

Court Statistics



Justice Independence Honor

THE RHODE ISLAND JUDICIARY'S QUARTERLY CASEFLOW REPORT

Volume 34, Number 2, June 2013

HIGHLIGHTS

FOR THE FIRST HALF OF 2013

SUPREME COURT'S DISPOSITION RATE EXCEEDED 100% FOR THE THIRD CONSECUTIVE YEAR.

IN **SUPERIOR COURT**, FELONY DISPOSITIONS EXCEEDED FILINGS STATEWIDE.

FAMILY COURT'S DISPOSITION RATE FOR DIVORCE CASES WAS 99%.

DISTRICT COURT SMALL CLAIMS FILINGS ROSE BY 27%.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION COURT DISPOSITIONS EXCEEDED PETITIONS FILED STATEWIDE.

TRAFFIC TRIBUNAL SUMMONSES PENDING DROPPED BY 19 %.

Supreme Court

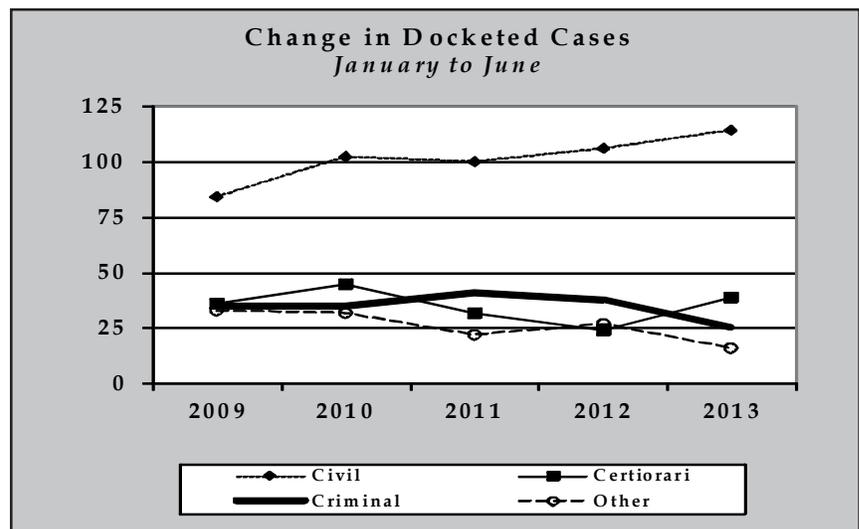
FILINGS

This report covers the first half of calendar year 2013. There were 194 Supreme Court cases docketed through the second quarter, down just 1 from last year. Compared to last year, appeals decreased in both the criminal category and miscellaneous appeals. Criminal appeals dropped by 13 (34 percent) and miscellaneous appeals by 11 (41 percent). For the first half

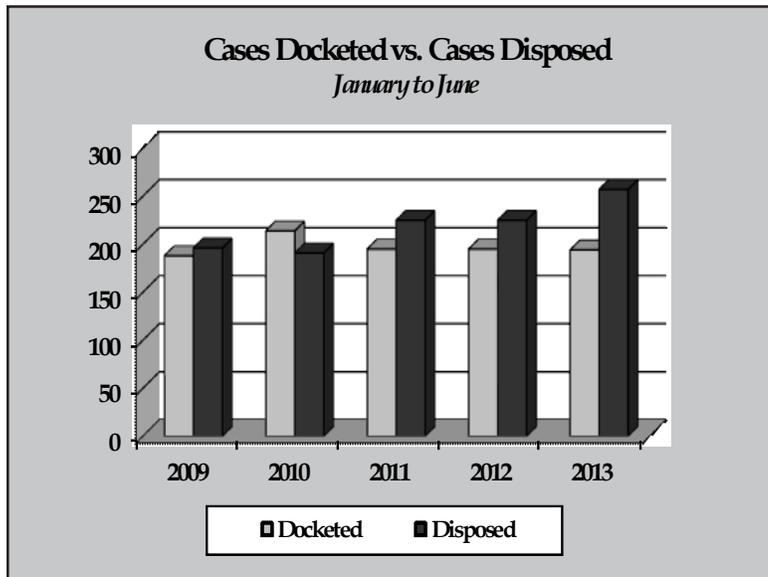
of 2013, both civil and certiorari appeals increased, rising by 8 and 15 (8 and 63 percent), respectively.

DISPOSITIONS

Like the past two years, dispositions exceeded new appeals filed for the first half of the year. The total number of appeals disposed through June was 257 (63 more than docketed). As explained in more detail below, 14 (less than 1 percent) of the 257 dispositions



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



Of the 257 dispositions during the first half of the year, 127 (49 percent) of the appeals were disposed before oral argument, 67 (26 percent) were disposed after show cause, and the remaining 63 (24 percent) were disposed after full oral argument. During the first half of 2013, the Supreme Court published 130 written decisions, including 9 orders and 121 opinions, compared to the 18 orders and 90 opinions that were written last year. Of the 257 dispositions through June, 29 percent were disposed within 180 days, and a total of 36 percent were disposed within 300 days.

