

# Court Statistics



THE RHODE ISLAND JUDICIARY'S QUARTERLY CASEFLOW REPORT

Volume 35, No. 1, March 2014

## HIGHLIGHTS

### THROUGH THE FIRST QUARTER OF 2014

**SUPREME COURT** FILINGS INCREASED BY 9% COMPARED TO LAST YEAR.

IN **SUPERIOR COURT**, FELONY CASES PENDING DECREASED BY 17% STATEWIDE.

**FAMILY COURT** HAD A 99% DISPOSITION RATE FOR DIVORCE CASES STATEWIDE.

**DISTRICT COURT** CIVIL FILINGS INCREASED BY 3% FROM LAST YEAR.

**WORKERS' COMPENSATION COURT** HAD A 96% DISPOSITION RATE STATEWIDE.

**TRAFFIC TRIBUNAL** SUMMONSES ISSUED INCREASED BY 13% COMPARED TO LAST YEAR.

## Supreme Court

### FILINGS

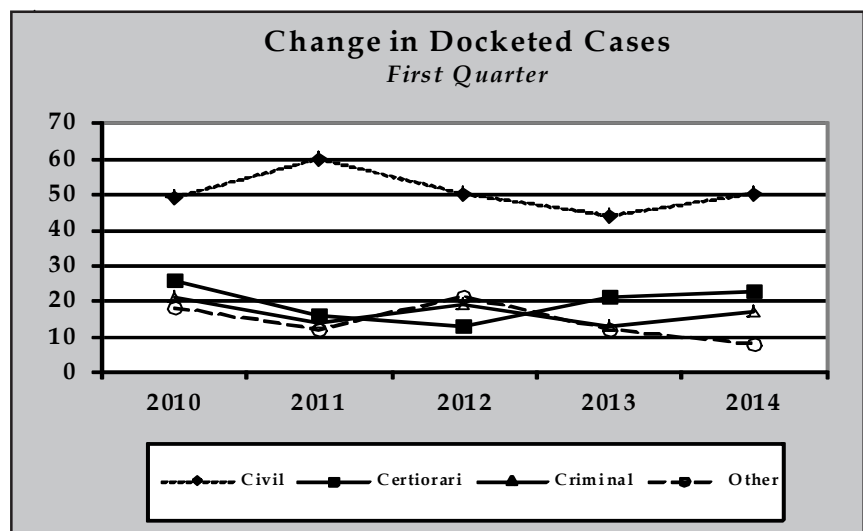
This report covers the first quarter of calendar year 2014. There were 98 Supreme Court cases docketed this quarter which was 8 more (9 percent) than those docketed during the first quarter of last year.

For the first quarter, Supreme Court filings increased in all case types, with the exception of miscellaneous appeals, where they decreased by 4

(33 percent). Criminal and civil appeals increased by 4 and 6 (31 and 14 percent), respectively, while certiorari appeals increased by 2 (10 percent), compared to last year.

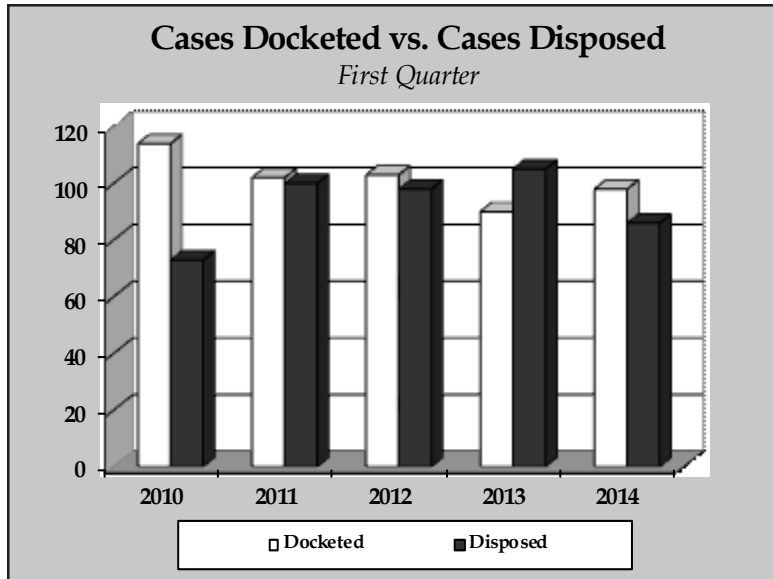
### DISPOSITIONS

New appeals exceeded dispositions for this quarter. The number of appeals disposed was 86, which was 12 fewer than those docketed, representing an 88 percent dis-



position rate. As explained in more detail below, 6 (6 percent) of the 98 dispositions occurred during some stage of the Appellate Mediation Program (AMP).

