

# ANNUAL REPORT

2019



**OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
STATE OF RHODE ISLAND**

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**Photo:** In 2019, the Office's Equal Opportunity Advisory Committee kicked off a featured speaker series, welcoming a number of presenters who shared their unique experiences and perspectives with the RIAG team.

## DEAR FELLOW RHODE ISLANDERS,

### It's the fight that matters.

As I write this letter, we are in the midst of a global pandemic that has cost our state hundreds of lives and caused thousands to be out of work. Massive protests calling for civil rights and an end to police brutality are sweeping the country and our state, after the killing of George Floyd at the hands of police officers in Minneapolis.

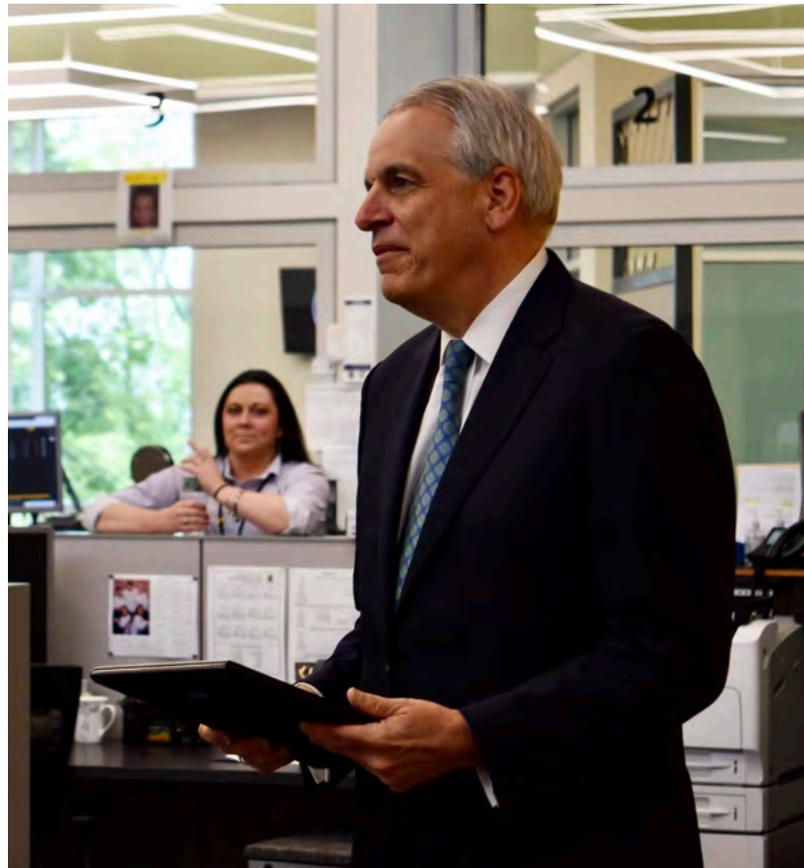
This annual report focuses on the work we did in 2019 – our first year in office. But if 2020 so far has taught us anything, it's that in order to be prepared for the unpredictable, you better have been doing the hard work all along.

Part of my role as Attorney General is to push this Office beyond what is comfortable to fight for Rhode Islanders. The full scope of what this Office handles is immense, but I have been truly excited by the impact we can have if we think creatively and use our existing authority in new ways.

We're holding companies accountable when they violate environmental regulations, because no one – no matter what their zip code – should have to breathe polluted air or drink dirty water. We're helping consumers in disputes with companies that refuse to do the right thing because they think the individual Rhode Islanders don't have the means to fight back on their own. We're offering regular office hours at a location on the south side of Providence to assist and connect with a community that doesn't see enough of us.

As the "people's lawyer," I want to expand our lane, not narrow it. I want this Office to be in places people don't expect, because I believe there are more places where we can make a real difference. The phrase "we've never done that before" holds no meaning for me.

Wage theft is a good example of a place where we needed to do more. We've stepped up our efforts there, including hiring an experienced former federal agent whose sole focus is ensuring Rhode Islanders are paid fairly for their work. Using our regulatory and charitable trust authority to make sure healthcare is accessible and affordable is another. As the healthcare landscape changes drastically, this Office has an oversight role that is critical to get right. We're also expanding our ability to protect civil rights under our existing authority and working hard to convince the General Assembly to give us the tools to do more.



We will always fight to keep Rhode Islanders safe. We should focus on violent criminals while diverting, where appropriate, non-violent offenders away from traditional prosecution to programs that connect them with necessary treatment and other services. Our Public Integrity Unit, created when I took office, is working hard to ensure that all public officials serve the public, not themselves.

Everyone in this Office, including me, is here because we love this work. I see it in the attorneys who litigate their large civil and criminal caseloads with distinction and spend their off-hours at our expungement open houses helping Rhode Islanders get back on track; the consumer investigators who go above and beyond to reach a fair result for every Rhode Islander who files a complaint; and our background check team in Cranston who serve more than 350 people a day and consider it a privilege to serve the public with courtesy and respect.

As Attorney General, it has been my honor to represent the people of Rhode Island. I look forward to working with all of you to find ways we can keep fighting for what matters.

Peter F. Neronha  
Attorney General



## RESPONDING TO THE IMPACTS OF COVID-19

The appearance and spread of COVID-19 in the Ocean State prompted swift and decisive action by elected and community leaders, as well as public and private institutions. Just days after the first known case of COVID-19 in Rhode Island, Governor Gina Raimondo declared a state of emergency to address the critical yet still emerging public health crisis. Since the initial response to the COVID-19 pandemic by state and local government, the lives of Rhode Islanders have changed in profound ways.

At the time of this publication, hundreds of Rhode Islanders have lost their lives to COVID-19 and thousands have lost their jobs and face economic uncertainty. The challenges presented by the public health crisis and resulting economic downturn demanded an unprecedented mobilization of local, state and federal resources in response.

Almost immediately following the declaration of the state of emergency, the Office of the Attorney General implemented a continuity of operations plan, which ensured that the essential functions of the office remained at the ready to meet the needs of the people of Rhode Island. Since the plan's implementation, the Office has continued to fulfill the legal needs of the criminal justice system, conduct essential background checks, and help Rhode Islanders navigate a myriad of consumer issues stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic – from cancelled vacations to price gouging.

Additionally, our attorneys provided legal analysis and advice on a daily basis to address the many novel legal issues raised by the public health response to this epidemic. As the State's legal counsel, we were regularly consulted by the executive branch regarding many of the executive orders issued and worked jointly with state agencies to address practical and legal issues around quarantine, isolation, travel restrictions, social gathering restrictions and stay-at-home orders.

For perhaps the first time ever, the Office regularly issued public legal guidance documents to help government, law enforcement, businesses and the public navigate the quickly changing legal landscape. We issued guidance about open government law modifications; the enforcement of executive orders; illegal self-help evictions; protection of federal stimulus payments to nursing home residents; illegal debt collection practices of stimulus payments; and student loan forgiveness options during this crisis. All guidance was made publicly available on the Office's web site and COVID-19 resource page.

Throughout the State's collective response to COVID-19, the Office has remained a resource for the people of Rhode Island and worked tirelessly to protect their interests.



## MARCH

- 2 First positive COVID-19 case is reported in RI
  - 9 Governor issues Executive Order declaring State of Emergency
  - 11 AG issues warning to RI consumers after reports of price gouging and other scams
  - 16 AG's office implements new operational plan to adhere to emergency court calendar, ensure continuity of service for background checks, and allow teleworking for staff
  - 17 AG's office provides guidance to cities, towns and the public on changes to APRA/OMA open government laws due to executive order 20-05
  - 20 AG issues urgent warning to RI consumers as new scams promise COVID-19 stimulus checks
  - 30 AG's office launches COVID-19 resource page to keep Rhode Islanders informed
- Public Defender's Office files emergency petition for RI Supreme Court order to release subset of inmates from the ACI

## APRIL

- 1 AG files response to emergency petition, stipulating release must be contingent on safeguards recommended by DOH and DOC to ensure inmate does not pose public health risk
- 3 AG files supplemental stipulation; RI Supreme Court orders 52 ACI inmates to be released
- 6 AG issues warning against illegal 'self-help' evictions
- 9 AG's office reaches out to RI gyms and health clubs with guidance regarding membership agreements during suspended operation
- 13 AG reaches out to community groups to offer civil rights resources after reports of discrimination and harassment against Asian Americans
- 16 AG issues guidance to police chiefs on enforcement of Executive Orders related to social distancing, quarantine, isolation, and business closures
- 20 AG issues updated guidance to cities, towns and the public on new APRA/OMA guidelines based on supplemental Executive Order 20-25
- 28 AG puts debt collectors on notice that CARES Act relief payments cannot be garnished; issues guidance to financial institutions
- 31 AG participates in Violence Prevention town hall, outlines resources available for victims of domestic violence