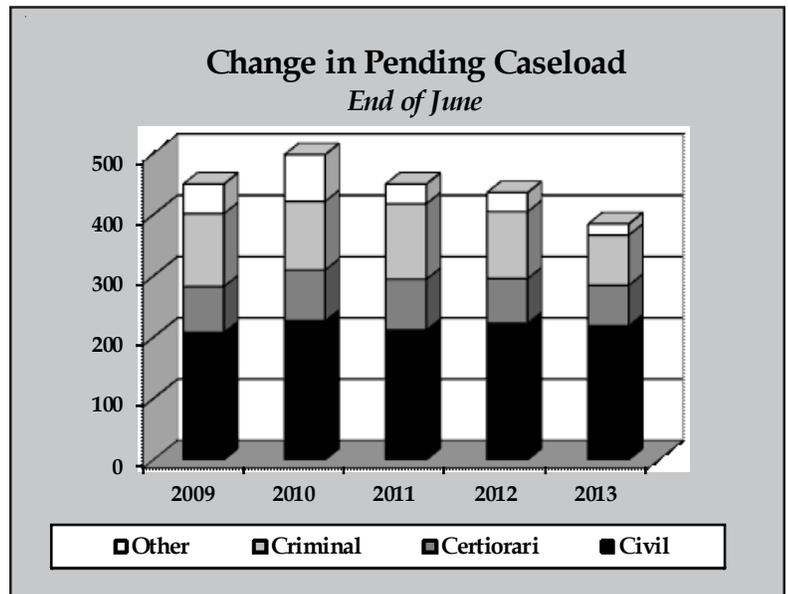
PENDING CASELOAD

As of June 30, 2013, the pending caseload was 385, a decline of 51 (12 percent) compared to

last year (436) at the end of the period. This was the result of a decrease in pending appeals in all categories since last year. Compared to last year, pending criminal appeals dropped by 27 (25 percent), civil appeals by 4 (2 percent), miscellaneous appeals by 13 (42 percent), and certiorari appeals by 7 (10 percent).

APPELLATE MEDIATION

Through the second quarter, there were 99 new cases screened through the AMP. Of the 99 cases screened, 60 were deemed either ineligible or inappropriate. During this time period, 14 cases were disposed at some stage in the mediation process, representing a 36 percent disposition rate. Of the 14 dispositions, 12 were settled at or after mediation, while the remaining 2 were dismissed or withdrawn at an earlier stage in the mediation process. As of June 30, 2013, there were 53 cases active in the program.



Superior Court

FELONY FILINGS

Statewide felony filings in Superior Court decreased through the second quarter of 2013 compared to last year. The number filed dropped by 106 (4 percent) from 2,795 to 2,689. Felony filings also decreased in both Kent and Providence/Bristol Counties. Filings dropped by 2 (less than 1 percent) in Kent County and by 156 (8 percent) in Providence/Bristol County. For the first half of 2013, felony filings increased in Washington and Newport Counties, rising by 11 and 41 (5 and 25 percent), respectively.

FELONY DISPOSITIONS

For the first half of the year, statewide felony dispositions exceeded filings. Similarly, disposition exceeded filings in all counties, with the exception of Washington County, which had a disposition rate of 84 percent.

TIME TO DISPOSITION - FELONIES

The Superior Court established a goal of 180 days for the disposition of felonies and achieved this in 61 percent of the cases during the first half of 2013. This goal measures the time from a felony is filed to the case disposition. Newport County disposed 56 percent of its felony caseload within 180 days, and in Providence/Bristol County, it was 58 percent. Kent

County met the 180 day guideline in 70 percent of the felonies disposed through June, and Washington County achieved it in 72 percent of the cases.

