



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND JUDICIARY

SUPREME COURT  
OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL

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**Via Electronic Mail (HouseJudiciary@rilegislature.gov)**

Chair Carol Hagan McEntee  
House Committee on Judiciary  
Rhode Island General Assembly  
Rhode Island State House  
House Lounge  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

**Re: House Bill #7653: An Act Relating to Criminal Offenses – Domestic Violence Prevention Act**

Dear Chair Hagan McEntee:

I write on behalf of the Rhode Island Judiciary to respectfully urge the House Committee on Judiciary to support the passage of House Bill #7653, scheduled to be heard this evening. If enacted, this legislation would amend R.I. Gen. Laws § 12-29-8 and require law enforcement officers to electronically file with the Supreme Court's Domestic Violence Training and Monitoring Unit (the "Unit") a new, upgraded, domestic violence/sexual assault reporting form under standardized data reporting and timing conditions.

Under current law, a law enforcement officer responding to or investigating a domestic violence incident must complete a "Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault/Child Molestation" form ("DV/SA-1"). This is the same form that officers must complete upon responding to or investigating a sexual assault or child molestation sexual assault incident. These reporting forms are delivered in person or by mail to the Unit in paper form with the accompanying police report attached. The proposed legislation would allow for electronic reporting which would assist both law enforcement officers and members of the Unit who process the forms.

The Judiciary proposed House Bill #7653 to enhance the current reporting system in three (3) consequential ways. First, the Unit receives approximately 7,300 DV/SA-1 forms each year. Each form must be individually reviewed, edited if inaccurate (for example, existing challenges include hard to read information, incomplete sections, and improper data field use), numbered, processed, scanned, and then a Unit member must manually enter the data into the Unit's database. The migration of the DV/SA-1 form from paper to electronic format would save the Unit

significant time, resources, and work hours at each step of this process, while allowing the Unit to better conform to the Judiciary's ongoing adoption of electronic documentation across the unified judicial system. This proposed change would also streamline the completion and submission process for law enforcement agencies by allowing them to complete the forms on scene (or immediately thereafter) and eliminate the need for printing the form, completing the form by hand, and personally delivering or mailing the form. Further, the electronic filing of the form would ensure that the relevant information is accurately submitted.

Second, a statewide records management system for law enforcement has been created, in which some, but not all, Rhode Island law enforcement agencies will participate. The creation of a new, electronic DV/SA-1 form would ensure that all law enforcement agencies, regardless of their participation status in the new statewide records management system, would be able to access and submit the same standardized form to the Unit. It would also permit the Unit to make quick and easy future form modifications and transmit them electronically to all law enforcement agencies at the same time.

Third, House Bill #7653 would establish a standardized reporting time period for submitting incomplete or "under investigation" DV/SA-1 forms. Currently, such a standard is lacking, leading some law enforcement agencies to submit DV/SA-1 forms before making a probable cause determination. The Unit must then list such cases as "under investigation" indefinitely, leaving gaps in their database and skewing their statistics. This bill would resolve this problem by requiring the law enforcement officer to submit completed forms by the end of each month and finish and submit "under investigation" forms as soon as practicable, but no later than the end of the relevant calendar year.

For the foregoing reasons, I ask the House Committee on Judiciary to consider supporting the passage of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to address this important matter.

Sincerely,



Chrisanne Wyrzykowski  
General Counsel  
Rhode Island Supreme Court