



Family Court of the State of Rhode Island  
One Dorrance Plaza  
Providence, RI 02903

MICHAEL B. FORTE  
CHIEF JUDGE

February 11, 2025

Representative Robert Craven  
Chairman, House Judiciary Committee  
R.I. State House  
Providence, R.I. 02903

Re: 2025-H 5222

Dear Chairman Craven and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I write to comment on 2025-H 5222, which amends the *Exclusive Jurisdiction* of the Family Court under R.I.G.L. 14—1-5, which details the exclusive original jurisdiction of the R.I. Family Court. It adds a subdivision to R.I.G.L. 14-1-28, regarding the mandatory transfer of cases to the Family Court. It is difficult to reconcile concurrent jurisdiction with the federal court at the discretion of the U.S. Attorney or the federal court with the exclusive original jurisdiction of the R.I. Family Court according to R.I.G.L. 14-1-28.

Moreover, even if this issue was clarified, the explanation provided by the Legislative Council does not match the language in the bill. The bill itself does not state that it applies only to minors who reside on the base. Obviously, the base could be breached and crimes committed by juveniles who live elsewhere. In addition, it is unclear whether a juvenile, once waived by the federal court or the U.S. Attorney is waived for all subsequent crimes, including wayward offenses, such as shoplifting in the Commissary.

Accordingly, the Court asks that this bill be held for further study.

Very Truly Yours,

Michael B. Forte, Chief Judge  
R.I. Family Court