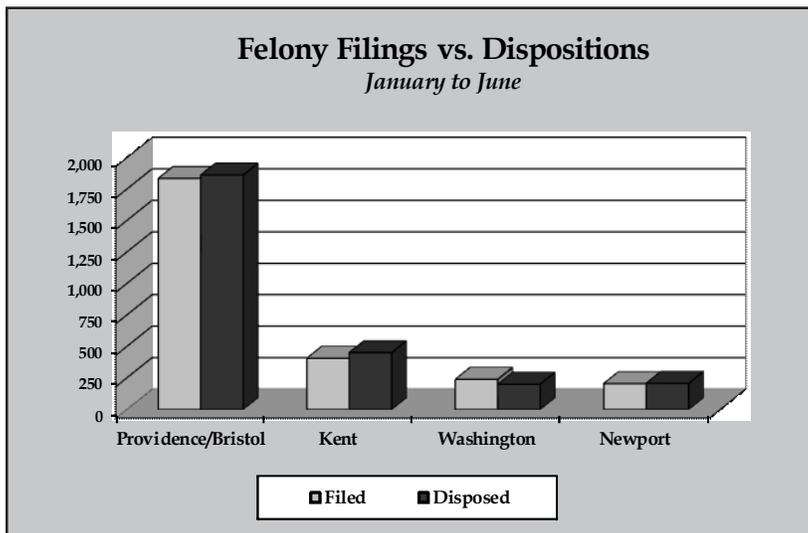
PENDING FELONY CASELOAD

The number of felonies pending statewide totaled 2,739 at the end of June, increasing by 1 percent (33) from last year. Of the 2,739 felonies pending, 50 percent (1,361) were pending over 180 days from filing. Providence/Bristol County had 1,208 cases over 180 days old; Kent County had 53; Washington County had 54; and Newport County had 46.

MISDEMEANOR FILINGS

Misdemeanor filings through the second quarter decreased by just 1 (less than 1 percent), declining from 116 last year to 115 in 2013. The decrease in misdemeanors occurred in both Kent and Newport Counties, dropping by 10 and 5 (42 and 33 percent), respectively. In Providence/Bristol County, misdemeanor filings rose by 6

<i>Felony Filings</i>	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Providence/Bristol	2,038	2,153	2,029	1,992	1,836
Kent	376	319	500	409	407
Washington	215	315	190	229	240
Newport	150	221	162	165	206
Total	2,779	3,008	2,881	2,795	2,689
<i>Misdemeanor Filings</i>					
Providence/Bristol	25	61	54	57	63
Kent	10	26	22	24	14
Washington	11	14	12	20	29
Newport	28	36	10	15	10
Total	74	137	98	116	116
<i>Civil Filings</i>					
Statewide	5,472	5,715	5,425	4,553	4,297
<i>Civil Cases Added to the Trial Calendar</i>					
Providence/Bristol	614	533	432	320	247
Kent	154	134	111	95	81
Washington	79	90	70	57	36
Newport	56	43	47	31	21
Total	903	800	660	503	385



(11 percent) and, in Washington County, they increased by 8 (40 percent).

MISDEMEANOR DISPOSITIONS

For the first half of the year, misdemeanor dispositions exceeded filings statewide, as well as in Kent and Newport Counties. In Providence/Bristol County, the disposition rate for misdemeanors was 95 percent, while in Washington County it was 93 percent.

TIME TO DISPOSITION - MISDEMEANORS

The goal for disposing misdemeanor cases in Superior Court is 90 days, which is measured from filing to disposition. Statewide, Superior Court met this goal in 33 percent of cases. Washington County disposed 81 percent of its misdemeanors within 90 days. In Providence/Bristol County, 10 percent of the misdemeanors were disposed within 90 days, while in both Newport and Kent Counties, it was 29 and 33 percent, respectively.

PENDING MISDEMEANOR CASELOAD

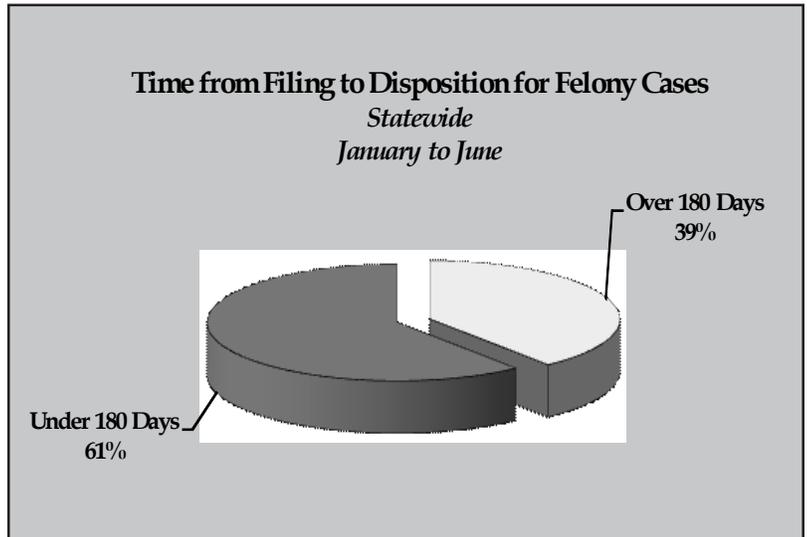
At the end of June, there were 147 misdemeanor cases pending statewide, and 80 percent (118) were over 90 days old.