Of the 98 dispositions during the quarter, 52 (60 percent) of the appeals were disposed before argument,



17 (20 percent) were disposed after show cause, and the remaining 17 (20 percent) were disposed after full oral arguments. During the first quarter, the Supreme Court published 34 written decisions, consisting of 28 opinions and 6 orders. Of the 98 dispositions through March, 28 percent were disposed within 180 days, and a total of 40 percent were disposed within 300 days.

**PENDING CASELOAD**

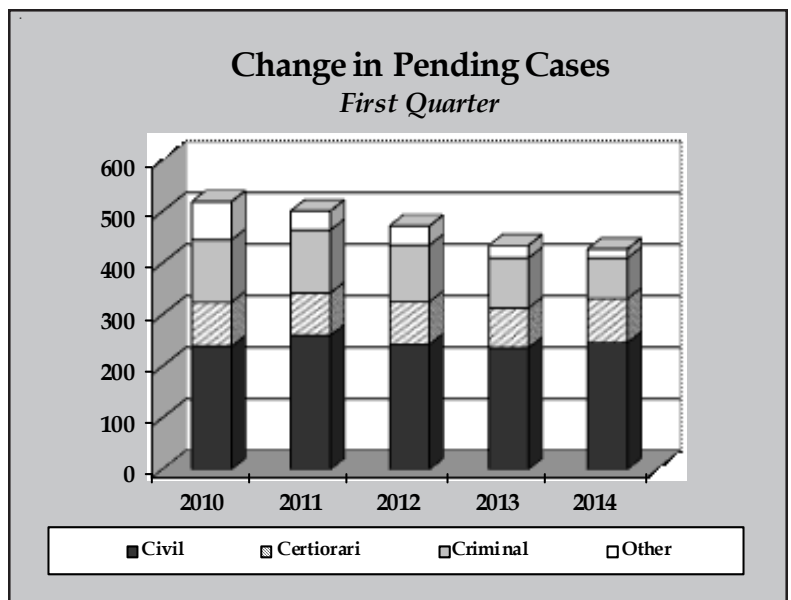
At the end of the period, the pending caseload was 427, a decrease of 7 (2 percent) com-

pared to last year (434). Compared to last year, pending civil appeals increased by 10 (4 percent) and certiorari appeals by 8 (10 percent). Both criminal and miscellaneous appeals decreased by 18 and 7 (19 and 29 percent), respectively.

**APPELLATE MEDIATION**

During the first quarter, there were 30 new cases screened through the AMP. Of the 30 new cases screened, 19 were deemed either ineligible or inappropriate. During this time period, 6 cases were disposed at some stage in the mediation process, resulting in a 55 percent disposition rate. Four of the six dispositions were settled at or after mediation, while the remaining two cases were dismissed or withdrawn at an earlier

stage in the mediation process. As of March 31, 2014, there were 30 cases active in the program.



# Superior Court

## FELONY FILINGS

Statewide felony filings in Superior Court decreased in the first quarter of 2014 compared to last year. The number filed dropped by 96 (7 percent) from 1,392 to 1,296. Felony filings decreased in Providence/Bristol County and Washington County, dropping by 67 and 61 (7 and 39 percent), respectively. Felony filings in Kent County increased by 9 (4 percent) and in Newport County, they rose by 23 (35 percent), compared to last year.

## FELONY DISPOSITIONS

Statewide, felony dispositions exceeded filing, resulting in a disposition rate over 100 percent. Dispositions also exceeded filings in Providence/Bristol and Washington Counties. The disposition rate in Kent County was 72 percent and in Newport County it was 88 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 58 percent of the cases during the first quarter of 2014. This goal measures the time from when a felony is filed to the case disposition. Newport County handled 63 percent of its felony caseload within 180 days. Kent County met the 180 day guideline in 78 percent of

<i>Felony Filings</i>	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Providence/Bristol	1,079	975	1,057	942	875
Kent	161	235	228	229	238
Washington	208	116	124	155	94
Newport	141	55	65	66	89
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,589</b>	<b>1,381</b>	<b>1,474</b>	<b>1,392</b>	<b>1,296</b>
<i>Misdemeanor Filings</i>					
Providence/Bristol	43	19	34	30	282
Kent	12	15	7	10	2
Washington	11	4	4	17	18
Newport	24	5	8	4	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>304</b>
<i>Civil Cases added to the Trial Calendar</i>					
Providence/Bristol	243	266	141	117	151
Kent	64	67	60	47	37
Washington	42	33	22	22	19
Newport	19	21	16	12	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>387</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>231</b>

