From: Sent: To: Subject:	Tuesday, August 31, 2021 9:54 AM bwcstatewidepolicy police body worn cameras
[External email: Use caution with links and attachments]	
Hello,	
I'm submitting my comments publicly regarding the use of police body worn cameras.	
These cameras should be active during any police engagement with the public, beginning when they are approaching the engagement.	
It should be a punishable violation for any officer to not follow this process, and all police organizations should support this. Not supporting this process makes every officer who doesn't appear to be hiding unacceptable or illegal behavior. For this reason, all police organizations would want to avoid any appearance of wrong doing.	
Body cameras are the best tool the public has in keeping police officers and their organizations accountable and transparent.	
Opposition to body cameras indicates there is something to hide by those against it.	

Thank you.

Sent: To: Tuesday, August 31, 2021 9:54 AM

bwcstatewidepolicy; rulesregs@risp.gov

Subject:

Police-worn body cameras in Rhode Island

[External email: Use caution with links and attachments]

To whom it concerns,

I am a firm believer that the technology that is available to us should be used.

The benefits and cost-effectiveness of using body cameras on police (and possibly other first responders) to our greater good is unquestionable.

Police-worn body cameras protect the integrity and accountability of our public servants.

The use of body cameras can be important for training and evidence.

If a legal matter arose then the evidence is there to indicate what actually happened.

The only reason to oppose body cameras is in the interest of hiding facts.

"A study conducted in 2013 by the University of Cambridge discovered that both police and respondents become less likely to use violence when police wear body cameras, citing a drop in force rate by a whopping 50%. This serves as very strong evidence that more cameras ultimately mean less violence."

Thank you for your time in considering my comments. Regards,

Sent:

Tuesday, August 31, 2021 10:15 AM

To: bwcstatewidepolicy Subject:

Body cam comment

[External email: Use caution with links and attachments]

In a state with a long history of government corruption, full time body cams on police officers are an imperative step toward restoring integrity to a system that has harassed innocent people including myself.

Sent:

Tuesday, August 31, 2021 11:32 AM

To: Subject: bwcstatewidepolicy Body cameras

[External email: Use caution with links and attachments]

Hello I've been informed that the public are only allowed to coment on the decision being made. My comment is that body cameras should be required at all times and turning it off should be treated as tampering with evidence and should result in immediately being fired. If all other workers are being surveilled while on the job (security cameras) so should police...

August 31, 2021

RE: RI Public input on police body camera policy

To: North Providence Police Department
Providence Police Department
Office of Attorney General
Dept of Public Safety

Yes, I am totally in favor of any kind of camera that will protect our police officers. A big THANK YOU to all of you, for risking your lives to protect us. We pray for you all the time; God bless you.

Sincerely,

August 31, 2021

RE: RI Public input on police body camera policy

To: North Providence Police Department
Providence Police Department
Office of Attorney General
Dept of Public Safety

YES! Please place body cameras and even police car cameras, and any camera that you can find on all of our wonderful police officers, to protect them in every possible way. It is beyond me to understand how ANYONE would even consider ANY single word that a criminal caught in the very act of a crime, would say against our police officers. Supposedly ten percent of our population are criminals; they lie, they cheat...there is obviously something very wrong with them. Why would anyone believe them over the word of our police officers? Where has common sense gone? People like that would do or say anything to get away with their crime. When the word of our police officers is made equal with a criminal's words, there is something very wrong with people's common sense. Our officers chose to serve humanity; putting their lives in danger and even their families' lives. Protect them in any way you can, in the same way that they protect all of us. You're going to find something amazing through these camera recordings; you're going to find that 90% of the population that is normal loves and prays for, and appreciates our officers. This world would be chaos without them. We thank all of them from the bottom of our hearts. Thank you. God bless all of you; we pray for you daily. Remember that God knows the truth, and He is with you protecting you.

Sincerely,

Sent:

Tuesday, August 31, 2021 1:22 PM

To:

bwcstatewidepolicy

Subject:

Body camera

[External email: Use caution with links and attachments]

I agree that body cameras are important in protecting both the police and the public in in that it records facts but it only works if the camera is on and not turned off or inadvertently turned off. There should be penalty when camera is turned off.