CIVIL FILINGS AND DISPOSITIONS

Civil filings totaled 4,297 for the first half of 2013, declining by 256 (6 percent) compared to last year. Through the second quarter, there was a total of 3,188 civil cases disposed, resulting in a 74 percent disposition rate.

CIVIL CASES ADDED AND DISPOSED - TRIAL CALENDAR

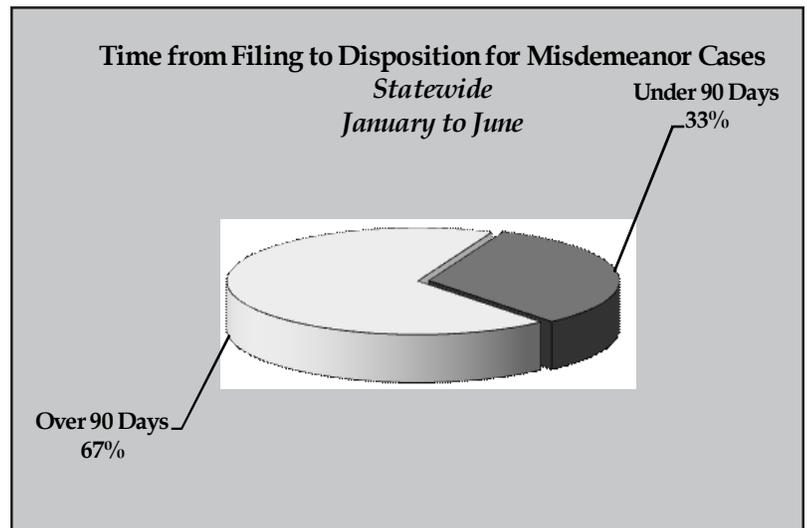
Similar to the drop in civil filings, the number of cases added to the civil trial calendar statewide through June decreased by 118 (24 percent) compared to the first half of last year. Cases added to the civil trial calendar decreased in all counties. Providence/Bristol County dropped by 73 (23 percent), while Washington County by 14 (15 percent). Kent and Newport Counties dropped by 14 and 10 (15 and 32 percent), respectively.



All four counties disposed more civil cases than were added to the trial calendar in the first half of 2013, resulting in disposition rates that exceeded 100 percent.

PENDING CIVIL CASELOAD - TRIAL CALENDAR

At the end of the period, the number of civil cases pending trial statewide declined by 223 (18 percent), compared to last year. In Providence/Bristol County, the number of cases pending dropped by 195 (19 percent), in Kent County by 5 (5 percent) and in Washington County by 23 (25 percent). In Newport County, the number of cases pending remained the same (40) compared to the first half of 2012.



Family Court

JUVENILE FILINGS

In the first half of 2013, Family Court held 43,016 hearings statewide. Juvenile filings decreased by 7 percent compared to last year, dropping by 255 from 3,937 to 3,682. Statewide there was a decline in juvenile petitions filed for each case type, with the exception of violations and termination of parental rights (TPR). Violations increased by 15 (4 percent), while TPR petitions rose by 5 (5 percent). Wayward/delinquent petitions dropped by 165 (7 percent), dependency/neglect/abuse (DNA) by 85 (11 percent), adoption/guardianship by 20 (9 percent), and petitions filed in the general category of other dropped by 5 (17 percent).

When reviewing filings by location, compared to a year ago, juvenile filings through the second quarter were lower in all counties. Providence/Bristol County filings dropped by 137 (5 percent) and those in Washington County decreased by 62 (17 percent). Filings were down in Kent County by 23 (4 percent) and dropped by 33 (13 percent) in Newport County during the first half of the year.

JUVENILE DISPOSITIONS

In the wayward/delinquent category, which includes violations of probation and court orders, the state-