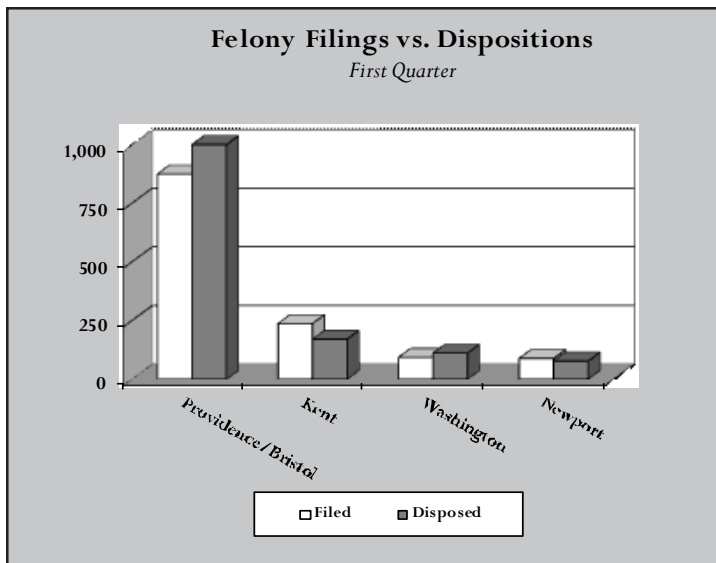
the felonies disposed through March. Washington County achieved it in 66 percent of the cases, and in Providence/Bristol County, the figure was 54 percent.

## PENDING FELONY CASELOAD

The number of felonies pending statewide totaled 2,564 at the end of March, down by 17 percent (511) from last year. Of the 2,564 felonies pending, 42 percent had been pending over 180 days from filing. Providence/Bristol County had 928 cases over 180 days old; Washington County had 55; Kent County had 77; and Newport County had 26.

## MISDEMEANOR FILINGS

Misdemeanor appeals in the first quarter have decreased by 11 (18 percent), dropping from 61 last year to 50 in 2014. Misdemeanor appeals decreased in every county, with the exception of Washington County, where they rose by 1 (6 percent). In Providence/Bristol County filings declined by 2 (7 percent); in Kent County they



dropped by 8 (80 percent); and in Newport County they decreased by 2 (50 percent).

**MISDEMEANOR DISPOSITIONS**

In the first quarter of 2014, misdemeanor dispositions exceeded filings statewide, as well as in each county, resulting in disposition rates over 100 percent.

**TIME TO DISPOSITION: MISDEMEANORS**

The goal for disposing misdemeanor cases in Superior Court is 90 days, which is measured from filing to disposition. Washington County had the largest percentage of misdemeanors disposed within 90 days (69 percent). Eight percent of Providence/Bristol County’s misdemeanors were disposed within the 90 day time frame, while Kent and Newport Counties reached the goal in 25 and 29 percent of misdemeanor dispositions, respectively.

**PENDING MISDEMEANOR CASELOAD**

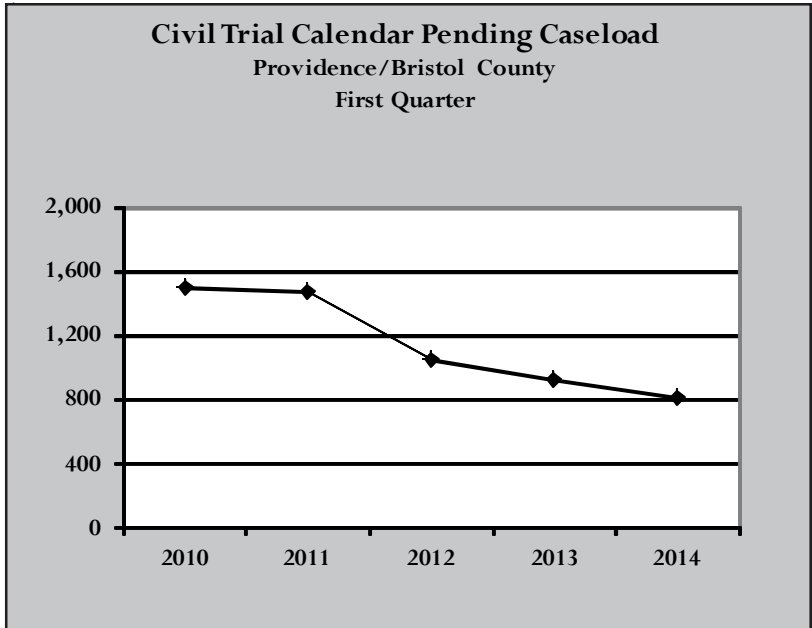
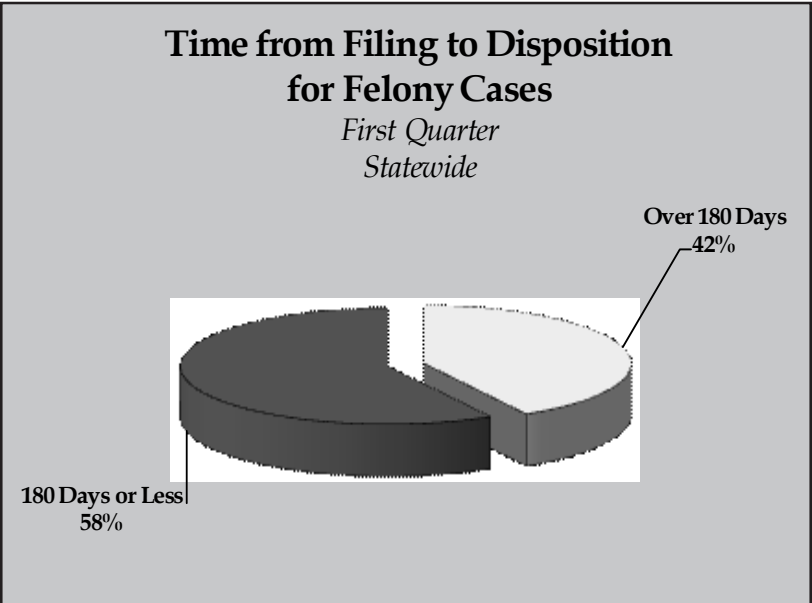
At the end of March, there were 115 misdemeanor cases pending statewide, down by 49 (30 percent) from 164 last year. Of the 115 pending misdemeanors, 64 percent (74) were over 90 days old.