Respectfully yours,

Sent:

Tuesday, August 31, 2021 4:32 PM

To:

bwcstatewidepolicy

Subject:

Re: Statewide Police Body Camera Policy

[External email: Use caution with links and attachments]

Hello,

In regard to the Statewide police body camera police, I feel that all officers - state police and local should be required by law to wear a body cam when on duty. The camera can be deactivated when in their cruiser and not interacting with the public. However, the minute the pull someone over, or respond to a call and step outside their cruiser, that camera should be turned on and remain on for the duration of the interaction with each individual the officer interacts with. Turning the camera off should be grounds for suspension WITHOUT pay! There are far too many instances of police brutality and racial profiling and they happen in Providence, North Providence, and East Providence regularly! Hold the police accountable.

Sent from my iPhone

Sent:

Tuesday, August 31, 2021 5:38 PM

To:

bwcstatewidepolicy

Subject:

Police Body Cams

[External email: Use caution with links and attachments]

Dear Sir,

As my daughter and I watch you on channel 10 news, we would like to state that there is NO REASON to release private camera footage from any police department, to civilians, especially criminals! The criminals are on trial not our Police. We are mortified at the way criminals are getting away with discrediting our police. It is a shame and it is wrong! Our Police have nothing to prove! To anyone! They should not even be questioned. They choose a career of protecting the innocent with their very lives against may I say 'scum'? I know it doesn't sound right, but I can't help it! Criminals are criminals! Lock them up so they don't hurt anyone else. WHY should they see private camera footage??? It's ridiculous; catering to the bad guys...unbelievable!

Without the men and ladies on the police force, the world be in chaos and mostly dead. Am I right? Protect our police! Invent a criminal gag!

I know it sounds funny but it is not. We need policies to protect our police. God bless them all.

Love and prayers,

From:

Sent: Wednesday, September 1, 2021 8:37 AM

To: bwcstatewidepolicy; rulesregs@risp.gov

Subject: Body Cameras

[External email: Use caution with links and attachments]

To whom it may concern;

Best,

I am writing this letter in support of police worn body cameras. I support the efforts and sacrifices made by members of law enforcement on a daily basis, and believe, overall, that having cameras increases their safety, successful prosecution, and provides factual accounts of events that happen in the event there is public/civil unrest in regards to an incident that took place.

On the contrary, what is important to consider is that equipping officers with these cameras can be extremely expensive to already thin town/city budgets, and many times the defendants (or passerbys) are filming with their phones. In addition, it creates another, new area of training needed (\$\$). Furthermore, it adds another hurdle to being able to effectively hire/recruit as all actions are perceived to be under a microscope (via body camera). Also, the public will feel that their privacy is being violated, and possibly being subjected to facial recognition software.

Thank you for reading and best of luck in your consideration of this issue.

Sent: To: Wednesday, September 1, 2021 8:48 AM

bwcstatewidepolicy

Subject:

police body camera policy input

[External email: Use caution with links and attachments]

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a RI resident concerned about police misconduct in general and the disproportionate use of force against Black, Indigenous, and People of Color in this state. As such, I am in favor of use of police body cameras, statewide, and strongly suggest that it is mandated that these cameras are activated and recording for the entirety of the time any particular officer is on duty. Devices should either not have an "off" / disabled option, or at the very least, officers should be severely penalized for turning them off at any time.

Thank you for hearing our input and for your dedication to creating a policy regarding police body camera use.

Sent: To: Wednesday, September 1, 2021 9:24 AM

Subject:

bwcstatewidepolicy; rulesregs@risp.gov Universal use of police body cameras

[External email: Use caution with links and attachments]

To whom it may concern,

I would like to express my strong support for a policy mandating universal use of police body cameras that requires them to be activated at all times any officer is on duty.

Sincerely,

Sent: To: Thursday, September 2, 2021 9:28 PM bwcstatewidepolicy; rulesregs@risp.gov

Subject:

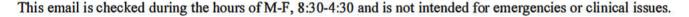
Universal Use of Police Body Cameras

[External email: Use caution with links and attachments]

Dear Policy Makers,

I am writing to request that policy makers institute a policy mandating universal use of police body cameras that requires them to be activated at all times any officer is on duty.