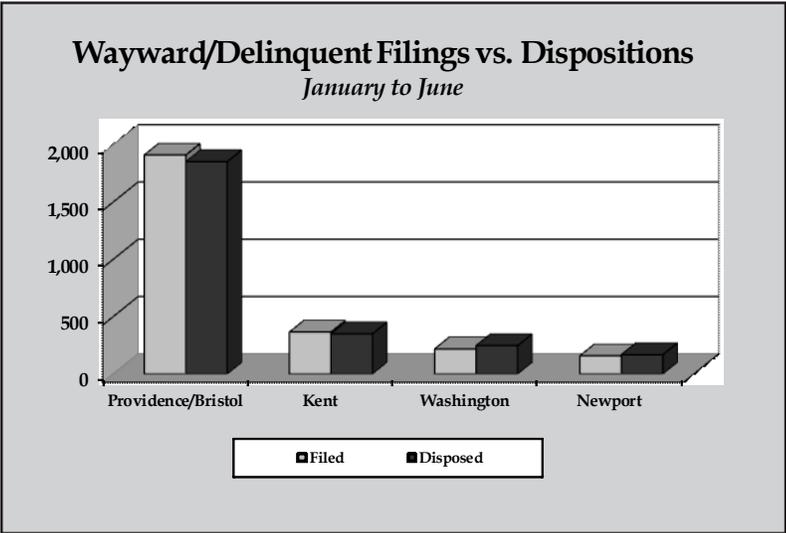
<i>Juvenile Filings by Case Type</i>	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Wayward/Delinquent	3,233	3,247	2,836	2,444	2,279
Violations	439	495	432	355	370
Dependency/Neglect/Abuse	826	833	730	780	695
Termination of Parental Rights	155	158	109	99	104
Adoption/Guardianship	242	245	245	230	210
Other	21	34	36	29	24
Total	4,916	5,012	4,388	3,937	3,682
<i>Juvenile Filings by County</i>					
Providence/Bristol	3,460	3,634	3,183	2,803	2,666
Kent	714	632	572	532	509
Washington	436	425	376	353	291
Newport	306	321	257	249	216
Total	4,916	5,012	4,388	3,937	3,682
<i>Divorce Filings by County</i>					
Providence/Bristol	1,495	1,594	1,588	1,658	1,583
Kent	409	415	427	399	373
Washington	256	307	278	241	229
Newport	148	176	175	154	178
Total	2,308	2,492	2,468	2,452	2,363
<i>Abuse Filings</i>					
Statewide	1,125	1,159	1,248	1,124	979

wide disposition rate was 99 percent. In Providence/Bristol County the disposition rate was 97 percent, and in Kent County, the rate was 96 percent. In both Washington and Newport Counties, dispositions exceeded filings, resulting in rates over 100 percent. In the child protection category, there was a 92 percent disposition rate with filings (1,033) exceeding dispositions (952) by 81.

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. Through June, Providence/Bristol County adjudicated

58 percent of its wayward/delinquent cases within 180 days (again with violations included), while in Newport County, it was 37 percent. In Washington and Kent Counties, 49 and 55 percent of their respective caseloads were adjudicated within the 180 day guideline. For wayward/delinquent cases handled informally, the goal is 45 days. Through the end of the period, 81 percent of the cases met this goal, while 96 percent were handled within 90 days.



In child protection cases statewide, Family Court met the 180 day guideline in 84 percent of the cases for TPR and in 43 percent of the cases for DNA matters. In Providence/Bristol County, 46 percent of the DNA cases and 93 percent of the TPR cases were adjudicated within 180 days.

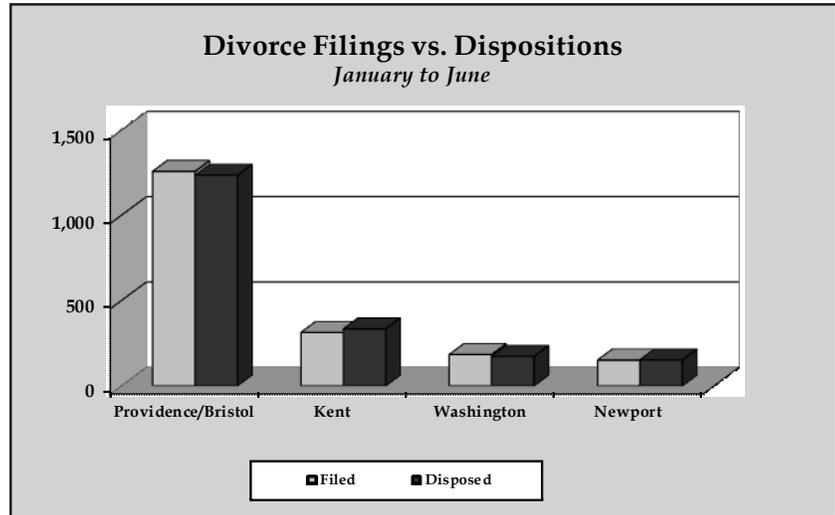
PENDING TPR CASELOAD

A specific area the court monitors closely is the cases pending on the contested TPR calendar in Providence/Bristol County. At the end of June, 38 cases, representing 23 families, remained on this calendar, and 21 cases, representing 12 families, were over 180 days old.

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DOMESTIC FILINGS AND DISPOSITIONS

On the domestic side, divorce filings were lower than last year statewide, decreasing by 89 (4 percent). Similarly, filings decreased in all counties, with the exception of Newport County, where they rose by 16 percent (24). Statewide, filings exceeded dispositions by 12 during the first half of 2013, with a disposition rate of 99 percent.



PENDING DIVORCE CASELOAD

At the end of June, the total number of divorce cases pending over a year was 52 statewide. Providence/Bristol County had 26 divorce cases pending over a year, while Kent County had 3. In Newport County, the total was 18, and in Washington County, there were 5.