## MAY

- 14 AG issues guidance on protections for student loan borrowers

## JUNE

- 4 AG alerts Rhode Islanders about legitimacy of Economic Impact Cards
- 14 AG Neronha issues guidance on federal stimulus payments for nursing home residents

## BY THE NUMBERS

Number of applicants  
for expungement

**Providence, Broad Street event:**

55

**Newport event:**

126

**Providence, Nonviolence  
Institute event:**

226

**Total number of applicants:**

407

**Applicants eligible for  
expungement immediately:**

182

**Applicants potentially eligible  
in the future:**

70

62%

of applicants were eligible  
for expungement immediately  
or in the future

*“We’re not creating anything new; this is a law that exists in Rhode Island. If you’re entitled to expungement under the law, getting it done shouldn’t be driven by where you live, what language you speak, or what your economic means are.”*

–AG Neronha

## EXPUNGEMENT OPEN HOUSES

One of the Office’s signature achievements in 2019 was the implementation of its Expungement Open Houses. These events, which are free and open to the public, offer people who have been arrested or convicted of certain criminal offenses in Rhode Island an opportunity to start the process of having their criminal record sealed or expunged. In addition to AG Neronha, staff attorneys are on site to help attendees obtain their criminal history and evaluate their eligibility for expungement. We provide them with information about the process and where to file their motion.

The Office held its first Expungement Open House on December 3, 2019 on Broad Street in Providence. Despite it being the first one without a past track record to draw from, over 50 people attended the Providence event and nearly 30% of applicants were able to move forward in the process to have their records expunged. What started as a pilot to see if there was a need and an interest in this public service has quickly grown into a standing-room-only event.

At the two Expungement Open Houses that have been held since, one in Newport and another in Providence, attendance has more than tripled. In total, we have helped over 400 people through these events and more than 250 of them were eligible to have their records expunged or will be eligible in the future.

While planned dates in 2020 were tabled due to COVID-19, the Office is in the process of bringing the expungement open houses online.

*“I thank God I learned about expungement and started the process to clear my name. I’m not going to let it happen again. I decided to change my path.”* –Victor, Providence man who learned he was eligible to expunge a 17-year-old felony drug conviction

## RECLASSIFICATION OF SIMPLE DRUG POSSESSION FOR PERSONAL USE

AG Neronha continues to champion legislation that recognizes that—like many other states already have—simple drug possession isn’t felony conduct and common-sense drug policy reforms can reduce the impact that drug addiction or a conviction can have on a Rhode Islander’s ability to get a job, find housing, and turn his or her life around.

Imprisoning drug users for simple possession offenses advances neither public safety nor public health. A growing body of evidence suggests that there is no statistically significant relationship between drug offender imprisonment rates and common measures of state drug problems, including the rate of drug use, drug overdose deaths, and drug arrests.

Under AG Neronha’s leadership, the Office has worked to re-focus law enforcement resources on stopping violent crime and drug dealers, instead of locking up users and those suffering from addiction.

*“Compared to other states, Rhode Island’s violent crime rate is low. That said, there is work to do. That work needs a strategy — a real strategy — to address violent crime in our neighborhoods. We can’t go back 30 years in time and say we’re going to lock everybody up for as long as possible. It’s too expensive, it won’t work, and it’s not right.”*

—AG Neronha

## DIVERSION PROGRAM

*“The more thoughtful we are, the better results we will get.”*—AG Neronha

AG Neronha believes in second chances and wanted to expand the Office’s Diversion Program to steer first-time and low-level offenders from the criminal justice system when possible. His approach resulted in a 50% increase in cases being referred to Diversion over 2018.

In late 2019, the Office partnered with the Superior Court to re-engineer the Diversion Program. Our diversion unit conducts the pre-screening and referral of persons who are eligible for diversion, while the Court tracks those individuals once a judge has authorized their participation in the program.

The new arrangement, which involves a judge addressing and reviewing defendants, offers greater formality with court reviews and is intended to ensure greater compliance with diversion conditions, leading to more people successfully completing the Diversion Program.

*“Thank you for all of your help during this process. This has been a very challenging time for me and my family. You were so kind and open to giving me advice during these past 6 months — you made me realize how I have to always think before making decisions. I have definitely grown up during this time.”* — Mark, completed Diversion Program

## ADULT DRUG COURT

In 2019, the Office continued to represent the State before the Superior Court’s Adult Drug Court (ADC), a special court that handles cases involving offenders with substance abuse disorders. Participants are subject to random weekly drug screens and are closely monitored by the ADC team through case reviews. The goal of the ADC is to integrate substance abuse treatment within the criminal justice system and divert nonviolent felony defendants facing drug or drug related charges.

**Adult Drug Court prosecutors handled 84 admissions, 78 graduates. The Adult Drug Court had 137 total participants as of December 31, 2019.**

## BY THE NUMBERS

**696 cases**

**cases were referred to Diversion in 2019**, the most in the program’s history and a 50% increase over 2018.

**\$152,588.38**

By making restitution an important component of the program, the Adult Diversion Unit **collected \$152,588.38 in restitution**, which was forwarded to crime victims.

**4,670 hours**

**Participants performed 4,670 hours** of community service work.

**162 counseling programs**

**Program participants enrolled in 162 counseling programs** (mental health, substance abuse, dual diagnosis, and gambling addiction), furthering the goal to attack the root cause in order to avoid recidivism.

*“Part of building trust is letting people know who you are. That means getting out into the community, holding office hours, speaking with neighborhood associations about their concerns. If I never leave my office at 150 South Main Street, then I’m not doing my job.” –AG Neronha*

Immediately after taking office in January 2019, AG Neronha implemented a community outreach plan focused on making the Office’s services accessible in the communities where they were most needed. Community office hours were held regularly in various cities and towns, starting with Central Falls. AG Neronha met personally with community members, listened to their concerns, and connected them with an RIAG staff member for assistance.

### REGULAR COMMUNITY OFFICE HOURS, 693 BROAD STREET, PROVIDENCE

Fulfilling a promise to be accessible to all Rhode Islanders, AG Neronha found a consistent way for the Office to help underserved communities by holding regular, weekly office hours at a location on Broad Street in South Providence. While staff is on a rotating schedule, community members can walk in at any time during designated office hours and speak with someone from the RIAG Consumer Protection Unit or Community Outreach Division. Spanish language services are available.

If an individual’s issue requires the services of another agency, our team sees to it that they are connected to a place that can help. The most important thing is that residents have a place they can turn to when they don’t know how to get needed assistance.

**Photo:** In 2019, members of the Office conducted visits, trainings, and presentations with many great organizations and groups throughout Rhode Island, including National Reading Week celebrations in schools across the Ocean State.





**Photo:** In 2019, the Office held regularly scheduled community office hours on the south side of Providence, accessible to residents via walk-in appointment.

## REFLECTING THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE

Change must start from within. Since early 2019, we have continued to evaluate every aspect of the Office to understand how our work impacts the communities we serve, particularly communities of color. It is challenging to understand and earn the trust of our communities when our employees do not reflect those communities. To that end, AG Neronha has prioritized increasing the diversity among our staff and our attorneys.

A significant advancement was the Office's move in early 2019 to a merit-based hiring system. All RIAG open positions are now posted publicly on <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/rhodeisland> and are available to all those who qualify.

The Office also established the William C. Clifton, Sr. Clerkship Program in 2019, which provides first- and second-year law students from historically underrepresented populations with the paid opportunity to spend the summer working on substantive legal matters while building valuable career experience. This program is an important investment in our Office's future workforce.

Our Office's Equal Opportunity Advisory Committee established a speaker series in 2019, which offers opportunities for our staff to hear about the impact of our work from diverse perspectives and improve our cultural competencies. Members of this committee also took a much more active role in the Office's hiring process in 2019.

