

Court Statistics



Justice Independence Honor

THE RHODE ISLAND JUDICIARY'S QUARTERLY CASEFLOW REPORT

Vol. 35, No. 3, September 2014

HIGHLIGHTS

THROUGH THE THIRD QUARTER OF 2014

IN **SUPREME COURT**, DISPOSITIONS EXCEEDED NEW APPEALS.

IN **SUPERIOR COURT**, FELONY FILINGS INCREASED BY 8% COMPARED TO LAST YEAR.

IN **FAMILY COURT**, THE STATEWIDE DIVORCE DISPOSITION RATE WAS 97%.

IN **DISTRICT COURT**, MISDEMEANOR FILINGS WERE UP 2% FROM LAST YEAR.

IN **WORKERS' COMPENSATION COURT**, THE DISPOSITION RATE WAS 95%.

IN THE **TRAFFIC TRIBUNAL**, SUMMONSES ISSUED WERE UP BY 10% COMPARED TO LAST YEAR.

Supreme Court

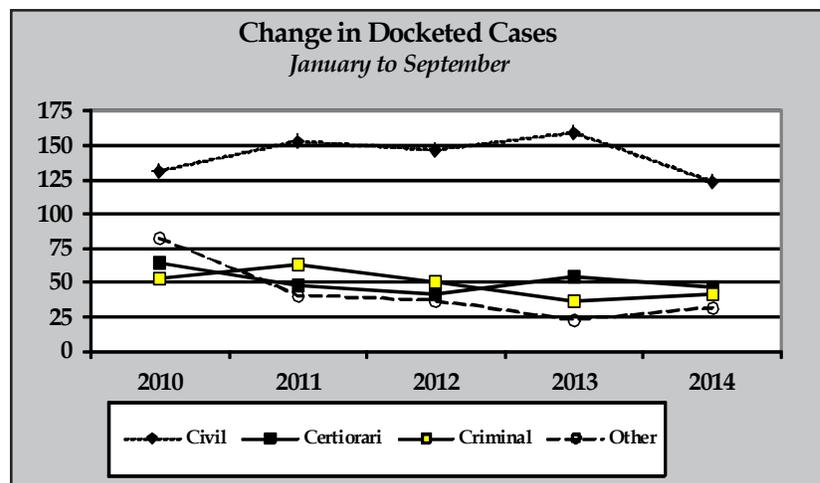
FILINGS

This report covers the first three quarters of the calendar year from January 1 through September 30, 2014. There were 244 Supreme Court cases docketed during the period which was 29 (11 percent) fewer than those docketed through the third quarter of last year. During this period, civil appeals decreased from last year, dropping by 23 percent from 159 to 123, while petitions for writ of

certiorari dropped by 13 percent, from 54 to 47. Compared to last year's figures both criminal and miscellaneous appeals increased, rising by 14 and 39 percent, respectively.

DISPOSITIONS

Through the third quarter, dispositions exceeded new appeals, resulting in a disposition rate over 100 percent. The number of appeals disposed was 276, which was 32 more than were docketed. As explained in more detail below, 16 (6 percent) of



the 276 dispositions occurred during some stage of the Appellate Mediation Program (AMP). Of the 276 dispositions during the period, 57 percent of the appeals were disposed before argument, 25 percent were disposed after show cause, and the remaining 18 percent

pared to last year. A review of the pending caseload showed that the 96 percent (367) were in the pre-briefing stage, while 2 percent (9) were pending show cause and another 2 percent (6) were pending full argument on the merits.