District Court

MISDEMEANOR FILINGS

In District Court, misdemeanor statewide filings decreased through the second quarter compared to last year. The total number filed decreased from 14,219 last year to 12,336, a decline of 1,883 (13 percent). Filings decreased in all divisions; in the Second Division, misdemeanors dropped by 194 (15 percent), in the Third Division, they declined by 788 (14 percent), in the Fourth Division by 305 (21 percent), and in the Sixth Division by 596 (10 percent).

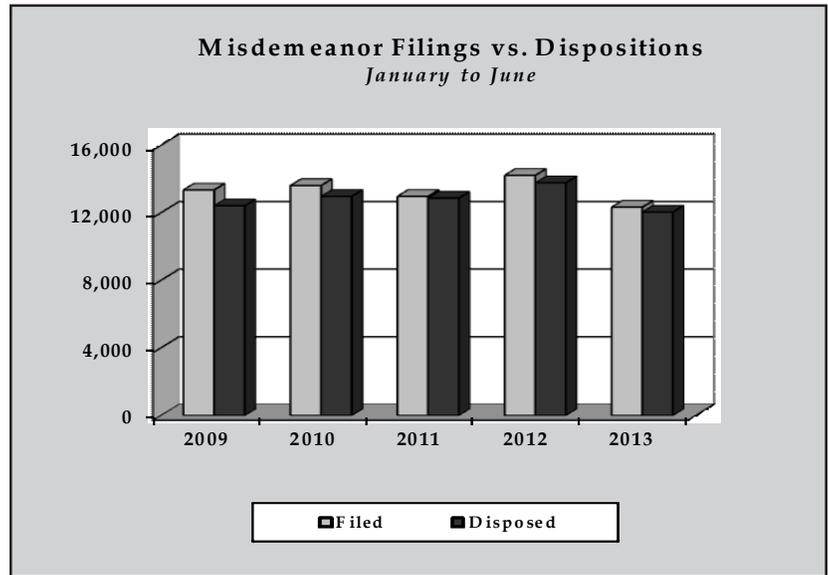
During the first half of 2013, the 12,336 statewide misdemeanor case filings were comprised of 16,902 individual counts. In the Second Division, the 1,065 misdemeanor cases filed represented 1,426 counts, while the Third Division misdemeanor case filings (4,857) resulted in 6,550 counts. Furthermore, the 1,174 misdemeanor cases filed in the Fourth Division included 1,718 counts, and in the Sixth Division, the 5,240 misdemeanor case filings were comprised of 7,208 counts.

MISDEMEANOR DISPOSITIONS

In general, the District Court continued to handle its misdemeanor caseload in a timely and efficient manner. Overall, the statewide disposition rate for misdemeanors was 98 percent through June. The Third Division also had a disposition rate of 98 percent, while the Sixth and Second Divisions' disposition rates were 96 and 95 percent, respectively. In the Fourth Division, dispositions exceeded filings for the first half of 2012.

TIME TO DISPOSITION - MISDEMEANORS

The court's goal is to dispose misdemeanors within 60 days of filing. This measures the time period between filing a case and its disposition in the District Court. Statewide, 70 percent of misdemeanors met this goal. Through the second quarter, 71 percent of misde-



meanors in the Third Division and 69 percent of misdemeanors in the Sixth Division were disposed within 60 days. In the Second Division, 75 percent of misdemeanors met the goal, and the Fourth Division met the 60 day guideline in 68 percent of its misdemeanor cases.

PENDING MISDEMEANOR CASELOAD

At the end of June, there were a total of 3,626 misdemeanors pending statewide; 60 percent were less than 60 days old, and another 21 percent were between 60 and 180 days old. In the Second Division, the number of misdemeanors pending more than 60 days was

<i>Misdemeanor Filings</i>	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Second	1,201	1,423	1,201	1,259	1,065
Third	3,613	3,920	3,638	5,645	4,857
Fourth	1,601	1,558	1,532	1,479	1,174
Sixth	6,941	6,719	6,608	5,836	5,240
Total	13,356	13,620	12,979	14,219	12,336
<i>Felony Filings</i>					
Courtwide	3,532	3,670	3,767	3,687	3,323
<i>Civil Filings</i>					
Second	631	660	697	618	535
Third	3,167	3,246	3,294	3,838	3,682
Fourth	749	974	805	549	523
Sixth	6,656	6,880	6,804	5,967	5,799
Total	11,203	11,760	11,600	10,972	10,539
<i>Small Claims</i>					
Second	288	398	400	282	350
Third	5,409	2,200	2,113	2,309	3,128
Fourth	519	466	555	368	405
Sixth	4,551	4,286	3,956	2,568	3,143
Total	10,767	7,350	7,024	5,527	7,026
<i>Abuse Filings</i>					
Courtwide	483	469	430	332	384

81 (30 percent); in the Third Division, it was 557 (41 percent); it was 71 (26 percent) in the Fourth Division and 744 (43 percent) in the Sixth Division. The total number of misdemeanors over 60 days old was 1,453 (40 percent), an increase from 914 a year ago.