**CIVIL FILINGS AND DISPOSITIONS**

Civil filings totaled 2,128 for the first quarter, increasing by 59 (3 percent) compared to last year. During the quarter, there were a total of 1,646 civil cases disposed, an increase of 192 (13 percent) over the 1,454 civil cases that were disposed through normal case processing last year.

**CIVIL CASES ADDED AND DISPOSED: TRIAL CALENDAR**

Consistent with the increase in civil filings, the number of cases added to the civil trial calendar through March rose by 33 (17 percent) compared to the first quarter last year. The number of cases added in Providence/Bristol County increased by 34 compared to last year, while the number in Newport County rose by 12. In Kent County, cases added to the civil trial calendar decreased by 10, and in Washington County, they dropped by 3.



Statewide the court disposed more civil cases than were added to the calendar in the first quarter. Similarly, all counties had disposition rates over 100 percent.

**PENDING CIVIL CASELOAD: TRIAL CALENDAR**

At the end of the quarter, the number of cases pending trial statewide decreased by 145 (13 percent) from 1,130 last year to 985. In Providence/Bristol County, the number of civil cases pending trial dropped by 117 (13 percent); in Kent County by 3 (4 percent); in Washington County by 21 (27 percent); and in Newport County, by 4 (9 percent).

# Family Court

## JUVENILE FILINGS

In the first quarter of 2014 the Family Court conducted 20,289 hearings. During this time period, juvenile filings decreased by 17 percent compared to last year, declining by 335 from 2,023 to 1,688. There was a decline in all case types from last year, with the exception of termination of parental rights (TPR) petitions, which increased by 12 (24 percent), and adoption/guardianship petitions, which increased by 8 (8 percent). The remaining four categories all decreased; violations dropped by 18 percent (34), dependency/neglect/abuse (DNA) petitions by 5 percent (18), wayward/delinquent petitions by 23 percent (298), and the general category of other by 33 percent (5).

When reviewing filings by location, juvenile filings in the first quarter were lower in all counties, compared to last year, except in Washington County, where they increased by 22 (17 percent). In Providence/Bristol County filings dropped by 332 (22 percent), while in Kent County filings decreased by 24 (9 percent). Juvenile filings declined by just 1 (1 percent) in Newport County during the first quarter.

## JUVENILE DISPOSITIONS

In the wayward/delinquent category, including violations of probation and court orders, there was an 81 per-

<i>Juvenile Filings by Case Type</i>	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Wayward/Delinquent	1,724	1,456	1,411	1,304	1,006
Dependency/Neglect/Abuse	391	385	362	359	341
Termination of Parental Rights	80	58	34	50	62
Adoption/Guardian	117	129	113	104	112
Violations	242	204	206	191	157
Other	23	13	15	15	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,577</b>	<b>2,245</b>	<b>2,141</b>	<b>2,023</b>	<b>1,688</b>
<i>Juvenile Filings by County</i>					
Providence/Bristol	1,908	1,664	1,555	1,512	1,180
Kent	310	271	299	263	239
Washington	209	187	155	130	152
Newport	150	123	132	118	117
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,577</b>	<b>2,245</b>	<b>2,141</b>	<b>2,023</b>	<b>1,688</b>
<i>Divorce Filings by County</i>					
Providence/Bristol	773	810	847	779	749
Kent	204	220	210	192	152
Washington	142	132	133	119	104
Newport	79	93	74	86	83
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,198</b>	<b>1,255</b>	<b>1,264</b>	<b>1,176</b>	<b>1,088</b>
<i>Abuse Filings</i>					
Courtwide	551	569	543	458	483

cent disposition rate statewide. The disposition rate was also 81 percent in both Providence/Bristol and Newport Counties. In Kent County the disposition rate was 80 percent, while in Washington County it was 83 percent. In the child protection category, the disposition rate was 80 percent statewide. The rate was 91 percent in Providence/Bristol County; 59 percent in Kent County; and 42 percent in Newport County. In Washington County, the disposition rate was 56 percent.

