



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

April 16, 2026

MICHAEL B. FORTE
CHIEF JUDGE

Representative Carol Hagan McEntee
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
RI State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: 2026 H-8089

Dear Chair McEntee and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

I write to comment on **2026 H 8089** entitled “Relating to Delinquent and Dependent Children—Proceedings in Family Court.” This bill adds to R.I.G.L 14-1-6 regarding the retention of jurisdiction over children and adolescents by the Family Court. It provides that once the Court has acquired jurisdiction of a child in the juvenile justice system, either the child or the Court, *sua sponte*, can extend the Court’s jurisdiction until the juvenile’s twenty-first birthday.

This bill is effective upon passage which raises concern that the legislation may create an *ex post facto* problem. If the Court, *sua sponte*, can extend the detention of a juvenile beyond the original disposition, the constitutionality of the law may be in question. Additionally, the budgetary implications will need to be considered by both DCYF and the Family Court.

While the Court respects the intent of this bill to make rehabilitative services available to juveniles for a longer period of time, the Court respectfully asks that this bill be held for further study, and thanks the Committee for this opportunity to comment on this proposed legislation.

Very truly yours,

Michael B. Forte
Chief Judge

MBF:nmp