FELONY FILINGS

Statewide, felony filings in the first half of 2013 decreased from last year's figures. Felony filings dropped from 3,687 to 3,323, representing a 10 percent decline. The number filed decreased in the Third Division (16 percent), the Sixth Division (5 percent), and the Fourth Division (28 per-

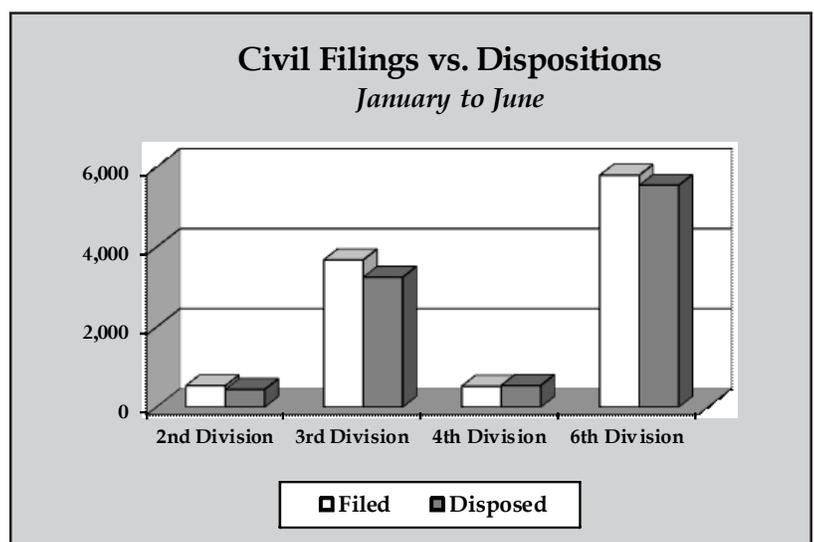
cent). Felony filings increased in the Second Division by 8 percent.

CIVIL FILINGS

On the civil side, statewide filings through June decreased by 433 (4 percent) from 10,972 in the first half of 2012 to 10,539 for the comparable time period in 2013. Filings decreased in all divisions. Abuse filings rose by 52, representing a 16 percent increase over last year. In addition, small claims increased in all divisions compared to a year ago. Overall, the number of statewide small claims filed rose by 1,499 (27 percent) from 5,527 to 7,026.

CIVIL DISPOSITIONS

The statewide disposition rate for civil cases was 93 percent, while the small claims disposition rate was 90 percent for the first half of the year.



Workers' Compensation Court

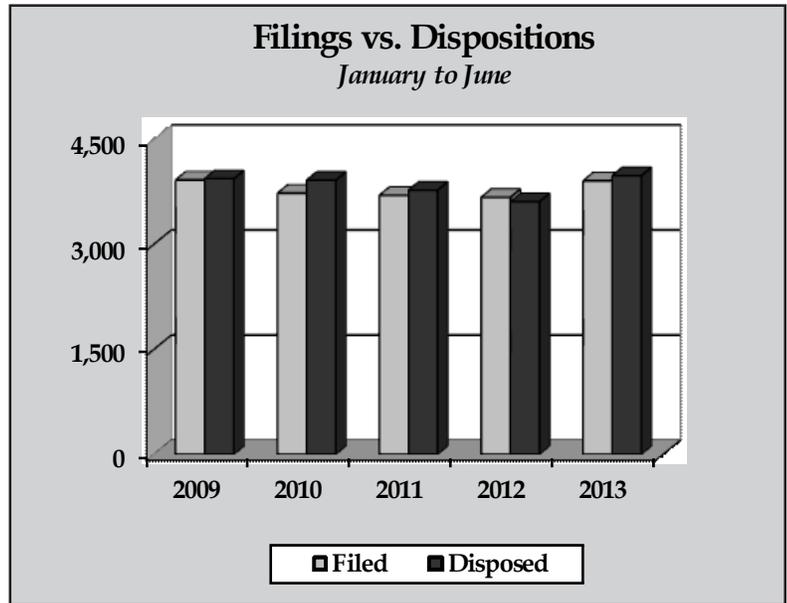
PETITIONS FILED

The number of petitions filed in the Workers' Compensation Court during the first half of 2013 increased by 235 from last year. A year ago there were 3,670 petitions filed through June, and this year there were 3,905, an increase of 6 percent.