## TIME TO DISPOSITION: JUVENILE CASES

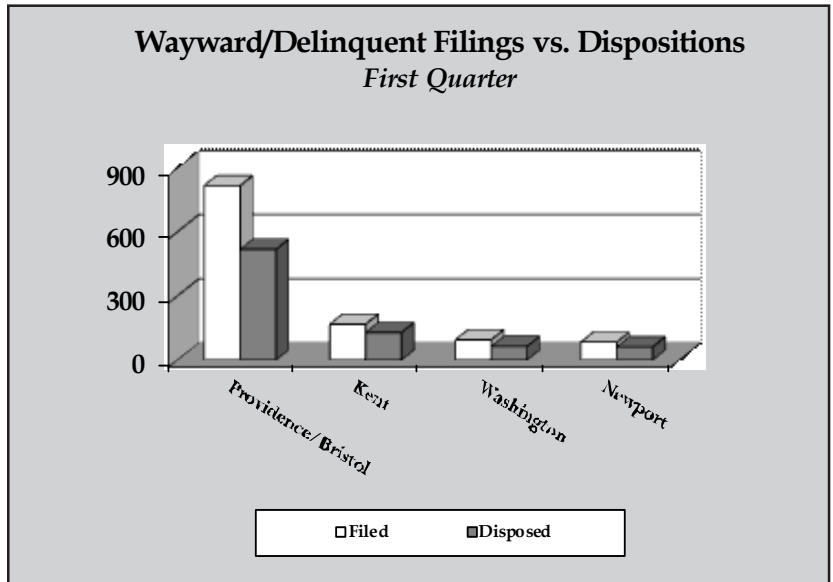
The Family Court has established a timeframe of 180 days as the goal for adjudicating juvenile cases. This goal measures the time from filing until a finding is entered, not the time to final disposition of a case. In the quarter,

both Kent County and Providence/Bristol County adjudicated 53 percent of their wayward/delinquent cases within 180 days (again with violations included). In Newport County, 40 percent of the cases were handled within the guideline and in Washington County, it was 50 percent. For wayward/delinquent cases handled informally, the goal is 45 days. Through March, 33 percent of the cases met this goal statewide; while 73 percent were handled within 90 days.

In child protection cases statewide, Family Court met the 180 day guideline in 48 percent of the cases for TPR and in 30 percent of the cases for DNA matters.

**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 March, 20 cases, rep-



resenting 15 families, remained on this calendar, and 11 cases (9 families) were over 180 days old.

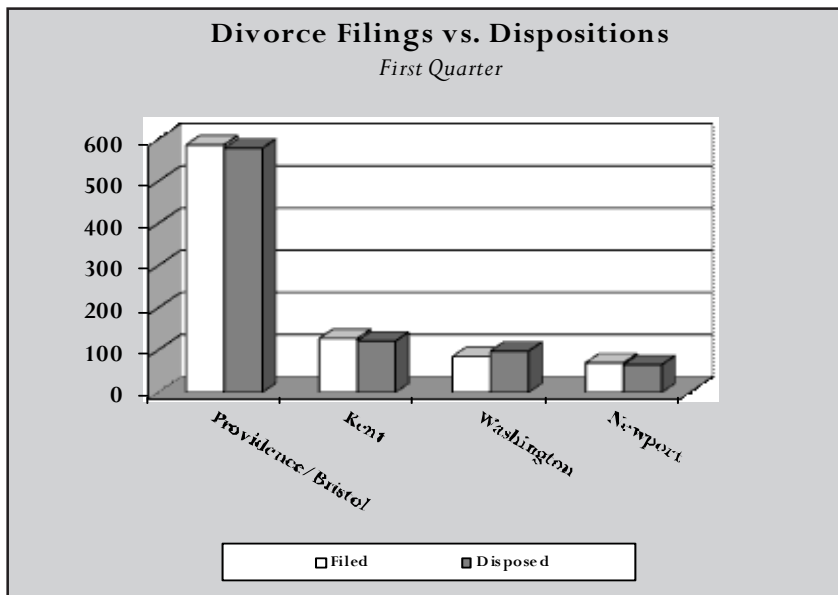
**DOMESTIC FILINGS AND DISPOSITIONS**

On the domestic side, statewide divorce filings were fewer than last year, decreasing by 88 (7 percent). For the first quarter, divorce dispositions exceeded filings in Washington County, with a disposition rate over 100 percent.

The disposition rate in Providence/Bristol County was 99 percent; in Kent County, it was 95 percent; and in Newport County, the disposition rate was 94 percent.

**PENDING DIVORCE CASELOAD**

At the end of the quarter, the total number of divorce cases pending over a year was 43 statewide. In Providence/Bristol there were 31 divorce cases pending over one year; in Newport there were 4; and in Washington there were 8. There were no cases pending over one year in Kent County.



