

HOUSE No. 1497

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand 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
2 edition, 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
12 such:

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