## BY THE NUMBERS

# 8,079

calls to consumer unit

# 251

walk ins

Over

# 100

presentations to elders on scam/  
fraud prevention

More than

# 35

consumer protection  
presentations

# 478

Resolved complaints for  
RI consumers

Over

# \$109,068

recovered for 182 consumers  
(Many positive outcomes  
are not monetary)

*“Our Office protects Rhode Islanders from companies that break the rules, engage in deception or fraud, and take advantage of workers. When these businesses cross the line, they hurt Rhode Island consumers, and they hurt their competitors that do play by the rules” –AG Neronha*

In today’s complex marketplace, consumers can often run into problems or have questions. What do you do about them? What are your legal rights as a consumer? Who do you turn to for help? How do you protect yourself against fraud?

AG Neronha made it a top priority to focus on issues that impact the lives of Rhode Islanders. Through the Office’s Consumer Protection Unit, we help consumers resolve complaints against businesses, whether it’s a refund for a cancelled trip or services paid for but never delivered. The Office has also helped student loan borrowers through the Consumer Protection Unit, participated in and collected a number of multi-state settlements that directly benefit consumers, and taken part in nationwide efforts to curb robocalls.

## SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT

### iLoveKickboxing

After iLoveKickboxing abruptly closed both of its locations in 2019, dozens of its members were left high and dry. Our Office worked with the gym’s attorney to secure restitution for past clients in an amount of over \$8,000.

**Our office resolves consumer complaints no matter what the issue or monetary amount is. Below is just a sample of consumers we helped in 2019:**

- \$3,196 refund for a consumer in Pawtucket for cancelled merchandise from a popular cookware company
- \$4,695 refund for a consumer in Barrington from a tax preparation services company
- Wireless phone bill resolution to a zero balance for a consumer in East Providence
- \$100 refund for a consumer in Exeter for a gift certificate to a closed restaurant
- Reduced invoice from \$2,344 to \$1,559 for heating and air conditioning services for a consumer in Providence
- Acknowledgement of liability and agreement to repair vehicle damage by a car wash for a consumer in Cranston
- \$64.84 refund and account cancellation by wireless phone provider for a consumer in Warwick
- \$1,221.42 refund from a security services provider for a consumer in Coventry
- \$3,372.96 refund from a travel insurance company for a consumer in Providence

## CONSUMER SETTLEMENT

### Equifax pays \$1 million to Rhode Island as part of Data Breach Settlement

In July 2019, a coalition of 50 Attorneys General, comprising 48 states, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, reached a \$425 million settlement with Equifax resulting from an investigation into a massive 2017 data breach. As a consequence of the breach, Equifax was ordered to pay \$1 million to the State of Rhode Island.

The investigation found that Equifax's failure to maintain a reasonable security system enabled hackers to penetrate its systems, exposing the data of 56 percent of American adults, including approximately 500,000 Rhode Island consumers—the largest-ever breach of consumer data.

## CONTINUED EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN RI'S CONSUMER PROTECTION LAW

There is so much more we could do for Rhode Island consumers, but we need better consumer protection laws. AG Neronha continues to champion reforms to better protect Rhode Islanders from deceptive trade practices. **Here's why:**

- The National Consumer Law Center refers to Rhode Island's consumer protection laws as one of the "terrible two," along with Michigan's, in that the law does not apply to the majority of all consumer transactions.
- Rhode Island is the only state that does not permit civil penalties for the first violation of its consumer protection law.
- Our Office's ability to help consumers is hampered anytime a consumer is dealing with a person or business that is otherwise regulated, such as insurance, mortgage and other lending, and utilities.
- Our proposed changes to the law would give the AG tools to help consumers when they need it most and help ensure that people and businesses breaking the rules are held accountable.



### Attorney General Neronha takes action to protect consumers from speculative ticket sellers

In 2019, we investigated the sale of speculative tickets in Rhode Island and found that consumers who purchased speculative tickets to a production of Hamilton at the Providence Performing Arts Center paid an average of \$479 per ticket, while the average price for tickets through the venue was about \$145.

The effort led to thousands of dollars in refunds for Rhode Island consumers, the removal of thousands of speculative tickets to events in Rhode Island from online ticket resale platforms, and the sanction of ticket sellers found to have listed or sold inadequately disclosed speculative tickets.

**Photo:** In 2019, the Office held office hours in communities throughout Rhode Island, bringing the Office to Rhode Islanders to help with consumer protection and other issues.



*“For too long, an underground economy in which employees are misclassified as independent contractors or otherwise denied the wages and benefits they are fairly owed has been allowed to exist in Rhode Island, with little interference. I am committed to changing that.”*

–AG Neronha



### Ensuring Workers are Paid Their Fair Share

In 2019, the Office significantly stepped up efforts to combat wage theft in Rhode Island. We have built a robust in-house effort, including hiring an investigator who is solely focused on seeking out companies who engage in wage theft.

### Attorney General charges business owner for failing to pay wages

In September 2019, Attorney General Neronha and Rhode Island State Police Colonel James M. Manni announced the arrest of David Pelino, President of Bright Sky Solar, LLC, for allegedly failing to pay wages totaling over \$7,000 to former employees. As a result of the investigation, one of Pelino’s four employees was compensated in full, while two were paid back a partial amount of the money owed.

**Photo:** Rhode Island has a robust local radio market that exists in communities throughout the state, including Woonsocket, Newport, Providence, with broadcasts in English and Spanish languages.

## LOOKING OUT

### FOR RHODE ISLAND STUDENT LOAN BORROWERS

More than 133,000 Rhode Islanders, including 16,000 senior citizens, have a combined \$4.5 billion in student loan debt. Borrowers in Rhode Island report being double-charged or incorrectly marked as delinquent in payment, with loan servicers taking months, or even years, to correct mistakes.

In 2019, we worked with the General Treasurer to pass the Student Loan Bill of Rights, which provides Rhode Islanders with new consumer protections and allows our Office to have greater oversight and investigative and enforcement tools regarding student loan servicing practices.

Borrowers can visit our dedicated web site, [www.studentloanborrowersri.com](http://www.studentloanborrowersri.com), for more information.

### TOP CONSUMER COMPLAINTS IN 2019 CONCERNED PROBLEMS WITH:

- Mobile phone service providers
- Internet service providers
- Auto Sales and Service
- Scams
- Identity Theft
- Contractors

### How to Reach Out to Consumer Protection for Help

**Phone:** 401-274-4400, PROMPT 1

**E-mail:** [consumers@riag.ri.gov](mailto:consumers@riag.ri.gov)

**File an online complaint:** [www.riag.ri.gov](http://www.riag.ri.gov)



*“We have really stepped up our game when it comes to environmental enforcement. I can tell you that the Port of Providence is a focus for this office.” –AG Neronha*

Protecting the environment and environmental justice are important priorities of the Office. Our Environmental Unit has stepped up its efforts to ensure the public’s right to access to the State’s vast coastline and has engaged with DEM on multiple efforts to clean up the Port of Providence and hold polluters accountable.

In addition to our local enforcement efforts, we have been a consistent advocate on the national level in 22 multi-state lawsuits and comment letters submitted to the EPA in an effort to stem the Trump Administration’s rollback of environmental protections.

## RHODE ISLAND CASES

### **Rhode Island v. Chevron, et al**

On July 2, 2018, Rhode Island was the first state in the nation to bring a climate change lawsuit against 21 major fossil fuel companies, seeking to hold these companies liable for knowingly contributing to climate change and its catastrophic consequences to the State and its residents, economy, ecosystem, and infrastructure.

Upon the filing of the State’s complaint in Rhode Island Superior Court, the defendant oil companies removed the case to the U.S. District Court for the District of Rhode Island, claiming that the lawsuit is the State’s attempt at regulating emissions, which is preempted by federal common law and/or federal statutes. The State moved to remand the case to state court. On July 22, 2019, the U.S. District Court granted the State’s motion and remanded the lawsuit back to Superior Court. This decision has been appealed to the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit, but without a stay of the state court proceedings. This appeal is still pending.

We also filed important amicus briefs in similar cases across the country, including County of San Mateo v. Chevron Corporation, et al, and City of Oakland v. BP PLC.

### **Rhode Island v. Atlantic Richfield, et al**

On April 26, 2017, Rhode Island filed a lawsuit in Rhode Island Superior Court against 34 gasoline manufacturers to recover expenses associated with the cleanup of the gasoline additive Methyl Tertiary Butyl Ether (“MTBE”). The lawsuit alleges that for many years, MTBE (a probable human carcinogen) leaked from underground storage tanks and contaminated groundwater and soils throughout the State. The lawsuit seeks to hold the gasoline manufacturers liable for the groundwater contamination arising from the use of MTBE and the resulting expensive cleanup.