APPELLATE MEDIATION

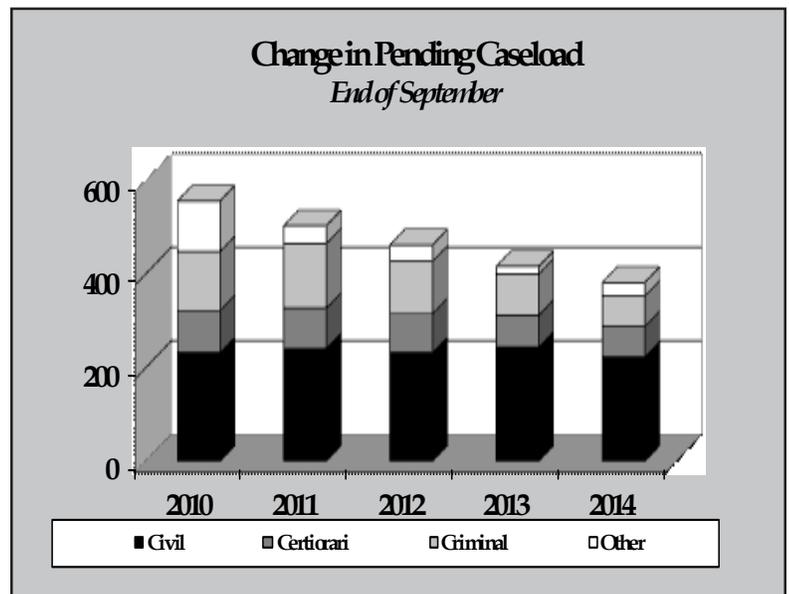
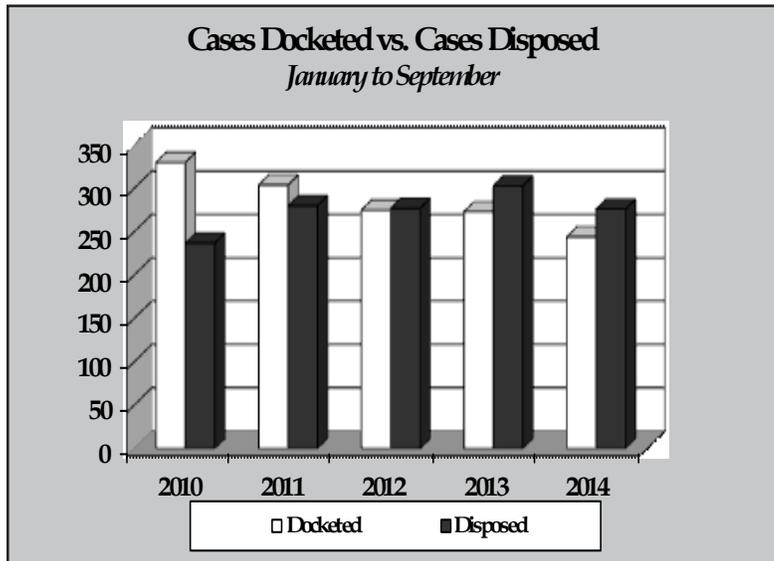
During the first three quarters of calendar year 2014, there were 108 new cases screened through the AMP. Of the 108 new cases screened, 64 were deemed either ineligible or inappropriate for mediation. During this time period, 16 cases were disposed at some stage in the mediation process, representing a 36 percent disposition rate. Eleven of the 16 dispositions were settled at or after mediation, while the remaining 5 were dismissed or withdrawn at an earlier stage in the mediation process. As of September 30, 2014 there were

were disposed after full oral arguments. During the first nine months of 2014, the Supreme Court published 117 written decisions, including 11 orders and 106 opinions. There was also one appeal that was withdrawn.

30 cases active in the program.

PENDING CASELOAD

At the end of the period, the pending caseload was 382, a decrease of 34 (8 percent) compared to last year (416). This is a result of a decline in pending appeals in all categories, with the exception of miscellaneous appeals, which increased by 13. Pending criminal appeals dropped by 23, while certiorari and civil appeals decreased by 3 and 21, respectively, com-



Superior Court

FELONY FILINGS

Statewide felony filings in Superior Court increased through the third quarter of 2014 compared to last year. The number rose by 307 (8 percent) from 3,926 in 2013 to 4,233 in 2014. Felony filings increased in Providence/Bristol and Newport Counties by 13 and 15 percent (353 and 38), respectively. In Kent County, felony filings decreased by 9 (2 percent), while in Washington County, they declined by 75 (23 percent).

FELONY DISPOSITIONS

Through the third quarter of 2014, the statewide felony disposition rate was 93 percent, and in Providence/Bristol County, the rate was also 93 percent. Kent County had an 86 percent disposition rate for felonies, while in Newport County, the disposition rate was 90 percent. In Washington County, dispositions exceeded filings, resulting in a disposition rate over 100 percent.

TIME TO DISPOSITION: FELONIES

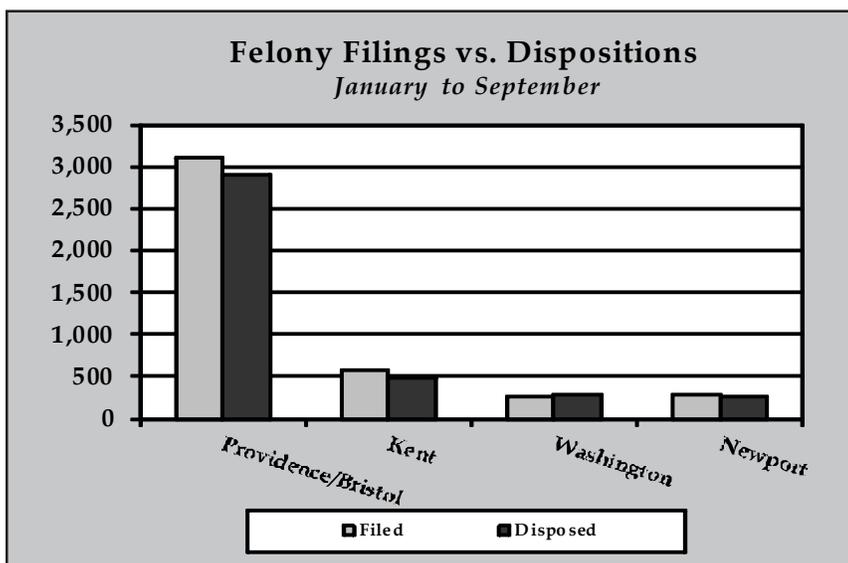
The Superior Court has established a goal of 180 days for the disposition of felony cases and achieved this in

