



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

MICHAEL B. FORTE
CHIEF JUDGE

September 26, 2025

Steven Brown
Executive Director
American Civil Liberties Union
Of Rhode Island
128 Dorrance Street, Suite 400
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Re: Letter of September 22, 2025

Dear Director Brown:

Thank-you for bringing to my attention that the Family Clerk's office has rejected filings when a litigant does not provide an e-mail address. I have instructed the supervisory clerks to inform staff that the lack of an e-mail address, or a litigant's refusal to provide one, is not an acceptable reason for rejecting a filing.

The practice of requesting e-mail addresses evolved during the pandemic as an efficient means of communicating with litigants at a time when in-person communications with staff was restricted. In fact, to this day, the availability of e-mail addresses continues to assist the court and staff communicate with litigants, especially self-represented litigants. However, the request for e-mail addresses was never meant to negatively impact the constitutional right to court access.

I trust this response satisfies your concerns. Thanks again.

Very truly yours,

Michael B. Forte
Chief Judge