With gratitude,



Confidentiality Notice: E-mail is <u>not</u> a secure, confidential form of communication. Please keep this in mind when deciding whether to send personal information. This e-mail, including attachments, is intended for the exclusive use of the addressee and may contain proprietary, confidential or privileged information. If you are not the intended recipient, any dissemination, use, distribution or copying is strictly prohibited. If you have received this e-mail in error, please notify me via return e-mail and permanently delete the original and destroy all copies.

Sent: To: Friday, September 3, 2021 2:59 PM

bwcstatewidepolicy

Subject: Police body cams

[External email: Use caution with links and attachments]

All police officers need to have a body cam ON at All times that they are interacting w/the public - No exceptions. Immediate notification that the camera is on should always happen.

SEPTEMBER 1, 2021

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL 150 SOUTH MAIN STREET PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND 02903 RE.: BODY CAMERAS IMPUT

ATTORNEY GENERAL PETER F. NERONHA:

ALL THE OFFICERS WHO ARRIVE AT THE SCENE SHOULD HAVE THEIR BODY CAMERAS ACTIVATED AT THAT TIME AND SHOULD NOT BE TURNED OFF UNTIL BOTH THE INCIDENT IS OVER AND THAT THE OFFICERS INVOLVED AT THE SCENE ARE NOLONGER AT THE SCENE AND ARE NOT IN VISUAL CONTACT WITH EITHER THE VICTIM OR THE SUSPECTS.

IN THIS MANNER BOTH THE PUBLIC AND THOSE INVOLVED IN THE CASE WILL SEE THE COMPLETE INVOLVEMENT OF THE POLICE ACTIONS FROM THE TIME OF THEIR ARRIVAL UNTIL THEY LEFT THE SCENE AND WERE NOLONGER IN VISUAL CONTACT WITH EITHER THE SUSPECTS OR THE VICTIM. TRUST IS THE KEY FACTOR IN COMMUNITY POLICE RELATIONS. YOU MAY SHARE OR READ THIS LETTER AT THE NEXT ASSOCIATION OF POLICE CHIEFS" MEETING.

SINCERELY,

Mr. albert Melikian.
PRESIDENT

CRANSTON REGIONAL CRIME WATCH

August 31, 2021

RE: RI Public input on police body camera policy

To: North Providence Police Department
Providence Police Department
Office of Attorney General
Dept of Public Safety

YES! Please place body cameras and even police car cameras, and any camera that you can find on all of our wonderful police officers, to protect them in every possible way. It is beyond me to understand how ANYONE would even consider ANY single word that a criminal caught in the very act of a crime, would say against our police officers. Supposedly ten percent of our population are criminals; they lie, they cheat...there is obviously something very wrong with them. Why would anyone believe them over the word of our police officers? Where has common sense gone? People like that would do or say anything to get away with their crime. When the word of our police officers is made equal with a criminal's words, there is something very wrong with people's common sense. Our officers chose to serve humanity; putting their lives in danger and even their families' lives. Protect them in any way you can, in the same way that they protect all of us. You're going to find something amazing through these camera recordings; you're going to find that 90% of the population that is normal loves and prays for, and appreciates our officers. This world would be chaos without them. We thank all of them from the bottom of our hearts. Thank you. God bless all of you; we pray for you daily. Remember that God knows the truth, and He is with you protecting you.

Sincerely

August 31, 2021

RE: RI Public input on police body camera policy

To: North Providence Police Department
Providence Police Department
Office of Attorney General
Dept of Public Safety

Yes, I am totally in favor of any kind of camera that will protect our police officers. A big THANK YOU to all of you, for risking your lives to protect us. We pray for you all the time; God bless you.

Sincerely,

Sent: To:

Friday, September 17, 2021 12:43 PM

bwcstatewidepolicy; Kim DeJoseph

Subject:

Public Comment submitted on Usage for Police Body Cameras

and video

Attachments:

BodyCamUsageSuggestions.pdf

[External email: Use caution with links and attachments]

Dear Sir or Madam,

Please accept the attached document as my public comments submission which contains my suggestions for Police Body-Cameras and video usage in RI. The attached is a written draft of "2021-H5993," House Bill sponsored by Representatives Batista, Williams, Morales, Felix and Alzate and introduced during the 2021 Session, but it was not enacted into law. I fully support all the recommended usage for Police BodyCams and videos as set forth in this proposed legislation and I adopt it hereby by reference as if fully set forth herein. Thank you so much for your consideration and attention.