<i>Felony Filings</i>	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Providence/Bristol	2,996	2,878	2,581	2,767	3,120
Kent	501	693	563	580	571
Washington	406	303	321	328	253
Newport	299	235	253	251	289
Total	4,202	4,109	3,718	3,926	4,233
<i>Misdemeanor Filings</i>					
Providence/Bristol	86	99	83	96	132
Kent	37	25	34	19	25
Washington	20	23	36	40	60
Newport	47	15	21	18	10
Total	190	162	174	173	227
<i>Civil Filings</i>					
Total	8,561	7,952	6,946	6,511	6,854
<i>Civil Cases added to the Trial Calendar</i>					
Providence/Bristol	856	607	454	382	418
Kent	204	167	127	115	147
Washington	125	93	80	56	54
Newport	65	63	45	34	54
Total	1,250	930	706	587	673

59 percent of the cases disposed statewide during the first three quarters of 2014. This goal measures the time from when a felony is filed to the case disposition. Kent County handled 70 percent of its felony caseload within 180 days, while Washington County disposed 65 percent within the goal. Providence/Bristol and Newport Counties disposed 55 percent and 75 percent of cases within the 180 day guideline, respectively.

PENDING FELONY CASELOAD

The number of felonies pending statewide totaled 3,082 at the end of September, and 44 percent had been pending over 180 days from filing. Providence/Bristol County had 1,133 cases over 180 days old; Kent County had 131;



Washington County, 61; and Newport County had 32.

MISDEMEANOR FILINGS

Statewide misdemeanor filings through the third quarter increased by 54 (31 percent) from 173 in 2013 to 227 in 2014. Misdemeanor filings increased in all counties, with the exception of Newport County, where they dropped by 8 (44 percent). In Providence/Bristol County misdemeanor filings increased by 36 (38 percent); in Kent County by 6 (32 percent) and in Washington County by 20 (50 percent).

MISDEMEANOR DISPOSITIONS

Statewide, misdemeanor dispositions exceeded filings, resulting in disposition rate over 100 percent. Misdemeanor dispositions exceeded filings in both Providence/Bristol and Newport Counties, while disposition rates in Kent and Washington Counties were 52 and 93 percent, respectively.

TIME TO DISPOSITION: MISDEMEANORS

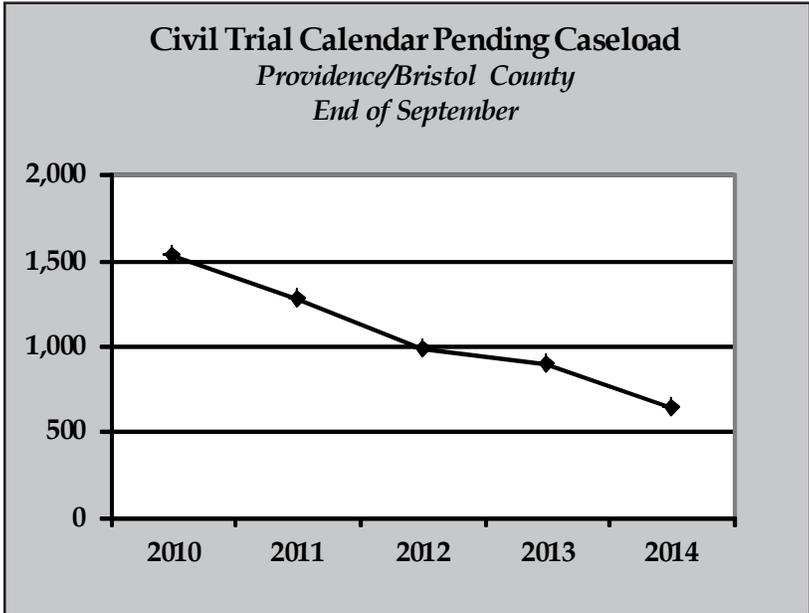
The goal for disposing misdemeanor cases in Superior Court is 90 days, which is measured from filing to disposition. Washington County had the largest percentage of misdemeanors disposed within 90 days (66 percent). Thirty percent of Newport County’s misdemeanors were disposed within the 90 day time frame, while Kent and Providence/Bristol Counties reached the goal in 46 percent and 12 percent of misdemeanor dispositions, respectively.