# District Court

## MISDEMEANOR FILINGS

In District Court, misdemeanor filings decreased during the first quarter compared to last year. The total number filed dropped from 6,282 last year to 6,271, a decline of 11 (less than 1 percent). Filings decreased in all divisions, with the exception of Third Division, where they rose by 122 (5 percent). In the Fourth Division, misdemeanor filings decreased by 11 percent (66) and in both the Second and Sixth Divisions, filings declined by 2 percent (11 and 56, respectively).

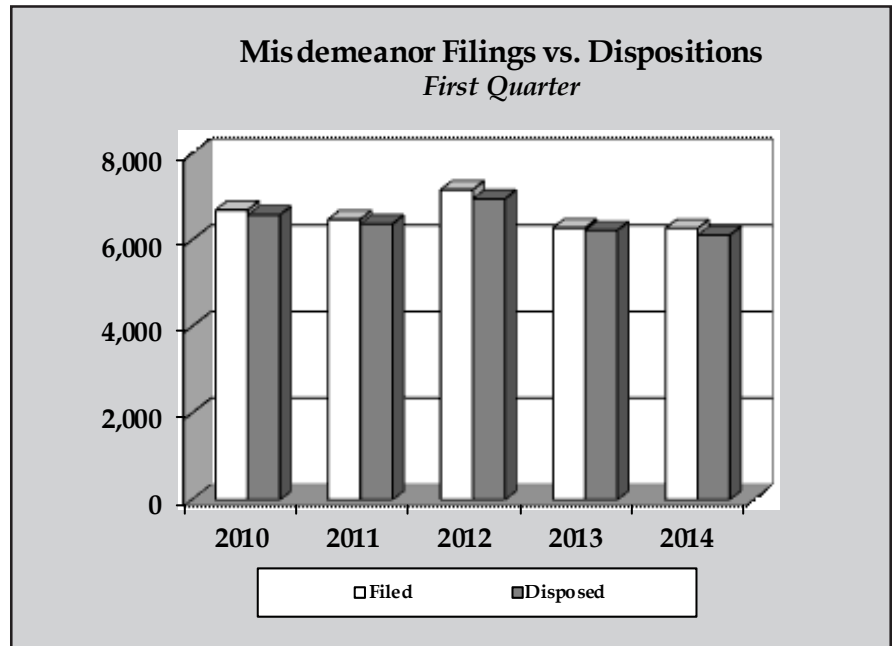
The 6,271 statewide misdemeanor case filings in the quarter were comprised of 8,348 individual counts. In the Second Division, the 522 misdemeanor cases filed represented 664 counts, while the Third Division misdemeanor case filings (2,657) resulted in 3,496 counts. Furthermore, the 555 misdemeanor cases filed in the Fourth Division included 744 counts, and in the Sixth Division, the 2,537 misdemeanor case filings comprised of 3,444 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 March. The disposition rate for misdemeanors was also 98 percent in the Third, Fourth and Sixth Divisions, and in the Second Division it was 94 percent.

## TIME TO DISPOSITION: MISDEMEANORS

The court's goal is to dispose misdemeanors within 60 days of filing. This measures the time period between a case filing and disposition. Statewide, 73 percent of misdemeanors met this goal. This quarter, the Third and Fourth Divisions handled 72 and 73 percent of their misdemeanor caseloads, respectively, within 60 days. In both



the Second and Sixth Divisions, they met the 60 day guideline in 74 percent of misdemeanor cases.

## PENDING MISDEMEANOR CASELOAD

At the end of the first quarter, there were a total of 3,679 misdemeanors pending; 50 percent were less than 60 days old, and another 17 percent were between 60 and 180 days old. In the Second Division, the number of misdemeanors pending more than 60 days was 40; in the Third Division, it was 644; it was 90 in the Fourth Division and 1,082 in the Sixth Division. The total number of misde-

<b>Misdemeanor Filing</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
Second	672	615	644	533	522
Third	1,915	1,795	2,824	2,535	2,657
Fourth	772	752	727	621	555
Sixth	3,338	3,315	2,967	2,593	2,537
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,697</b>	<b>6,477</b>	<b>7,162</b>	<b>6,282</b>	<b>6,271</b>
<b>Felony Filings</b>					
Courtwide	1,782	1,848	1,865	1,670	1,581
<b>Civil Filings</b>					
Second	305	347	301	272	303
Third	1,618	1,762	1,853	1,880	2,032
Fourth	481	426	288	296	318
Sixth	3,252	3,501	2,930	3,054	3,031
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,656</b>	<b>6,036</b>	<b>5,372</b>	<b>5,502</b>	<b>5,684</b>
<b>Small Claims</b>					
Second	172	262	136	190	170
Third	993	1,220	1,104	1,531	1,370
Fourth	223	286	206	209	177
Sixth	1,897	2,277	1,217	1,411	1,545
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,285</b>	<b>4,045</b>	<b>2,663</b>	<b>3,341</b>	<b>3,262</b>
<b>Abuse Filings</b>					
Courtwide	211	198	165	186	205

meanors over 60 days old was 1,856, up 47 percent from 1,262 a year ago.

