

HOUSE No.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Peter J. Koutoujian

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the passage of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to family justice centers. .

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Peter J. Koutoujian

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

10th Middlesex

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. 1266 OF 2007-2008.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and Nine

AN ACT RELATIVE TO FAMILY JUSTICE CENTERS. .

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 2 of Chapter 209A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2006 edition,
2 shall be deleted and replaced with the following section:-

3 Section 2. Proceedings under this chapter shall be filed, heard and determined in the
4 superior court department or respective divisions of the probate and family or district court
5 departments having venue over the plaintiff's residence. If the plaintiff has left a residence or
6 household to avoid abuse, such plaintiff shall have the option of commencing an action in the
7 court having venue over such prior residence or household, or in the court having venue over the
8 present residence or household. In the event that the plaintiff's residence also falls within a
9 county that provides the services of a Family Justice Center, that plaintiff shall also have the
10 option to commence an action in the court located nearest the Family Justice Center.

11 For purposes of this section, a Family Justice Center is defined in the commonwealth as such:

12 A Family Justice Center is solely dedicated to service delivery for victims of domestic violence
13 and sexual assault. A Family Justice Center locates in one facility providers and responders to
14 enable easier access to services for victims of these crimes, and their children. The co-location of
15 service providers, community-based programs, and criminal justice professionals is designed to
16 create options, not barriers, for victims.