PENDING MISDEMEANOR CASELOAD

At the end of September, there were only 143 misdemeanor cases pending statewide, and 72 percent (103) were over 90 days old.

CIVIL FILINGS

Statewide civil filings totaled 6,854 through the third quar-



ter of 2014, increasing by 343 (5 percent) compared to last year.

CIVIL CASES ADDED AND DISPOSED: TRIAL CALENDAR

The number of cases added to the civil trial calendar through September increased compared to last year, rising by 86 (15 percent). Cases added to the trial calendar increased in all counties, with the exception of Washington County, where they decreased by 2 (4 percent). In Providence/Bristol County, there were 36 (9 percent) more cases added to the civil trial calendar compared to last year, while in Washington County, there were 32 (28 percent) more. In Newport County, the number of cases added to the civil trial calendar increased by 20 (59 percent), compared to last year. During the first nine months of 2014, all counties disposed more civil cases than were added, resulting in disposition rates that exceeded 100 percent.

PENDING CIVIL CASELOAD: TRIAL CALENDAR

As of the end of September, there were 831 civil cases pending trial statewide, 261 (24 percent) fewer than last year.

Family Court

JUVENILE FILINGS

Through the third quarter of 2014, the Family Court held 61,383 hearings statewide. During this time, Family Court juvenile filings decreased by 2 percent compared to last year, dropping by 110 from 4,919 to 4,809. There was a increase in juvenile filings in every category through the third quarter, with the exception of wayward/delinquent filings, which decreased by 10 percent (282). In the dependency/neglect/abuse (DNA) category, filings increased by 4 percent (41), while in the general category of “other,” they

increased by 19 percent (6). In the violation category, there was an 8 percent increase (40), while both termination of parental rights (TPR) petitions and adoption/guardianship petitions rose by 15 and 21 percent (23 and 62), respectively.

For the nine month period analyzed, juvenile filings were lower in both Providence/Bristol and Kent Counties, compared to last year. Providence/Bristol County filings decreased by 212 (6 percent), while those in Kent County dropped by 21 (3 percent). In both Washington and Newport Counties, filings increased, rising by 21 and 12 percent (86 and 37), respectively.

<i>Juvenile Filings by Case Type</i>	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Wayward/Delinquent	4,318	3,844	3,205	2,931	2,649
Violations	715	600	524	504	544
Dependency/Neglect/Abuse	1,240	982	1,094	1,010	1,051
Termination of Parental Rights	235	154	143	154	177
Adoption/Guardianship	371	364	318	289	351
Other	59	47	48	31	37
Total	6,938	5,991	5,332	4,919	4,809
<i>Juvenile Filings by County</i>					
Providence/Bristol	5,008	4,279	3,782	3,544	3,332
Kent	855	836	729	665	644
Washington	620	514	484	403	489
Newport	455	362	337	307	344
Total	6,938	5,991	5,332	4,919	4,809
<i>Divorce Filings by County</i>					
Providence/Bristol	2,237	2,321	2,397	2,327	2,340
Kent	621	618	579	562	481
Washington	395	395	368	351	319
Newport	239	271	241	269	244
Total	3,492	3,605	3,585	3,509	3,384
<i>Abuse Filings</i>					
Courtwide	1,773	1,930	1,750	1,574	1,664

JUVENILE DISPOSITIONS

In the wayward/delinquent category, there was a statewide disposition rate of 99 percent. The disposition rate for child protection cases statewide was 93 percent through the third quarter of 2014.

TIME TO DISPOSITION: JUVENILE CASES

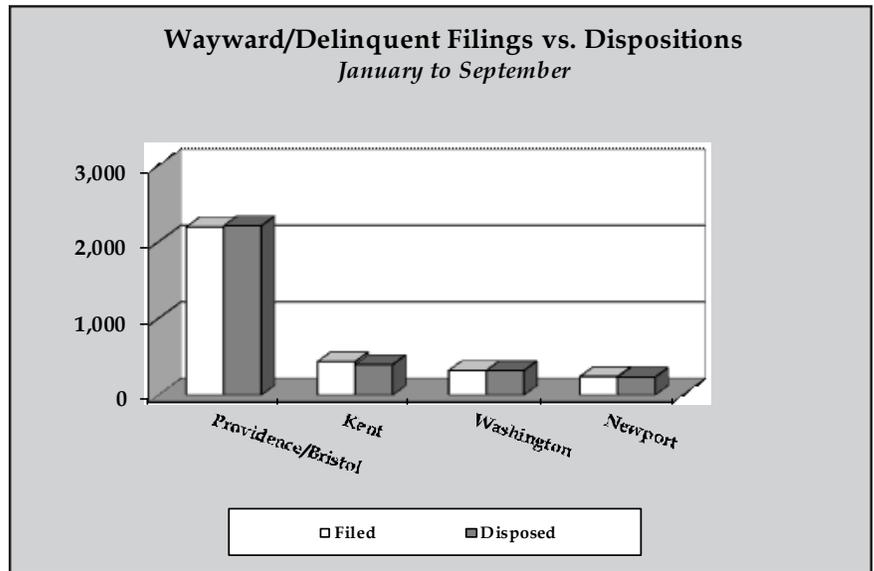
The Family Court has established a timeframe of 180 days as the goal for adjudicating juvenile cases. This goal measures the time from filing until a finding is entered, not the time to final disposition of a case. Statewide, this goal was met in 57 percent of wayward/delinquent cases. Through the third quarter, Providence/Bristol County also

