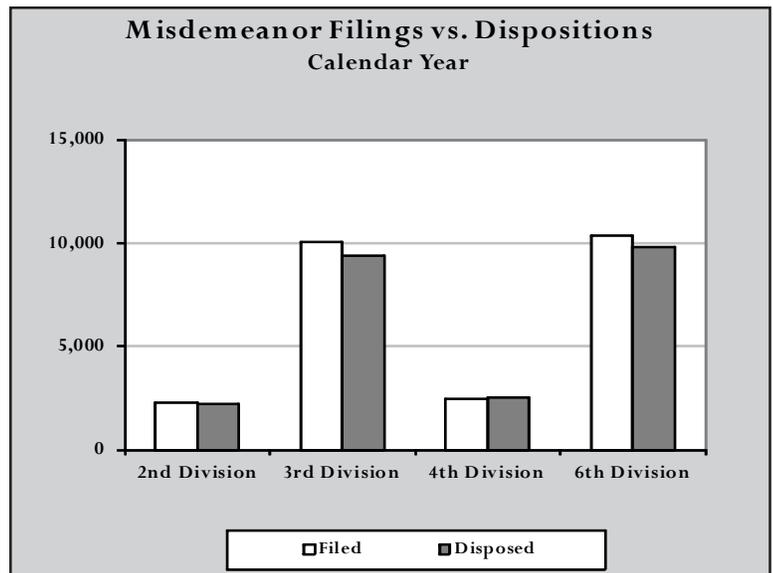
TIME TO DISPOSITION: MISDEMEANORS

The court's goal is to dispose misdemeanors within 60 days of filing. This measures the time between a case's filing and disposition dates. Statewide, this goal was met in 73 percent of the cases. Through year end, the Second Division handled 75 percent of its misdemeanor caseload

MISDEMEANOR FILINGS

In District Court, misdemeanor filings decreased in calendar year 2013 compared to last year. The total number filed dropped from 27,640 last year to 25,131, a decrease of 2,509 (9 percent). Misdemeanor filings declined in all divisions compared to last year. In the Second Division, filings decreased by 10 percent (261); in the Third Division by 6 percent (592); in the Fourth Division by 18 percent (532); and in the Sixth Division by 10 percent (1,124).

The 25,131 statewide misdemeanor case filings in calendar year 2013 were comprised of 33,853 individual counts. In the Second Division, the 2,273 misdemeanor cases filed represented 3,126 counts, while the Third Division misdemeanor case filings (10,057) resulted in 13,088 counts. Furthermore, the



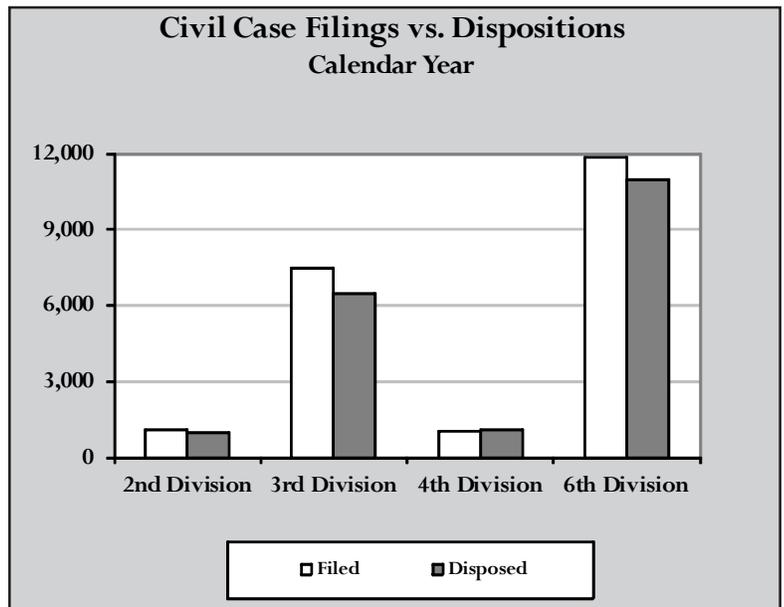
within 60 days. In both the Third and Sixth Divisions, 72 percent of misdemeanor cases were disposed within 60 days, while the Fourth Division disposed 74 percent of its misdemeanors within the 60 day timeframe.

PENDING MISDEMEANOR CASELOAD

At the end of 2013, there were a total of 3,957 misdemeanors pending; 54 percent were less than 60 days old, and another 20 percent were between 60 and 180 days old. In the Second Division, the number of misdemeanors pending more than 60 days was 69, while in the Third Division, it was 640. There were 115 misdemeanors pending more than 60 days in the Fourth Division and 986 in the Sixth Division. The number of misdemeanors over 60 days old has increased by 27 percent from 1,429 a year ago to 1,810.