### FELONY FILINGS

Felony filings in the first quarter of 2014 decreased compared to last year's figures, dropping from 1,670 to 1,581, representing a 5 percent decline statewide. The number filed decreased by 19 (15 percent) in the Second Division, by 40 (7 percent) in the Third Division, and by 8 (8 percent) in the Fourth Division. In the Sixth Division, felony filings decreased by 2 percent (22), compared to last year.

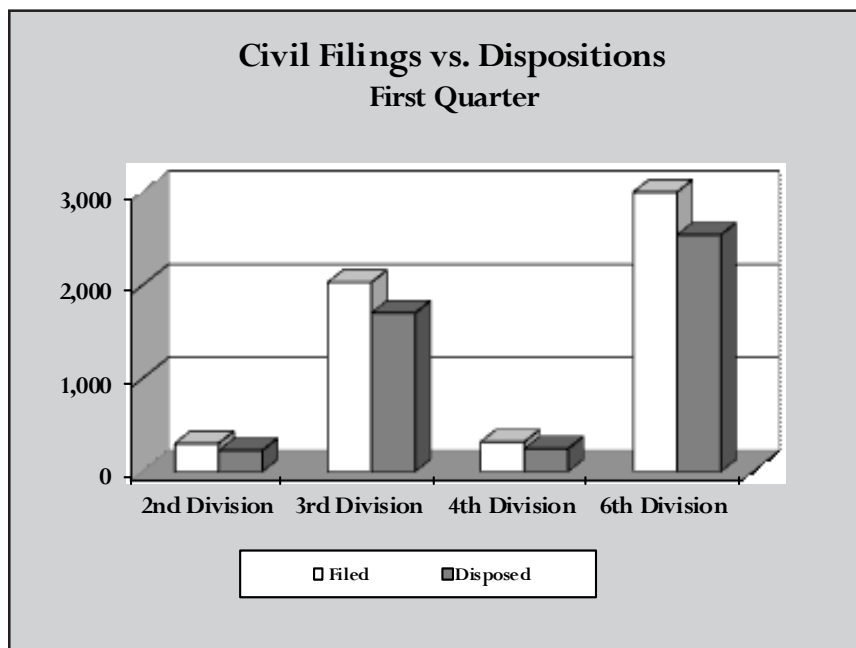
### CIVIL FILINGS

On the civil side, statewide filings through March increased by 182 (3 percent) from 5,502

in the first quarter of 2013 to 5,684 for the comparable time period in 2014. Civil filings increased in all divisions, except the Sixth Division, where they dropped by 23 (1 percent). Civil filings rose by 31 (11 percent) in the Second Division, by 152 (8 percent) in the Third Division, and by 22 (7 percent) in the Fourth Division. Abuse filings rose by 19 statewide, representing a 10 percent increase over last year. In addition, small claims decreased compared to a year ago. Statewide, the number of small claims filed dropped by 79 (2 percent) compared to last year.

### CIVIL DISPOSITIONS

The statewide disposition rate for civil cases was 83 percent, while small claims dispositions exceeded filings, resulting in a disposition rate over 100 percent.





# Workers' Compensation Court

## PETITIONS FILED

The number of petitions filed in the Workers' Compensation Court during the first quarter increased by 9 from last year. A year ago there were 1,910 petitions filed through March, and this year there were 1,919, a difference less than 1 percent.

Based on type of case, some categories increased, while some decreased compared to a year ago. Employee petitions rose by 6 (1 percent), and original petitions increased by 47 (8 percent). Petitions for medical rose by 5 (19 percent) and petitions to enforce increased by 6 (3 percent). On the contrary, employer petitions dropped by 11 (3 percent); lump sum settlements by 36 (15 percent); and petitions to enforce declined by 6 (3 percent).

## PETITIONS DISPOSED

Dispositions during the first quarter (1,842) were fewer than filings (1,919) by 77 petitions, resulting in a 96 percent disposition rate. At the pretrial stage, dispositions