The case is currently proceeding with fact discovery.



## Challenging federal actions that harm Rhode Islanders

### **New York, et al. v. EPA**

In August 2019, AG Neronha joined a multi-state Petition for Review challenging the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Affordable Clean Energy (ACE) Rule, which relaxes federal greenhouse gas emission standards and other important regulatory controls for existing coal-fired power plants. Filed in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, the petition challenged the ACE Rule as unlawful and asserted that it must be vacated. The ACE Rule would enable existing coal-fired power plants to operate indefinitely into the future without requiring them to implement key technology to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>).

### **California v. Chao, Petition for Review challenging the Safer Affordable Fuel-Efficient Vehicles (SAFE) Rule Part One**

In September 2019, Rhode Island joined a coalition of states, led by California, in filing a lawsuit challenging the Trump administration’s decision to revoke a rule that empowers the state to set tougher car emissions standards than those required by the federal government. The lawsuit maintains that the special waiver California and other states, including Rhode Island, have relied on for the last 50 years to set their own standards is not only lawful but essential to protecting air quality.

## BY THE NUMBERS

2019 training,  
outreach and education

### 60 attendees

Along with the Matthew Shepard Foundation and the Commission on Prejudice and Bias, the Office organized a full-day training on hate crimes for **approximately 60 attendees** from law enforcement and city/town solicitors

RI State Police Academy training for **40 recruits**

RI Campus and University Police training for **15 officers**

Day One Helpline advocate training for **approximately 70 participants**

RI Legal Services training for **20 participants**

RI Municipal Police Academy for **36 recruits**

Providence Police Academy for **40 recruits**

**240 children**

Anti-bullying training for **240 school children** at Blackstone Valley Prep

*“We need these tools to protect the civil rights of all Rhode Islanders and hold individuals and organizations, including law enforcement agencies, accountable when we identify a pattern of conduct that violates civil rights.” –AG Neronha*

The Civil Rights Advocate is a critical function that helps promote equal rights for all Rhode Islanders and responds to complaints related to civil rights violations against those belonging to a protected class, including those who may be discriminated against on the basis of actual or perceived race, religion, ancestry, national origin, color, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or expression, or disability.

The Civil Rights Advocate investigates complaints and brings civil enforcement actions for injunctive relief to protect individuals who have been subjected to bias-motivated actual or threatened violence, damage or destruction of property, or trespass on property. In addition, the Office serves as a resource to local law enforcement throughout investigation and/or prosecution of hate crimes and providing civil rights trainings and education.

The Office is currently championing a critical civil rights bill for Rhode Island that would broaden civil rights protections for all Rhode Islanders and give the Attorney General enhanced tools and authorities to investigate and enforce both individual instances of police misconduct, as well as patterns or practices of misconduct.

**Photo:** In 2019, the Office’s featured speaker series welcomed Omar Bah, Executive Director of the Refugee Dream Center, to share his experiences as a refugee from The Gambia.





The Attorney General’s Health Care Advocate is dedicated to making quality healthcare accessible and affordable for all Rhode Islanders, in every community across the State. Our expanding work in the area of healthcare includes keeping insurance rates as low as possible, maintaining healthcare delivery that serves our communities, protecting our elderly who rely on nursing homes, and helping individuals seeking protection of their rights as healthcare consumers. Now, during a pandemic – a medical emergency – the Health Care Advocate’s work is even more critical.

With large healthcare system mergers on the horizon, our Office is gearing up to perform its job making sure these significant transactions meet the conditions of approval required by the Hospital Conversion Act. This oversight protects Rhode Islanders’ access to care.

In 2019, AG Neronha introduced legislation passed by the General Assembly that strengthened the Office’s oversight role under the Hospital Conversion Act by adding antitrust review, extending the monitoring period after a transaction, increasing the monetary fine for violations, and simplifying the judicial review process.

**The following priorities have shaped our healthcare work in 2020:**

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**Protect quality of care**

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**Provide oversight of healthcare costs**

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**Protect Rhode Islanders’ access to healthcare by protecting charitable assets intended for community healthcare use**

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**Protect access to care by overseeing hospital mergers through the Hospital Conversion Act**

**COMBATTING THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC IN RHODE ISLAND**

The opioid epidemic has taken an extraordinary toll on the people of Rhode Island. This office remains committed to continuing to aggressively pursue our claims against Purdue Pharma and the Sacklers. In September 2019, we filed a complaint against additional Sackler family members for their role in the distribution of these highly addictive opioids in Rhode Island.

The Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation (BCI) is a critical function of the Office of the Attorney General, providing state and national background check services to the public, reviewing and issuing licenses for concealed carry permits in Rhode Island, and maintaining multiple law enforcement databases.

2019 was the busiest year on record for BCI. It is one of the essential services that has remained 100 percent operational throughout the COVID-19 crisis in 2020. The division has also stepped up its customer service focus. Rhode Islanders have provided positive feedback about the professionalism and high-quality service provided by our BCI staff.

## BY THE NUMBERS

41,056

civil fingerprints processed.

10,285

approximately **10,285** expungements were processed.

14,000 restraining orders

Entered over **14,000** restraining orders, no contact orders and modifications into the database. Approximately **7,277** remain active.

350 people

On average, in 2019, personnel at BCI **served more than 350** people each day.

44 licenses

The Attorney General is responsible for the licensing of private security guard businesses. BCI issued **44 licenses (new and renewal)** in 2019.

28,777 background checks

Processed **28,777 national background checks** for various employment and licensing requirements, including school employee applicants, nursing licenses, security guards, Twin River and Tiverton Casino employment, and medical marijuana caregivers and purchasers, among others.

306 pistol and revolver permit applications

In 2019, the Office successfully upgraded the pistol permit cards, which now have a digital signature, thumbprint and hologram. As of December 31, 2019, there were 2,069 active pistol permits in Rhode Island. During 2019, BCI staff **processed 306 pistol and revolver permit applications**, of which **58** were new and **248** were renewals.



**Photo:** The Julius C. Michaelson Customer Service Center, located at 4 Howard Ave. in Cranston, officially opened in July 2018. This state-of-the-art facility houses the BCI Unit, Consumer Protection, Diversion and attorney office space. Centrally located with free parking and multiple service windows, this building makes it easy to engage with our Office.

## INVESTIGATIVE

The Attorney General has a total of six criminal investigators tasked with a wide array of duties involving the investigation and prosecution of criminal cases. These investigators, in addition to assisting prosecutors, are assigned to work on a part-time basis with ATF, DEA and SSA task forces. The Office also has an investigator assigned to handle financial crime.

## BY THE NUMBERS

In 2019, these investigators initiated

**40**  
criminal  
investigations,

resulting in  
**11**  
referrals for  
prosecution,

and  
**13** people being  
charged.

Additionally, investigators served **137** witness subpoenas and interviewed **104** individuals seeking to either lodge complaints with our Office or seek assistance.

## BY THE NUMBERS

161

open government  
complaints received

600 practitioners

Provided training to nearly  
600 practitioners at 2019  
Open Government Summit,  
which welcomed representatives  
from the New England First  
Amendment Coalition

2 lawsuits

Initiated 2 lawsuits against  
the cities of West Warwick and  
Woonsocket for significant  
violations of RI's open  
government laws

*“Openness and transparency are critical for our government institutions and public bodies to function in a way that effectively serves the best interests of the public.” –AG Neronha*

The Open Meetings Act (OMA) and the Access to Public Records Act (APRA) establish important requirements for ensuring that government in Rhode Island is carried out in an open and transparent manner. **The Open Government Unit:**

- Investigates complaints against public bodies in Rhode Island for alleged violations of these statutes
- Processes APRA requests for public documents maintained by the Office of the Attorney General
- Issue findings and files lawsuits to enforce the statutes when appropriate
- Provides guidance, as well as training and resources, on OMA and APRA requirements

AG Neronha brought a new approach to open government findings. In 2019, the Office's Open Government Unit received the highest number of complaints in its history.

## SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

### Lapp v. Fishermen's Advisory Board

The Complainant alleged that the Fishermen's Advisory Board violated the OMA by meeting outside the public purview and by failing to post timely notice for a meeting. Guided by Rhode Island Supreme Court precedent, our Office concluded, based on the totality of the evidence, that the Fishermen's Advisory Board is not a public body under the OMA. Accordingly, we found no violations.