FELONY FILINGS

Felony filings in 2013 dropped by 3 percent over those filed last year, decreasing from 7,280 to 7,078. Felony filings decreased by 7 percent (170) in the Third Division, by 17 percent (81) in the Fourth Division, and by less than 1 percent (4) in the Sixth Division. In the Second Division, felony filings increased by 53 (12 percent), compared to last year.

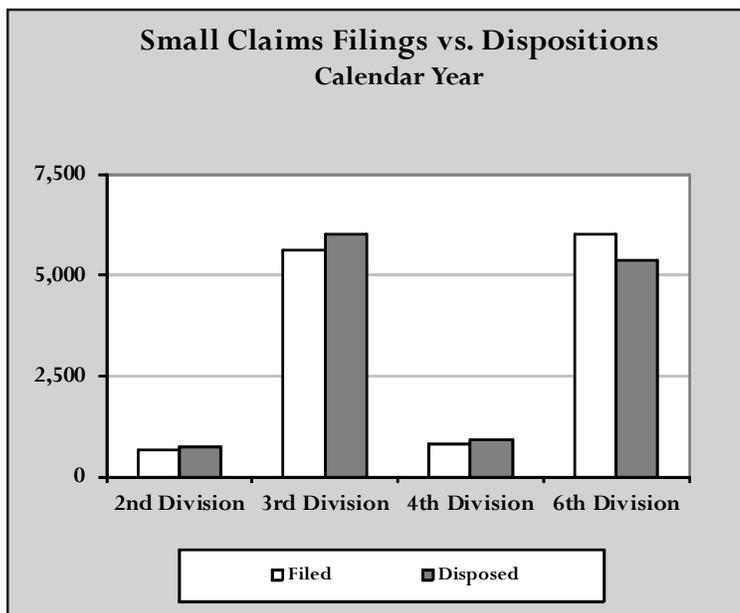


CIVIL FILINGS

On the civil side, filings declined by nearly 7 percent from 22,969 in 2012 to 21,420 in 2013, a difference of 1,549. Civil filings decreased in all divisions. In the Fourth and Sixth Divisions, civil filings dropped by 8 and 5 percent (94 and 577), respectively. Civil filings decreased by 14 percent (176) in the Second Division, and in the Third Division, they dropped by almost 9 percent (702), compared to last year. Statewide, abuse filings increased from 730 in 2012 to 781 in 2013, rising by 7 percent (51). Statewide, small claims increased by 18 percent, from 11,130 in 2012 to 13,085 in 2013, an increase of 1,955. There was an increase in all divisions in small claims filings in 2013. Filings in the Third Division rose by 21 percent (960), whereas the Fourth Division filings rose by 8 percent (57). In both the Second and Sixth Divisions, small claims filings rose by 16 percent (93 and 845, respectively).

CIVIL DISPOSITIONS

The statewide disposition rate for civil cases was 91 percent, an increase compared to last year (85 percent). In addition, the statewide disposition rate for small claims was nearly 100 percent, while the disposition rate for abuse cases was 88 percent.



Workers' Compensation Court

PETITIONS FILED

The number of petitions filed in the Workers' Compensation Court during calendar year 2013 increased by 261 from last year. In calendar year 2012, there were 7,480 petitions filed, and this year there were 7,741, a difference of 3 percent.

Filings declined in 5 case categories and increased in 3. Miscellaneous petitions decreased by 26 percent (47), while petitions for medical and petitions to enforce dropped by 9 and 4 percent (9 and 36), respectively. Also, employer petitions decreased by less than 1 percent (3), while petitions for 2nd injury dropped from 1 to 0. During 2013, employee petitions increased by 8 percent (169), lump sum settlements by 2 percent (16), and original petitions rose by 7 percent (172).

PETITIONS DISPOSED

For calendar year 2013, dispositions (7,836) exceeded filings (7,741), resulting in a disposition rate over 100 percent. Cases disposed during the pretrial

stage accounted for 74 percent of the total, the same as the previous three years.