adjudicated 57 percent of its wayward/delinquent cases within 180 days (with violations included). Washington County adjudicated 50 percent of this caseload within 180 days, Kent County met the guideline in 59 percent of the cases, and Newport County in 54 percent. For wayward/delinquent cases handled informally, the goal is 90 days. Through September, 55 percent of the cases met this goal.

In child protection cases statewide, Family Court met the 180 day guideline in 58 percent of the cases for TPR and in 37 percent of the cases for DNA matters. Also, in Providence/Bristol County, 37 percent of the DNA cases and 58 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 September, 30 cases (representing 16 families) remained on this calendar, and 9



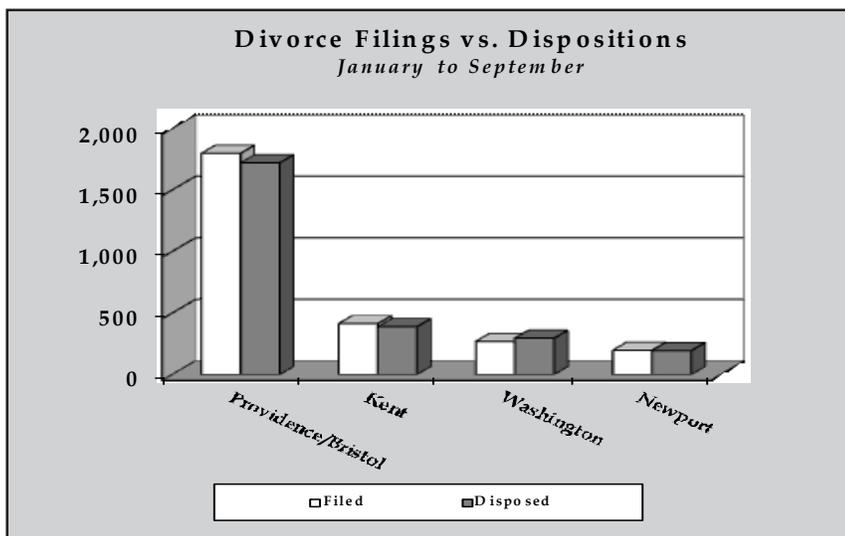
cases (6 families) were over 180 days old.

DOMESTIC FILINGS AND DISPOSITIONS

On the domestic side, divorce filings statewide decreased by 125 (4 percent) compared to last year, from 3,509 to 3,384. Statewide, the dispositions rate for 2014 through the third quarter was 97 percent. In Providence County the disposition rate was 96 percent; in Kent County it was 94 percent; and in Newport County it was 98 percent. Dispositions exceeded filings in Washington County through the third quarter, resulting in a disposition rate over 100 percent.

PENDING DIVORCE CASELOAD

At the end of the third quarter, the total number of divorce cases pending over a year was 45 statewide, 4 more than last year. Providence/Bristol County had 39 divorce cases pending over a year, while Kent, Washington and Newport Counties each had 2 divorce cases pending over a year.



District Court

MISDEMEANOR FILINGS

In District Court, misdemeanor filings increased through the third quarter of 2014 compared to last year. The total number filed rose from 19,092 last year to 19,457, an increase of 365 (2 percent), with filings increasing in all divisions, with the exception of the Sixth Division, where they decreased by 82 (1 percent). In the Fourth Division filings rose by 4 percent (67), in the Third Division by 3 percent (258) and in the Second Division by 7 percent (122).

The 19,457 statewide misdemeanor case filings through the third quarter of 2014 were comprised of 25,781 individual counts. In the Second Division, the 1,870 misdemeanor cases filed represented 2,410 counts, while the Third Division misdemeanor case filings (7,789) resulted in 10,525 counts. Furthermore, the 1,952 misdemeanor cases filed in the Fourth Division included 2,448 counts, and in the Sixth Division, the 7,846 misdemeanor case filings were comprised of 10,398 counts.