This was a notable finding because it goes through the analysis of what a public body is. It is a case our Office will sometimes offer as guidance when we are asked about this question.

### Spodnik v. Town of West Warwick and West Warwick Town Council

The Complainant alleged that the Town violated the OMA by having insufficiently specific agendas for its December 11, 2018; January 8, 2019; and February 26, 2019 meetings. This Office concluded that several of the agenda items identified by the Complainant did not provide fair notice to the public of the nature of the business to be discussed and violated the OMA. Our Office determined that injunctive relief was not appropriate at this time but required the Town to provide a supplemental submission addressing whether the violations found were willful or knowing.

This finding is notable because it goes through analysis of insufficient notice for an agenda item, which is an issue that comes up frequently.

### Attorney General files lawsuit against Town of West Warwick for APRA violation

In October 2019, the Office filed a complaint alleging that the Town of West Warwick committed a willful and knowing, or reckless, violation of the APRA and requested that the Town provide all responsive documents related to a 2018 APRA request and the assessment of civil fines and attorneys' fees.

The filing followed an initial finding that the Town had violated the APRA when it failed to respond to a February 15, 2018 APRA request for financial records. The investigation into the initial APRA complaint revealed that the Town of West Warwick failed to respond to the request within 10 business days, as is required under the APRA.

The Office filed its complaint after it became clear that the Town had still not provided all the responsive documents; did not submit an affidavit describing its search efforts; and did not sufficiently explain why this violation should not be considered willful or reckless.

As the sole felony prosecutor in the state, our Office investigates and prosecutes everything from violent crimes – including domestic abuse, sexual assaults, and homicides – to white collar crimes, criminal drug offenses, firearm offenses, and more. We work with our law enforcement and government partners to combat human trafficking, fight the opioid epidemic, and ensure ongoing services for victims of crime.

## REBUILDING ONE OF THE MOST CRITICAL FUNCTIONS OF THE OFFICE

One of the Office's most significant accomplishments in 2019 was the in-depth review and complete restructuring of the Intake Unit, which is responsible for the information charging process and is now operating at an unprecedented level of productivity. Faced with a widely reported situation on day one involving 1,300 felony cases that were not prosecuted by the Office for a variety of reasons, AG Neronha took prompt steps that subsequently revealed an even larger backlog issue.

### What it took to address the backlog:

- A re-engineered intake structure with new leadership, appropriate staffing, and increased production.
- Close collaboration with the Superior Court and the defense bar to address the increase in the number of cases being reported out and overcome challenges.
- Focused prioritization of cases involving victims to move them to the top of the reporting out list.
- Improved communication between the Intake Unit and police departments to ensure that such lapses do not recur going forward.

### The results:

- Processed case backlog of over 1,600 cases, which was years in the making, in just six months
- Full implementation of an e-notification system to improve and streamline communication with police departments, ensuring prosecutors have all necessary information for charging decisions

**6,522 cases  
charged  
(65% increase  
over previous  
year)**



## NARCOTICS AND ORGANIZED CRIME

The Narcotics and Organized Crime Unit (NOCU) is responsible for the investigation, management, and prosecution of all criminal cases that involve narcotics, firearms, and organized crime. The NOCU is also responsible for the forfeiture of proceeds and instrumentalities of criminal activity including narcotics, gambling, pandering/permitting prostitution, and racketeering.

**Handled matters involving the seizure of \$2,764,530.50 in total cash and property. A total of \$1,725,368.43 in cash and property was forfeited and the proceeds were distributed to State and local police and the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals.**

## SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT

Upon taking office in 2019, AG Neronha created the Special Victims Unit to handle cases involving domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, child molestation and elder abuse. SVU prosecutors understand the vulnerability of victims of these crimes and the unique legal and social issues that are common to these cases. Throughout the year, prosecutors engage in focused training in this ever-evolving area of criminal law.

### Elder abuse

A priority of the SVU is elder abuse and exploitation, as this age group is Rhode Island's fastest growing demographic. These crimes are drastically underreported, since victims are often afraid and reluctant to come forward. Raising awareness is critically important to create a community where victims feel safe coming forward, which helps lead to successful prosecutions of these crimes.

- **The Office focused on preventative education through community outreach to older adults in 2019, conducting over 100 outreach presentations at community centers and residential facilities statewide.**
- **Elder abuse received 341 complaints, opened 35 investigations that were independent of police investigations, and fielded 900 telephone calls. Of those calls, some matured into criminal complaints while others were referred to the appropriate agency or resource to provide services for the caller or the person about whom they called.**

## MEDICAID FRAUD CONTROL AND PATIENT ABUSE UNIT

The Medicaid Fraud Control and Patient Abuse Unit enforces the laws pertaining to fraud in the state Medicaid program and prosecutes cases of abuse, neglect or mistreatment of patients in all state healthcare facilities. The Unit prosecutes criminal activity, pursues civil remedies where appropriate and participates with federal and state authorities in a variety of inter-agency investigations.

- **In 2019, our Medicaid Fraud Control Unit prosecuted 14 cases related to patient abuse. Six of those cases involved nursing homes, while the other 8 involved either group homes, hospitals, and adult day care and residential programs.**
- **The Unit also conducted 168 investigations into fraud and abuse.**



## SIGNIFICANT CASES

### Operation Heat

A three-month RISP wiretap investigation into a violent group of individuals centered in Providence, which focused on the shootings and narcotics dealing conducted by the group. The investigation led to the arrest of twenty-six associates in the organization, as well as the seizure of firearms and narcotics.

### Howard Watson

Howard Watson was charged in connection with the death of Mackenzie Irons in Providence. He pled guilty to second-degree murder and possession of a pistol without a permit and was sentenced to 50 years, with 25 years to serve, and 25 years suspended.

### State vs. George Dugas

George Dugas pled nolo contendere to first-degree child molestation during a jury trial. He molested his adopted daughter for several years. The Court sentenced Dugas to 25 years, with 9 years to serve. He was ordered to have no contact with the victim. Upon release, he must comply with the State's sex offender registration, counseling and community notification statute.

**Photo:** In 2019, the Office, along with community partners, hosted the Victims' Grove Ceremony, an annual event that promotes victims' rights by honoring crime victims, survivors and advocates during National Crime Victims' Rights Week.

### State vs. Victor Rodriguez

Victor Rodriguez pled nolo contendere to two felony counts of committing multiple acts of sexual violence involving two juvenile victims. Rodriguez was sentenced to 45 years, with 16 years to serve. He was ordered to undergo sex offender counseling and register as a sex offender. Additionally, the Court imposed no-contact orders between Rodriguez and his victims.

### State vs. Carlton Vose

This was the first case of Abuse and Neglect of a Severely Impaired Adult to proceed to trial in Rhode Island. A Providence County Superior Court jury found Carlton Vose guilty of six counts of neglect of his elderly mother, who suffered from dementia and was repeatedly found wandering and confused near her home in Pawtucket. Vose was sentenced to five years, with two years to serve. The Court also ordered the defendant to receive counseling upon release and have no contact with his mother.

## BY THE NUMBERS

4,254

referrals for services

42,000

generated approximately  
42,000 case status notices  
to victims

2,500 court  
proceedings

advocates accompanied victims  
to more than 2,500 court  
proceedings — such as bail hearings,  
violation hearings, pretrial  
conferences, trials and Supreme Court  
arguments, as well as  
interviews with prosecutors

3,000 referrals

Made more than 3,000 referrals  
to other agencies for further assistance

30 letters

provided approximately 30 letters  
of notification to victims related  
to the Rhode Island Supreme Court  
appeal process and matters  
on post-conviction relief

*“There is no one measure, or even set of measures, that will solve the gun violence problem faced by this country. But there are some things we can do to make progress, while respecting the rights of law-abiding gun owners.”*

– AG Neronha

### GUN SAFETY EFFORTS

In 2019, AG Neronha championed common sense gun safety measures, including banning ghost guns, strengthening penalties for straw purchasers (people who buy firearms on behalf of people who are prohibited from owning them), requiring all firearms to be stored safely, and strengthening reporting requirements for lost or stolen weapons.

The Office continues to advocate for these and other gun safety measures in 2020, including a bill that mandates gun purchase applications to be sent to the city/town of the purchaser (rather than the seller).