Based on the type of case, some petitions increased compared to a year ago, while others decreased. Lump sum settlements increased by 9 percent (38), petitions for medical by 10 percent (5), original petitions by 6 percent (72), and both employee petitions and employer petitions by 13 percent (125 and 76, respectively). On the contrary, miscellaneous petitions declined by 38 (37 percent), petitions to enforce by 42 (11 percent), and petitions for second injury decreased from 1 to 0, compared to last year.

PETITIONS DISPOSED

Through the second quarter, dispositions (3,978) exceeded filings (3,905), resulting in a disposition rate over 100 percent. Cases disposed at the pretrial stage



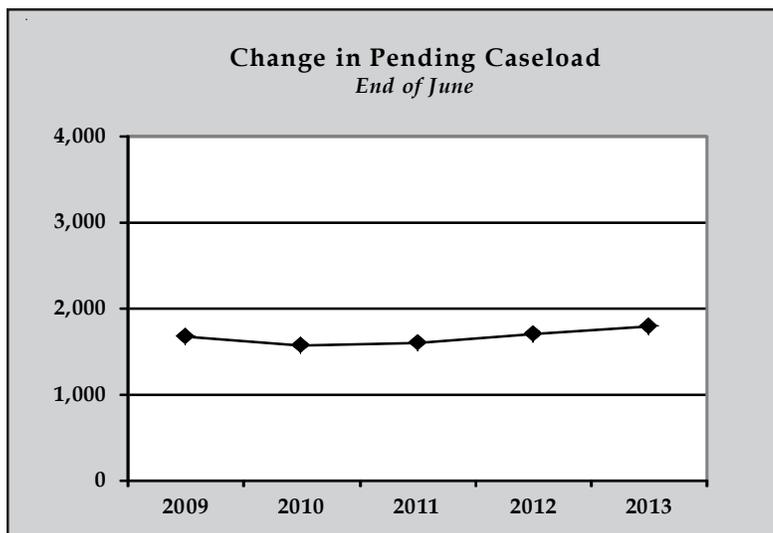
accounted for 72 percent of the total, while those disposed at trial represented 28 percent.

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 of filing (87 percent) was a minimal decrease from last year (88 percent). At trial, 86 percent of the cases were handled within 360 days, down from 90 percent last year.

PENDING CASELOAD

Compared to last year, the total number of petitions pending rose from 1,697 to 1,793, an increase of 96 (6 percent). The number pending trial stayed the same as last year (755). The petitions pending trial over 270 days increased by 7 percent from 254 to 273, representing 36 percent of the total number pending trial.



Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal

SUMMONSES ISSUED

The number of summonses issued to the Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal (RITT) decreased during the first half of 2013, declining by 26 percent from 53,584 last year to 39,875. RITT summonses accounted for 55 percent of the total summonses issued this period.

Contrary to the overall decrease in RITT summonses, there was an increase in both breathalyzer refusals, rising by 1 percent (10), and insurance violations, rising by 15 percent (691), compared to last year.

SUMMONSES DISPOSED

During the first half of 2013, RITT dispositions exceeded filings, resulting in a disposition rate of 102 percent. Payments by mail represented 23 percent of total dispositions decreasing by 40 percent (6,395) over last year's figure. The remaining 77 percent were disposed by court hearings, which decreased by 18 percent (7,080) compared to last year.

<i>Filings</i>	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Total Summonses Issued *	79,544	75,656	73,661	88,205	72,001
RITT Summonses Issued	46,671	44,371	40,175	53,584	39,875
RITT Violations	56,293	54,355	49,345	64,272	50,396
<i>RITT Dispositions</i>					
Court Hearings	31,617	29,764	28,698	38,511	31,431
Payments by Mail	16,697	14,389	12,557	15,798	9,403
Total Disposed	48,314	44,153	41,255	54,309	40,834
* Includes summonses issued to both RITT and municipal courts.					

TIME TO DISPOSITION

The RITT has adopted 60 days as the goal for disposing summonses, which measures the time from the initial appearance to disposition. In the first half of the year, 95 percent of all dispositions met this guideline. Furthermore, 77 percent of breathalyzer refusals and 93 percent of insurance violations were disposed within the 60 day timeframe.

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), 17 percent of all violations disposed occurred prior to arraignment, while another 62 percent occurred at arraignment. Also, 80 percent of insurance violations and 23 percent of breathalyzer refusal matters were disposed at or before arraignment.

PENDING CASELOAD

The total number of summonses pending at the end of June dropped by 19 percent (414), declining from 2,174 last year to 1,760. Of this number, 1,600 (91 percent) were pending over 60 days. Also, the number of appeals pending at the end of the period dropped by 16 percent, from 67 last year to 56.