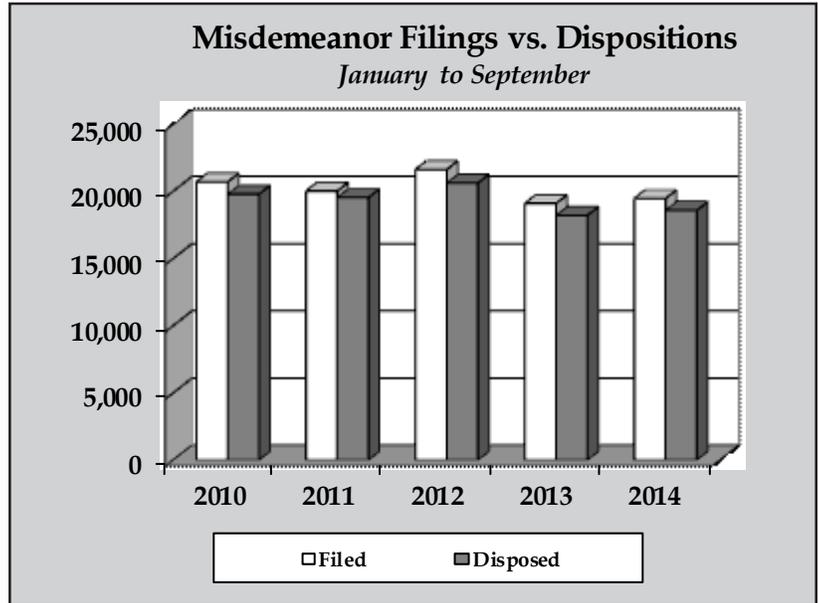
MISDEMEANOR DISPOSITIONS

In general, the District Court continued to handle its misdemeanor caseload in a timely and efficient manner. Overall, the disposition rate for misdemeanors was 95 percent through September. The Third Division had a disposition rate of 99 percent, while in the Second Division, the disposition rate was 94 percent. In the Fourth and Sixth Divisions, the disposition rates were 92 and 93 percent, respectively.

TIME TO DISPOSITION: MISDEMEANORS

The court's goal is to dispose misdemeanors within 60 days of filing. This measures the time between filing a case and its disposition. Statewide, 76 percent of misdemeanors were disposed within this time period. Through

the third quarter, the Second Division handled 80 percent of its misdemeanor caseload within 60 days. The Fourth Division met the 60 day guideline in 78 percent of the mis-



demeanor cases; the Third Division in 74 percent; and the Sixth Division in 77 percent.

PENDING MISDEMEANOR CASELOAD

At the end of September, there were a total of 4,175 misdemeanors pending; 44 percent were less than 60 days old, and another 16 percent were between 60 and 180 days old. In the Second Division, the number of misdemeanors pending more than 60 days was 73, and in the Third Division, it was 719. There were 126 misdemeanors pending more than 60 days in the Fourth Division, and 1,409 in the Sixth Division. The number of misdemeanors over 60 days old has increased by 46 percent from 1,590 a year ago to 2,327.

FELONY FILINGS

Statewide, felony filings through the third quarter decreased by 2 percent over those filed during the same

<i>Misdemeanor Filings</i>	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Second	2,150	1,983	2,000	1,748	1,870
Third	5,715	5,893	8,366	7,531	7,789
Fourth	2,563	2,315	2,353	1,885	1,952
Sixth	10,267	9,820	8,894	7,928	7,846
Total	20,695	20,011	21,613	19,092	19,457
<i>Felony Filings</i>					
Courtwide	5,611	5,667	5,625	5,248	5,156
<i>Civil Filings</i>					
Second	979	1,032	938	866	861
Third	5,021	5,026	5,931	5,654	5,965
Fourth	1,397	1,235	816	804	850
Sixth	10,546	10,265	9,165	8,995	9,037
Total	17,943	17,558	16,850	16,319	16,713
<i>Small Claims</i>					
Second	574	511	413	523	540
Third	3,389	2,975	3,466	4,457	3,961
Fourth	734	743	555	643	587
Sixth	6,431	5,435	3,818	4,634	4,756
Total	11,128	9,664	8,252	10,257	9,844
<i>Abuse Filings</i>					
Courtwide	770	703	540	602	662

time period last year, dropping from 5,248 to 5,156. The number filed decreased in both the Second and Sixth Divisions. In the Second Division, filings declined by 43 (11 percent) and in the Sixth Division, they dropped by 112 (4 percent). In the Third Division, felony filings increased by 59 (4 percent), and in the Third Division, they rose by 4 (1 percent).