*“Seeking justice for victims requires a team approach, and everyone on the team – police, prosecutors, this Office’s Victims Services Unit and community advocates – is committed to ensuring that victims have a voice and are treated with dignity throughout the process.”*

– AG Neronha

### VICTIM SERVICES

One of the most critical functions of the Office is assisting the victims of the crimes for which the Office is seeking justice. The Victim Services team serves as a resource for victims - to answer questions, provide support, and keep them informed. A Victim Services team member is there with victims throughout the entire process.

### VOICE:

#### NEW STATEWIDE AUTOMATED VICTIM NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

An effort years in the making, the Office recently implemented VOICE, a web-based portal that provides state agency users, victims of crime, and victim advocates with 24/7 access to critical case information. For the first time, victims can receive real-time notifications from multiple state agencies in one place.

*“Rhode Island’s election laws exist for a reason...They exist to make sure that the public knows the true source of funds used to support political candidates...In short, they exist to ensure the integrity of elections.” –AG Neronha*

Upon taking office, AG Neronha restructured the White Collar Crime and Public Corruption Unit into the Public Integrity Unit, with a focus on maintaining the public’s trust in government and ensuring that all people are treated fairly and according to the law. The Public Integrity Unit investigates and prosecutes crimes committed by state employees and officials in the course of their duties, including crimes related to violations of elections and campaign laws.

## SIGNIFICANT CASES

### **Luis Aponte pleads to felony embezzlement charge; resigns from Providence City Council**

On July 29, 2019, Luis Aponte (age 56), of Providence, pleaded nolo contendere to a felony count of embezzlement and was sentenced to a 4.5-year suspended sentence with 4.5 years of probation. As part of his plea, Aponte was required to resign from his position on the Providence City Council.

Had the case proceeded to trial, the State was prepared to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that between December 18, 2013 and December 28, 2015, Aponte spent \$13,942.29 from his campaign account, "Friends of Luis Aponte," to pay for personal expenses. During that time, Aponte paid for items including subscriptions to Netflix and Xbox Live, iTunes, cable bills, and gas.

*“Today’s felony conviction of former Councilman Luis Aponte for stealing from his campaign funds once again underscores the importance of holding public officials accountable when they break the law and erode the public’s trust in government,”*

*–AG Neronha*



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### **Attorney General charges former state representative-elect with embezzlement and campaign finance violations**

House District 68 representative-elect Laufton Ascencao was arrested in September 2019 and charged by Criminal Information in April 2020.

The Criminal Information alleged that Ascencao, without authorization, diverted \$16,379 from the checking account of the Rhode Island Chapter of the Sierra Club while he was serving as treasurer of that organization. Ascencao used the money to pay for expenses during his 2018 campaign for state representative.

The Information further alleged three violations based on Ascencao's failure to report expenditures on his campaign finance filing with the Rhode Island Board of Elections. By not reporting these expenditures, which totaled \$3,357.00, Ascencao intended to hide the fact that the funds came from the checking account of the Rhode Island Chapter of the Sierra Club.

At the time of publication, Ascencao was scheduled for arraignment in Providence County Superior Court on July 15, 2020.

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### **Promoting transparency with proposed grand jury bill**

Under Rhode Island law, grand juries have the authority to investigate crimes and return indictments. However, aside from returning indictments, they have no mechanism for reporting on their findings.

AG Neronha continues to champion legislation that would allow Rhode Island grand juries to issue reports on their investigations even if they don't lead to indictments. While rare, there are times when a grand jury does not return an indictment but it is in the public's interest that there be an accounting of what occurred.

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### **Diocese of Providence Review**

After years of complaints and allegations of child sexual abuse by clergy, AG Neronha announced in July 2019 that the Office gained access to nearly 70 years of records from Diocese of Providence via a Memorandum of Understanding with the Diocese.

The review, being done in conjunction with the Rhode Island State Police, is intended to identify whether any new, prosecutable cases exist; ensure there are no credibly accused clergy in active ministry, and provide input into improvements of the Diocese's current policies and procedures for preventing and responding to allegations of child sexual abuse. Its objectives include determining how the Diocese responded to past reports of child sexual abuse.

**To date, over 100,000 pages have been reviewed. A report is expected to be issued early next year.**

*“While this voluntary, additional disclosure by the Diocese is an important step forward in our review,” Attorney General Neronha stated, “much additional work remains. We will not hesitate to take any additional steps that may prove necessary to fully determine the scope of misconduct here and take appropriate action.”*



The Appellate Unit represents the State in all criminal cases before the Rhode Island Supreme Court, responding to post-conviction relief applications in the Superior Court, responding to petitions for writs of habeas corpus in federal court, and providing research and other assistance to trial prosecutors both before and during trial.

## SUCCESS IN 2019

- Overall success rate above 96 percent in appeals in the Rhode Island Supreme Court
- Successfully defended 19 of 20 appeals in whole or in part, with respect to appeals from judgments of criminal conviction

## SIGNIFICANT DECISIONS

### **State v. Mulcahey,**

The Rhode Island Supreme Court affirmed the defendant's first-degree sexual assault conviction. The Court addressed the issue of authenticating text message evidence for the first time and held that the State produced sufficient circumstantial evidence to establish that the defendant authored the text messages sent to the victim.

### **State v. Merida**

The Rhode Island Supreme Court affirmed the denial of the defendant's motion to correct sentence. The Court held that the defendant was not entitled to have time that he spent on home confinement bail while awaiting trial credited toward his sentences for first- and second-degree child molestation sexual assault.

## BY THE NUMBERS

### 33 Rule 12A

**Filed 33 Rule 12A pre-briefing statements** in appeals pending in the Rhode Island Supreme Court

### 14 full briefs

**Filed 14 full briefs** in appeals pending in the Rhode Island Supreme Court

### 52 petitions or motions

**Responded to 52 miscellaneous petitions or motions** filed in the Rhode Island Supreme Court

### 15 petitions

**Responded to 15 petitions** for issuance of writs of habeas corpus filed in the United States District Court and briefed and argued one case in the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit

### 65 applications

**Litigated 65 applications** for post-conviction relief to decision and **disposed of 27 other applications** in the Rhode Island Superior Court

**Photo:** As the top legal official in Rhode Island, Attorney General Neronha leads an office that prosecutes criminal cases; represents state agencies, departments and commissions in litigation; initiates legal action when necessary to protect the interests of Rhode Islanders; and oversees the Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation.



The Office of Attorney General is charged with defending the State of Rhode Island in civil litigation. These cases typically seek monetary damages, changes to state policies or practices, or declarations that certain statutes are unconstitutional.

## SIGNIFICANT CASES

### Reproductive Privacy Act

In 2019, the Office also successfully defended the Reproductive Privacy Act from constitutional challenge. That statute guarantees, independently of the United States Constitution, that a woman has a statutory right to choose whether to terminate a pregnancy. This matter is also presently on appeal to the Rhode Island Supreme Court.

### Sports Wagering

Among the cases filed in 2019 was a challenge to the constitutionality of a statute authorizing sports wagering and mobile sports wagering. A Superior Court judge upheld the constitutionality of the statute, and it is expected that millions of dollars in state revenue will be generated each year as a result of sports wagering. This matter is currently on appeal to the Rhode Island Supreme Court, where the Office will continue to defend the constitutionality of the statute.