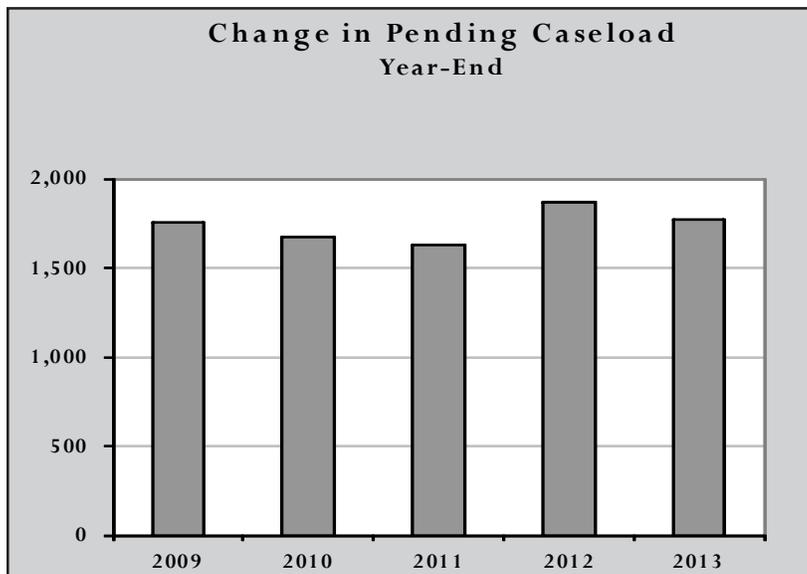
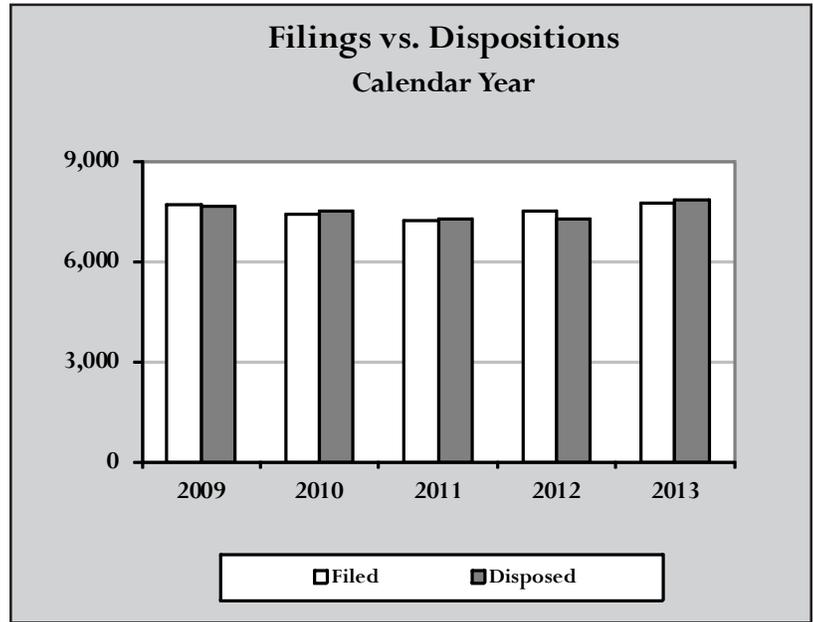
TIME TO DISPOSITION

The Workers' Compensation Court has established a goal of 90 days for cases to be disposed at pretrial and 360 days for those cases that go to trial. This measures the time from filing to disposition of a petition. The percentage of cases disposed at pretrial within 90 days was 87 percent, down slightly from last year (88 percent). Also, 86 percent of the cases disposed at trial were handled within 360 days, which is also less than last year (89 percent).

PENDING CASELOAD

Compared to last year, the total number of petitions pending decreased by 5 percent (99) from 1,871 to 1,772. The number pending trial declined by 3 (less than 1 percent) from 832 to 829. Furthermore, the petitions pending trial over 270 days decreased by 2 percent from 296 to 289, representing 35 percent of the total number

pending trial.



Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal

<i>Filings</i>	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Total Summonses Issued *	150,533	143,982	149,284	161,001	143,792
RITT Summonses Issued	85,790	83,419	82,960	94,721	80,401
RITT Violations	104,395	102,115	102,046	115,127	100,910
RITT Dispositions					
Court Hearings	59,491	57,286	56,764	70,622	63,208
Payments by Mail	30,350	27,641	25,965	27,079	19,764
Total Disposed	89,841	84,927	82,729	97,701	82,972
* Includes summonses issued to both the RITT and municipal courts.					

summonses, which measures the time from the initial appearance to disposition. During 2013, 96 percent of all dispositions met this guideline. Furthermore, 77 percent of breathalyzer refusals and 94 percent of insurance violations were disposed within the 60 day timeframe.

SUMMONSES ISSUED

The number of summonses issued to the Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal (RITT) decreased in calendar year 2013, declining by 15 percent from 94,721 last year to 80,401. However, 80,401 summonses issued during this time period included a total of 100,910 violations. In terms of summonses by category, those issued in the category of insurance violations increased by 9 percent (857) in 2013, while breathalyzer refusals decreased compared to last year, dropping by 4 percent (66). The RITT summonses accounted for roughly 56 percent of the total summonses issued during the year.

SUMMONSES DISPOSED

For 2013, RITT dispositions (82,972) exceeded the number of summonses filed, resulting in a disposition rate over 100 percent. Payments by mail represented 24 percent of the dispositions in 2013, while the remaining 76 percent were disposed by court hearings.

TIME TO DISPOSITION

The RITT has adopted 60 days from initial appearance as a guideline for disposing

As in the past, the majority of dispositions took place before or at the arraignment stage, although the results were different for certain categories. Based on statistics relating to the number of violations (separate offenses) 19 percent of all violations disposed occurred prior to arraignment, while another 61 percent occurred at arraignment. Also, 80 percent of insurance violations and 25 percent of breathalyzer refusal matters were disposed at or before arraignment.

PENDING CASELOAD

The total number of summonses pending at year end was 2,681, with 1,813 (67 percent) pending over 60 days.

