

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 455**

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**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 adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to family justice centers.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Peter J. Koutoujian</i>	<i>10th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/6/2011</i>

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 455**

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By Mr. Koutoujian of Waltham, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 455) of Peter J. Koutoujian relative to the creation of family justice centers to assist victims of abuse in certain court jurisdictions. The Judiciary.

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[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION  
SEE HOUSE, NO. 1497 OF 2009-2010.]

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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**In the Year Two Thousand Eleven**  
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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.