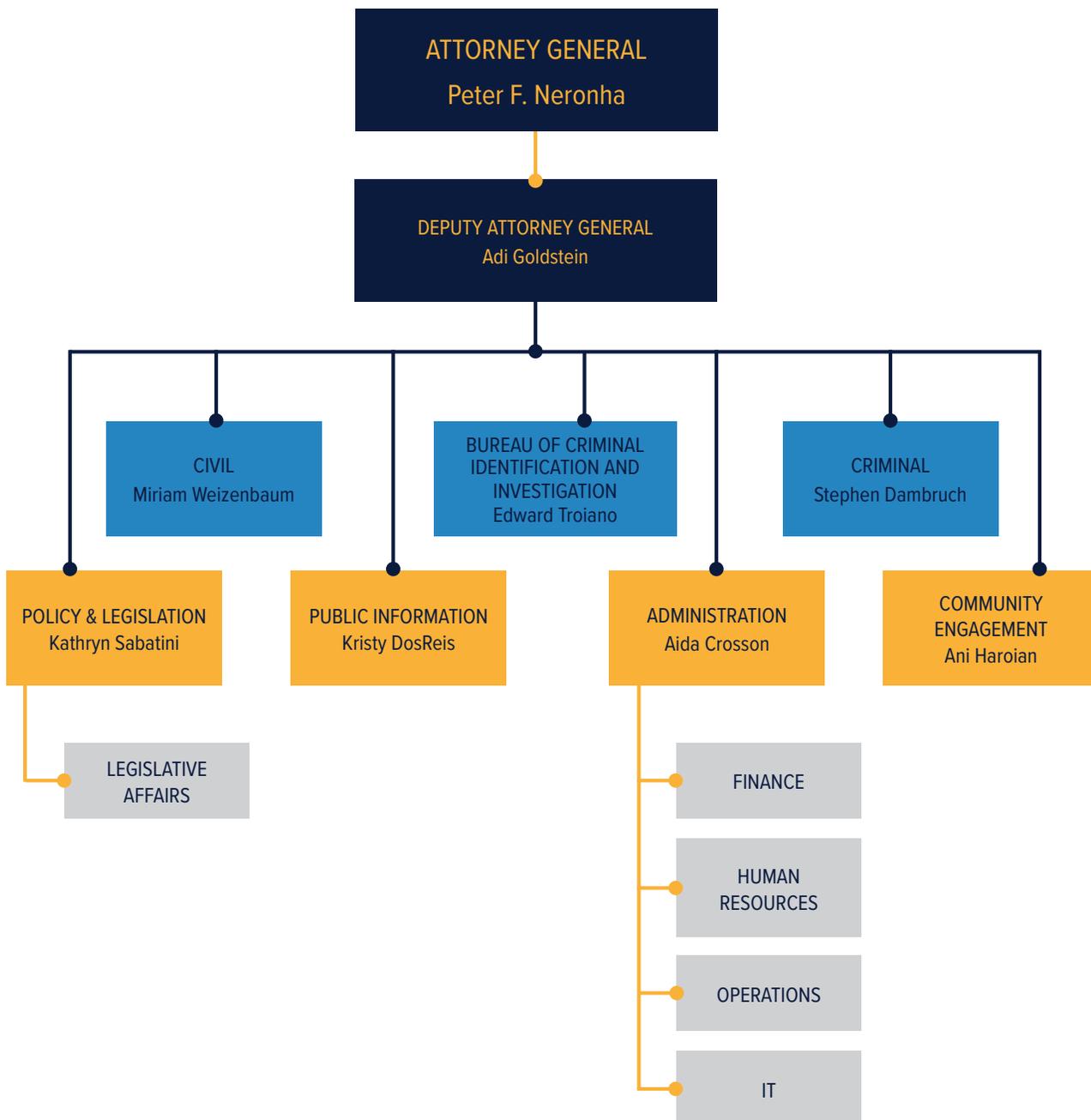
### RhodeWorks

This Office also continues to defend the constitutionality of the Rhode Island Bridge Replacement, Reconstruction, and Maintenance Fund Act, better known as RhodeWorks. Plaintiffs contend that the statute authorizing tractor-trailer-only tolls violates the Dormant Commerce Clause of the United States Constitution. If the statute is upheld as constitutional, the State expects to receive approximately \$45-50 million in toll revenue each year, which will be used to repair and maintain Rhode Island's bridges. A trial is scheduled for later this summer.

The Attorney General is one of five state-wide general officers elected by the people of Rhode Island. As the top legal official in the Ocean State, the Attorney General oversees a multifaceted office that is responsible for both criminal and civil legal matters on behalf of Rhode Islanders. The Attorney General prosecutes all felony criminal cases and misdemeanor appeals, as well as misdemeanor cases brought by state law enforcement agencies. Responsibilities include safeguarding the public from violent criminals, helping victims of crime, preserving Rhode Island’s natural resources, protecting consumers and addressing illegal business practices.

Additionally, the Attorney General represents all agencies, departments, and commissions in litigation, and initiates legal action where necessary to protect the interests of Rhode Island citizens. The Office is also charged with operating and maintaining the Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation, which is the central repository for all criminal records in the State.

Since its inception in 1650, the Attorney General has been an elected position (save for a period between 1740 and 1742), whose powers and duties are derived from the Rhode Island Constitution, the General Laws of Rhode Island, and common law.



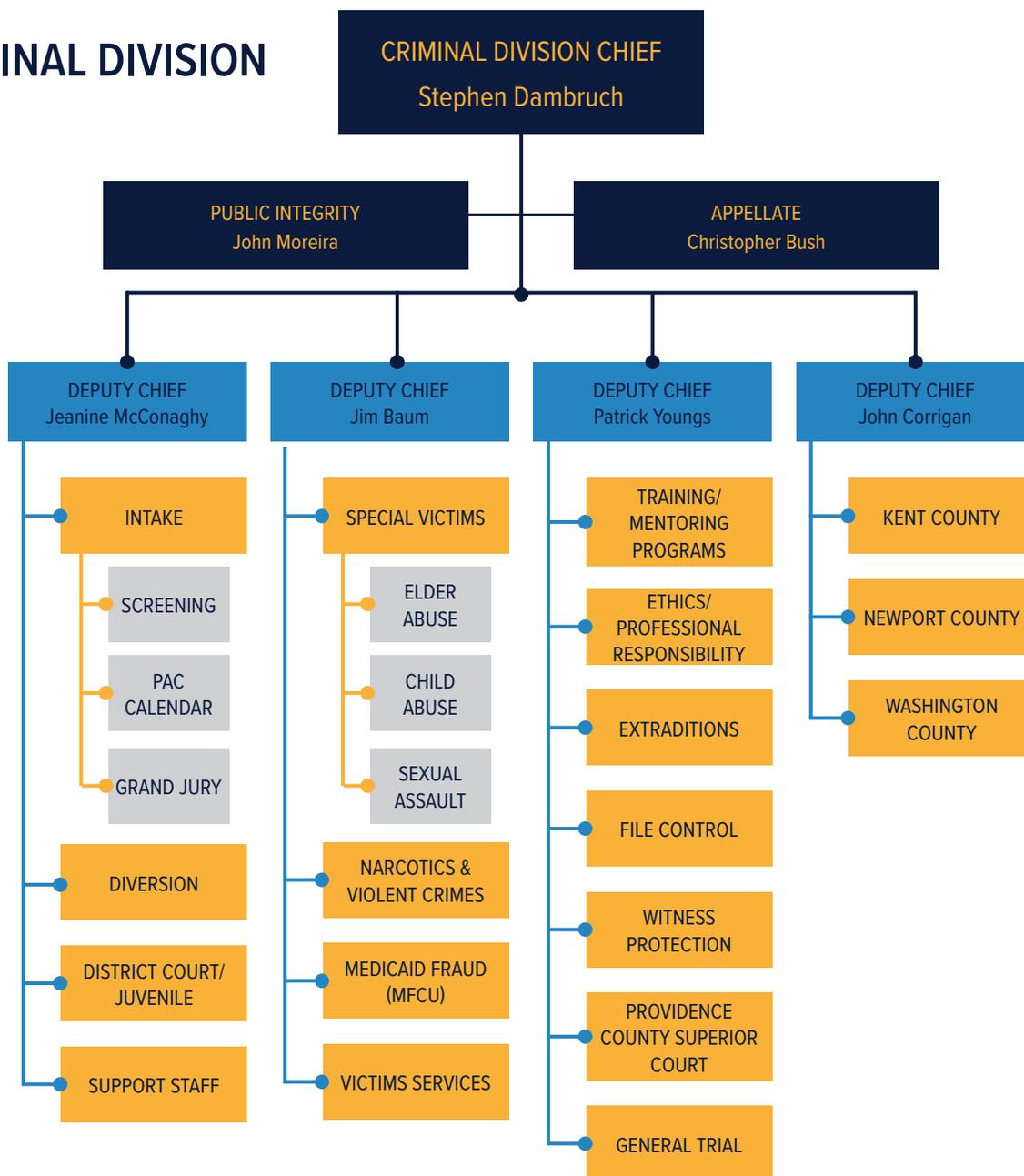
# ABOUT THE OFFICE

The Attorney General is responsible for prosecuting all felony criminal offenses occurring in Rhode Island, all misdemeanor criminal cases brought by State law enforcement agencies, all misdemeanor cases appealed to the Superior Court, and all violations of probation or bail, including violations of misdemeanor probation.

The Criminal Division works closely with local law enforcement, assigning Superior Court prosecutors to act as liaisons to each of the law enforcement agencies in the State to provide legal assistance. Together with our federal partners, the Criminal Division makes joint decisions on which office should assert jurisdiction where there are both viable state and federal charges.