CIVIL FILINGS

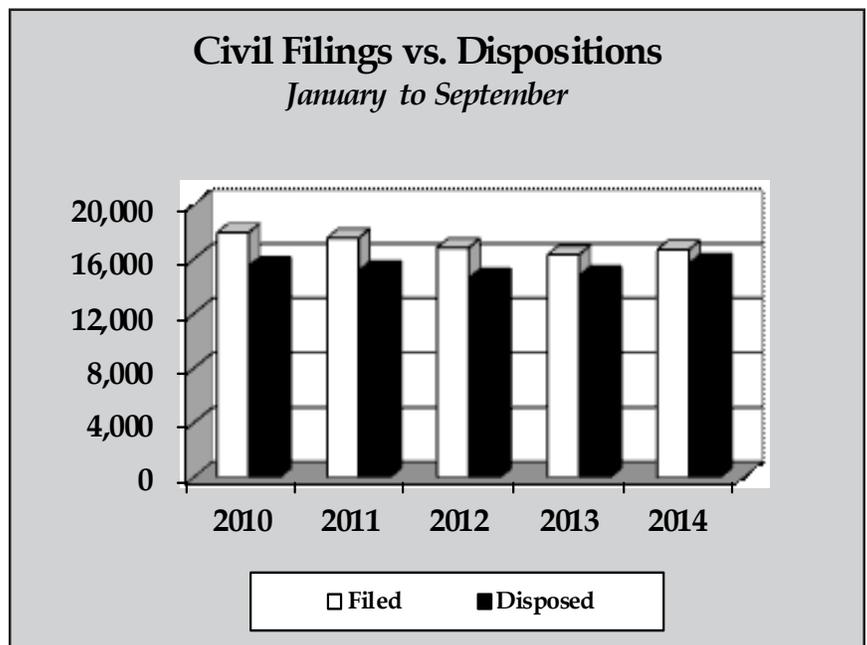
On the civil side, filings through September increased by 394 (2 percent) from 16,319 during the same time period of 2013 to 16,713 in 2014. The increase in civil filings includes a 6 percent increase in both the Third and Fourth Divisions (311 and 46, respectively), and in the

Sixth Division, filings increased by less than 1 percent (42). On the contrary, civil filings decreased by 1 percent (5) in the Second Division through the third quarter. Statewide, abuse filings were up 10 percent (60), compared to last year.

Small claims decreased statewide through the third quarter of 2014 compared to a year ago. Overall, the number of small claims filed dropped by 413 (4 percent). Small claims filings declined by 496 (11 percent) in the Third Division and by 56 (9 percent) in the Fourth Division. Filings increased by 3 percent in both the Second and Sixth Divisions (17 and 122), respectively, compared to last year.

CIVIL DISPOSITIONS

The statewide disposition rate for civil cases was 94 percent, up from 91 percent a year ago. For small claims, dispositions exceeded filings through the third quarter of 2014, resulting in a disposition rate over 100 percent.



Workers' Compensation Court

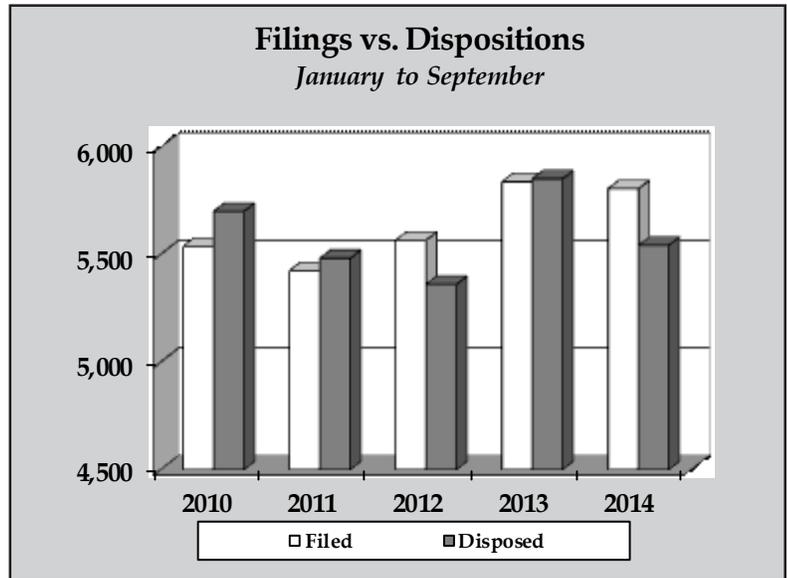
PETITIONS FILED

The number of petitions filed in the Workers' Compensation Court through the third quarter of 2014 decreased slightly by 32 from last year. A year ago there were 5,837 petitions filed through September, and this year there were 5,805, a difference of 1 percent.