Sincerely,

LC002010

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

AN ACT

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- RISHOD K. GORE JUSTICE IN POLICING ACT OF 2021

<u>Introduced By:</u> Representatives Batista, Williams, Morales, Felix, and Alzate <u>Date Introduced:</u> February 26, 2021

Referred To: House Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1	SECTION 1. Title 42 of the General Laws entitled "STATE AFFAIRS AND
2	GOVERNMENT" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following chapter:
3	CHAPTER 160
4	RISHOD K. GORE JUSTICE IN POLICING ACT OF 2021
5	42-160-1. Short title.
6	This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Rishod K. Gore Justice in Policing
7	Act of 2021".
8	42-160-2. Definitions.
9	As used in this chapter, the following words, terms and phrases have the meanings
10	indicated:
11	(1) "Contacts" means an interaction with an individual, whether or not the person is in a
12	motor vehicle, initiated by a peace officer, whether consensual or nonconsensual, for the purpose
13	of enforcing the law or investigating possible violations of the law. "Contacts" do not include
14	routine interactions with the public at the point of entry or exit from a controlled area.
15	(2) "Demographic information" means race, ethnicity, sex, and approximate age.
16	(3) "Peace officer" means the following individuals as defined in § 12-7-21.
17	(4) "Physical force" means the application of physical techniques or tactics, chemical
18	agents, or weapons to another person.

1 (5) "Serious bodily injury" means physical injury that creates a substantial risk of death or 2 causes serious permanent disfigurement or protracted loss or impairment of the function of any 3 bodily member or organ. 4 (6) "Tamper" means to intentionally damage, disable, dislodge, or obstruct the sight or 5 sound or otherwise impair functionality of the body-worn camera or to intentionally damage, delete, 6 or fail to upload some or all portions of the video and audio. 7 42-160-3. Camera use. 8 (a) Except as provided in subsections (b) through (d) of this section, a peace officer shall wear and activate a body-worn camera or dash camera, if the peace officer's vehicle is equipped 9 10 with a dash camera, when responding to a call for service or during any interaction with the public initiated by the peace officer, whether consensual or nonconsensual, for the purpose of enforcing 11 12 the law or investigating possible violations of the law. 13 (b) A peace officer may turn off a body-worn camera to avoid recording personal 14 information that is not case related; when working on an unrelated assignment; when there is a long 15 break in the incident or contact that is not related to the initial incident; and in administrative, tactical, and management discussions. 16 17 (c) A peace officer does not need to wear or activate a body-worn camera if the peace 18 officer is working undercover. (d) The provisions of this section shall not apply to jail peace officers or staff of a local law 19 enforcement agency if the jail has video cameras; however, the provisions of subsection (a) of this 20 21 section, shall apply to jail peace officers when performing a task that requires an anticipated use of 22 force, including cell extractions and restraint chairs. The provisions of this section shall also not 23 apply to the civilian or administrative staff of the Rhode Island state police or a local law 24 enforcement agency, the executive detail of the Rhode Island state police, and peace officers 25 working in a courtroom. 26 (e) If a peace officer fails to activate a body-worn camera or dash camera as required by 27 this section or tampers with body-worn or dash-camera footage or operation when required to 28 activate the camera, there exists a permissive inference in any investigation or legal proceeding, 29 excluding criminal proceedings against the peace officer, that the missing footage would have reflected misconduct by the peace officer. If a peace officer fails to activate or reactivate his or her 30 31 body-worn camera as required by this section or tampers with body-worn or dash-camera footage 32 or operation when required to activate the camera, any statements sought to be introduced in a prosecution through the peace officer related to the incident that were not recorded due to the peace 33

officer's failure to activate or reactivate the body-worn camera as required by this section or if the