Prosecutors from the Criminal Division are available to law enforcement 24 hours a day, seven days a week to assist in serious matters and complex investigations.

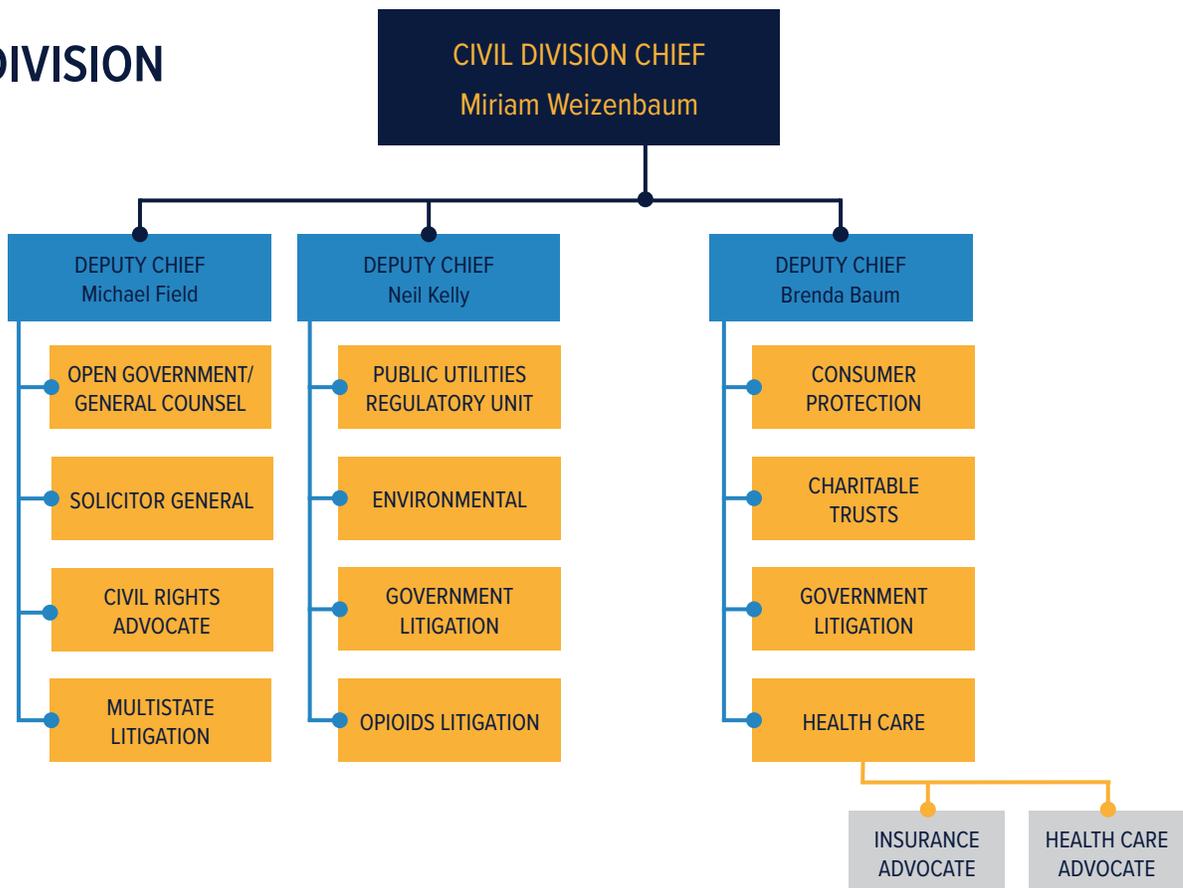
## CRIMINAL DIVISION



By law, the Attorney General represents the State, its agencies, and employees in all state and federal courts; institutes actions in state and federal courts whenever warranted; ensures that representation is provided to state officers, employees and agencies in all courts; advises state officers and agencies on legal issues; gives written opinions on legal issues when requested by an appropriate governmental officer; and represents the interests of the people of Rhode Island.

The Civil Division handles significant civil actions involving environmental, public health, public utilities and consumer protection issues.

## CIVIL DIVISION



From: 01/01/2019 To: 12/31/2019

SUPERIOR COURT CASE STATISTICS									
COUNTY	Filed			Disposed			Active Pending SC		
	MISD	FELONY	TOTAL CMS	MISD	FELONY	TOTAL	MISD	FELONY	TOTAL
KENT	108	739	847	86	581	667	144	2103	2247
NEWPORT	10	358	368	13	332	345	17	595	612
PROVIDENCE	235	6956	7191	205	4369	4574	317	9859	10176
WASHINGTON	118	328	446	118	306	424	63	860	923
STATEWIDE	471	8381	8852	422	5588	6010	541	13417	13958

AGE AT DISPOSITION										
COUNTY	Less Than 90 Days		91- 180 Days		181- 270 Days		271- 360 Days		Over 360 Days	
	MISD	FELONY	MISD	FELONY	MISD	FELONY	MISD	FELONY	MISD	FELONY
KENT	243	278	11	105	2	56	3	56	8	104
NEWPORT	69	118	2	98	2	53	3	53	0	41
PROVIDENCE	444	1926	58	738	24	568	14	568	20	747
WASHINGTON	339	104	20	66	6	33	2	33	4	72
STATEWIDE	1095	2426	91	1007	34	710	22	710	32	964

MANNER OF DISPOSITIONS - FELONIES										
COUNTY	GUILTY	NOT GUILTY	NG/FILING	PLEA	DISM 48A	DISM TR	MISTRIAL	HUNG JURY	TRIALS	VERDICTS
KENT	1	3	0	482	70	1	0	0	5	4
NEWPORT	1	0	1	278	46	0	0	0	1	1
PROVIDENCE	11	13	12	3418	796	0	0	0	24	24
WASHINGTON	0	1	1	177	26	0	0	0	1	1
STATEWIDE	13	17	14	4355	938	1	0	0	31	30

MANNER OF DISPOSITIONS - MISDEMEANOR APPEALS										
COUNTY	GUILTY	NOT GUILTY	NG/FILING	PLEA	DISM 48A	DISM TR	MISTRIAL	HUNG JURY	TRIALS	VERDICTS
KENT	1	1	4	63	10	0	0	0	2	2
NEWPORT	1	0	0	9	3	0	0	0	1	1
PROVIDENCE	1	0	3	118	66	0	0	0	1	1
WASHINGTON	1	0	1	47	5	0	0	0	1	1
STATEWIDE	4	1	8	237	84	0	0	0	5	5

MANNER OF DISPOSITIONS - STATEWIDE TOTALS										
COUNTY	GUILTY	NOT GUILTY	NG/FILING	PLEA	DISM 48A	DISM TR	MISTRIAL	HUNG JURY	TRIALS	VERDICTS
KENT	2	4	4	545	8	1	0	0	7	6
NEWPORT	2	0	1	287	49	0	0	0	2	2
PROVIDENCE	11	13	15	3536	862	0	0	0	24	24
WASHINGTON	1	1	2	224	31	0	0	0	2	2
STATEWIDE	16	18	22	4592	1022	1	0	0	35	34

Statistics were prepared by the Criminal Division based upon Case Management System (CMS) data on April 2, 2019. AG Trial Verdict Statistics were maintained manually within the Criminal Division and include all cases tried throughout the calendar year, regardless if sentencing or appeal is pending.



*“Part of my role as Attorney General is to push this Office beyond what is comfortable to fight for Rhode Islanders. The full scope of what this Office handles is immense, but I have been truly excited by the impact we can have if we think creatively and use our existing authority in new ways.” – AG Neronha*



## OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

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(401) 274-4400

### **Attorney General Julius C. Michaelson Customer Service Center**

4 Howard Avenue  
Cranston, RI 02920  
Phone: (401) 274-4400

### **Kent County Courthouse**

Noel Judicial Complex  
222 Quaker Lane  
Warwick, Rhode Island 02886  
Phone: (401) 822-6800

### **Providence County Courthouse**

Licht Judicial Complex  
250 Benefit Street, 2nd Floor  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903  
Phone: (401) 274-4400

### **Newport County Courthouse Office**

Florence Murray Judicial Complex  
Eisenhower Square  
Newport, Rhode Island 02840  
Phone: (401) 841-8310

### **Washington County Courthouse Office**

McGrath Judicial Complex  
4800 Tower Hill Road  
Wakefield, Rhode Island 02879  
Phone: (401) 782-4150