Petitions increased compared to a year ago for employee petitions, employer petitions and petitions for medical. Petitions for medical rose by 26 percent (18), and both employee and employer petitions increased by 3 percent (53 and 25, respectively). On the contrary, lump sum settlements dropped by 13 percent (82) while miscellaneous petitions, original petitions and petitions to enforce all decreased by 2 percent (2, 33 and 11, respectively).

PETITIONS DISPOSED

Through the third quarter, the disposition rate was 95 percent. At the pretrial stage, dispositions accounted for 76 percent of the total, an increase from last year (73 percent).

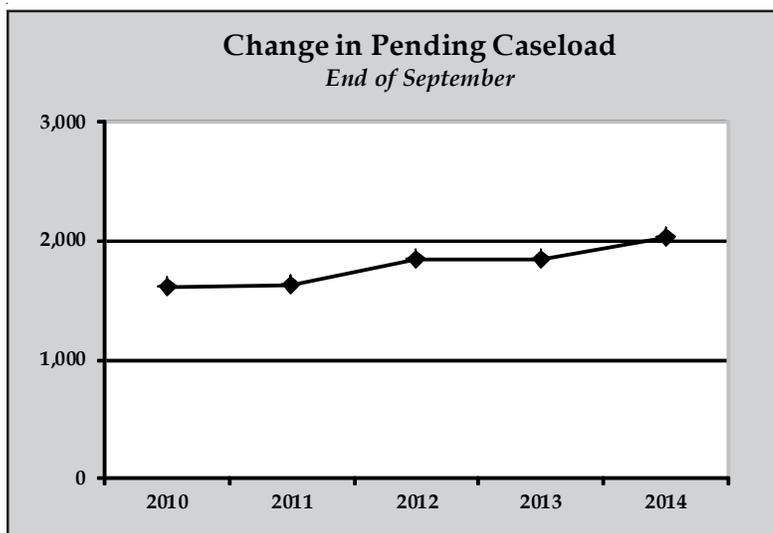


TIME TO DISPOSITION

The Workers' Compensation Court has established a goal of 90 days for cases to be disposed at pretrial and 360 days for those disposed at trial. This calculation measures the time between the filing and disposition of a petition. The percentage of cases disposed at pretrial was 86 percent, which represents negligible decrease from a year ago (87 percent). In addition, another 89 percent of the cases disposed at trial were handled within 360 days, up from 86 percent a year ago.

PENDING CASELOAD

Compared to last year, the total number of petitions pending grew from 1,846 to 2,023, an increase of 10 percent (177). Of those cases, the number of cases pending trial rose by 141 (18 percent) from 789 to 930. Petitions pending trial over 270 days increased from 260 to 369, representing 40 percent of the total number pending trial, up 7 percent from last year.



Traffic Tribunal

SUMMONSES ISSUED

The number of summonses issued to the Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal (RITT) increased through the third quarter of 2014, rising nearly 11 percent from 61,691 last year to 68,154. The 68,154 summonses issued during this time period included a total of

83,130 violations. RITT summonses accounted for roughly 60 percent of the total summonses issued this period.

Consistent with the overall increase in summonses, refusals rose by 49 (4 percent) and insurance violations increased by 380 (5 percent) compared to last year.

SUMMONSES DISPOSED

The RITT had a 99 percent disposition rate through the third quarter. Payments by mail represented 25 percent of total dispositions, and increased by 2,080 (14 percent) over last year's figure. The remaining 75 percent (50,653) 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 initial appearance to disposition. Through the third quarter of the year, 96 percent of all dispositions met this guideline statewide. Furthermore, 82 percent of breathalyzer refusals and 94 percent of insurance violations were disposed within the 60 day timeframe.

As in the past, the majority of dispositions took place at or before the arraignment stage, although the

<i>Filings</i>	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Summonses Issued *	112,055	112,708	128,735	111,309	113,254
RITT Summonses Issued	65,080	61,718	76,796	61,691	68,154
RITT Violations	79,770	75,916	92,855	77,600	83,130
<i>RITT Dispositions</i>					
Court Hearings	44,531	42,644	55,608	48,002	50,653
Payments by Mail	21,261	19,635	22,145	14,742	16,822
Total Disposed	65,792	62,279	77,753	62,744	67,475
* Includes summonses issued to both RITT and municipal courts.					

results were different for certain categories. Based on statistics relating to the number of violations (separate offenses) 18 percent of all violations disposed occurred prior to arraignment, while another 69 percent occurred at arraignment. Also, 81 percent of insurance violations and 27 percent of breathalyzer refusal matters were disposed at or before arraignment.

PENDING CASELOAD

The total number of summonses pending at the end of September was 2,729. Of this number, 1,915 (70 percent) were pending over 60 days.