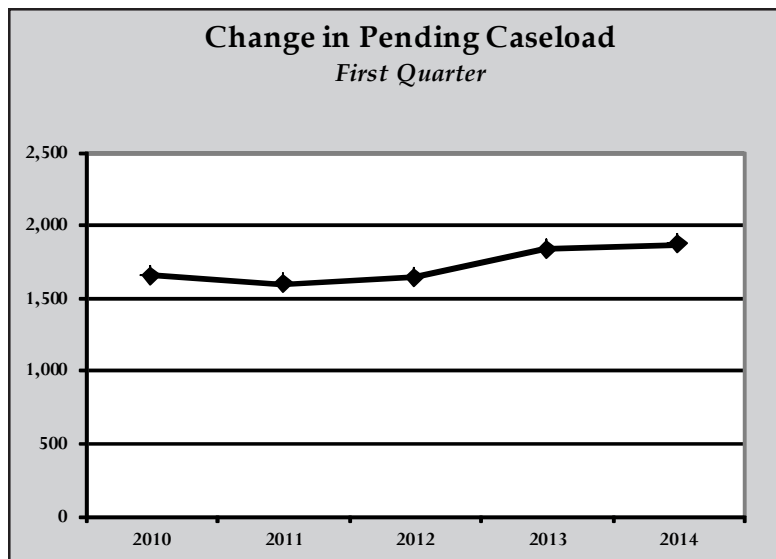
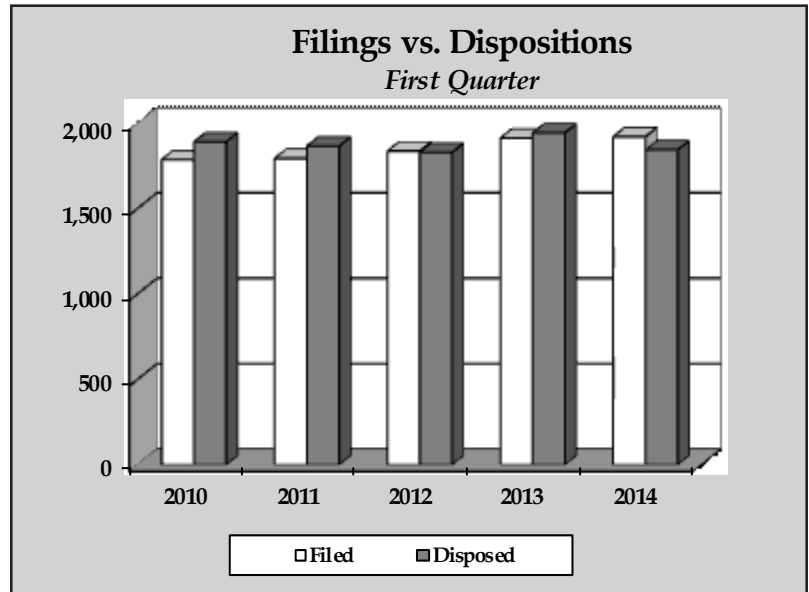
accounted for 75 percent of the total, slightly higher than a year ago (73).

## 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 proceed to trial. This benchmark measures the time from filing to disposition of a petition. The percentage of cases disposed at pretrial within 90 days of filing (85 percent) was slightly lower than a year ago (86 percent). At trial, 90 percent of the cases were handled within 360 days, up from 85 percent last year.

## PENDING CASELOAD

Compared to last year, the total number of petitions pending rose from 1,839 to 1,872, an increase of 33 (2 percent). During the first quarter, the number pending trial dropped by 1 from 817 to 816, a decline of less than 1 percent. The petitions pending trial over 270 days saw an increase of 3 percent from 299 to 307, representing 38 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) increased during the first quarter of 2014, rising by 13 percent from 19,471 last year to 22,068. The RITT summonses accounted for 61 percent of the total summonses issued this period.

<i>Filings</i>	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Summonses Issued *	35,938	34,616	47,514	35,338	36,507
RITT Summonses Issued	21,465	19,530	29,193	19,471	22,068
RITT Violations	26,304	24,122	34,982	24,520	26,807
<i>RITT Dispositions</i>					
Court Hearings	14,401	13,831	19,160	15,292	15,904
Payments by Mail	6,676	5,779	8,094	4,392	4,602
<b>Total Disposed</b>	<b>21,077</b>	<b>19,610</b>	<b>27,254</b>	<b>19,684</b>	<b>20,056</b>
* Includes summonses issued to RITT and municipal courts.					

Consistent with the increase in summonses, insurance violations increased by 79 (3 percent) to 2,706 in the first quarter of 2014. On the contrary, breathalyzer refusals decreased by 19 (4 percent).

## SUMMONSES DISPOSED

The RITT achieved a disposition rate of 91 percent through March. Payments by mail represented 22 percent of total dispositions, and the remaining 78 percent were disposed by court hearings.

## TIME TO DISPOSITION

The RITT has adopted 60 days from initial

appearance as the goal for disposing summonses, which measures the time from the initial appearance to disposition. In the first quarter, 95 percent of all dispositions met this guideline. Furthermore, 79 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 61 percent occurred at arraignment. Also, 78 percent of insurance violations and 28 percent of breathalyzer refusal matters were disposed at arraignment.

## PENDING CASELOAD

The total number of summonses pending at the end of March was 2,768, an 18 percent increase compared to last year (2,342). Of the 2,768 summonses pending, 1,857 (67 percent) were pending over 60 days, down from 75 percent last year.