1 statement was not recorded by other means, creates a rebuttable presumption of inadmissibility. 2 Notwithstanding any other provision of law, this subsection does not apply if the body-worn camera 3 was not activated due to a malfunction of the body-worn camera and the peace officer was not aware of the malfunction, or was unable to rectify it, prior to the incident; provided, that the law 4 enforcement agency's documentation shows the peace officer checked the functionality of the body-5 6 worn camera at the beginning of his or her shift. 7 42-160-4. Discipline for violation. 8 In addition to any criminal liability and penalty under the law, if a court, administrative 9 law judge, hearing officer, or a final decision in an internal investigation finds that a peace officer intentionally failed to activate a body-worn camera or dash-camera or tampered with any body-10 11 worn or dash-camera, except as permitted in this section, the peace officer's employer shall impose 12 discipline up to and including termination, to the extent permitted by the provisions of chapter 28.6 13 of title 42. 14 42-160-5. Retention of recordings. 15 A local law enforcement agency and the Rhode Island state police shall establish and 16 follow a retention schedule for body-worn camera recordings. 17 42-160-6. Release of recordings. 18 (a) For all incidents in which there is a complaint of peace officer misconduct by another 19 peace officer, a civilian, or nonprofit organization, through notice to the law enforcement agency 20 involved in the alleged misconduct, the local law enforcement agency or the Rhode Island state 21 police shall release all unedited video and audio recordings of the incident, including those from 22 body-worn cameras, dash-cameras, or otherwise collected through investigation, to the public 23 within twenty-one (21) days after the local law enforcement agency or the Rhode Island state police 24 received the complaint of misconduct, except as provided in subsections (b) through (g) of this 25 section. 26 (b) All video and audio recordings depicting a death shall be provided upon request to the victim's spouse, parent, legal guardian, child, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, significant other, or 27 28 other lawful representative, and such person shall be notified of his or her right, to receive and 29 review the recording at least seventy-two (72) hours prior to any public disclosure. This subsection 30 shall not apply to a person seventeen (17) years of age and under, unless legally emancipated. 31 (c) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, any video that raises substantial 32 privacy concerns for criminal defendants, victims, witnesses, juveniles, or informants, including

video depicting nudity; a sexual assault; a medical emergency; private medical information; a

mental health crisis; a victim interview; a minor, including any images or information that might

undermine the requirement to keep certain juvenile records confidential; any personal information
other than the name of any person not arrested, cited, charged, or issued a written warning,
including a government-issued identification number, date of birth, address, or financial
information; significantly explicit and gruesome bodily injury, unless the injury was caused by a
peace officer; or the interior of a home or treatment facility, shall be redacted or blurred to protect
the substantial privacy interest while still allowing public release. Unredacted footage shall not be
released without the written authorization of the victim or, if the victim is deceased or incapacitated,

the written authorization of the victim's next of kin. Unredacted footage shall not be released to a person seventeen (17) years of age and under, unless legally emancipated.

(d) If redaction or blurring is insufficient to protect the substantial privacy interest, the local law enforcement agency or the Rhode Island state police shall, upon request, release the video to the victim or, if the victim is deceased or incapacitated, to the victim's spouse, parent, legal guardian, child, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, significant other, or other lawful representative within twenty (20) days after receipt of the complaint of misconduct. In cases in which the recording is not released to the public pursuant to this section, the local law enforcement agency shall notify the person whose privacy interest is implicated, if contact information is known, within twenty (20) days after receipt of the complaint of misconduct, and inform the person of his or her right to waive the privacy interest.

(e) A witness, victim, or criminal defendant may waive in writing the individual privacy interest that may be implicated by public release. Upon receipt of a written waiver of the applicable privacy interest, accompanied by a request for release, the law enforcement agency may not redact or withhold release to protect that privacy interest.

(f) Any video that would substantially interfere with or jeopardize an active or ongoing investigation may be withheld from the public; except that the video shall be released no later than forty-five (45) days from the date of the allegation of misconduct. In all cases when release of a video is delayed in reliance on this subsection, the attorney general shall prepare a written explanation of the interference or jeopardy that justifies the delayed release, contemporaneous with the refusal to release the video. Upon release of the video, the attorney general shall release the written explanation to the public.

(g) If criminal charges have been filed against any party to the incident, that party shall file any constitutional objection to the release of the recording in the pending criminal case before the twenty-one (21) day period expires. In cases in which there is a pending criminal investigation or prosecution of a party to the incident, the twenty-one (21) day period shall begin from the earliest

34 of:

1	(1) The date of appointment of counsel;
2	(2) The filing of an entry of appearance by counsel; or
3	(3) The election to proceed pro se by the defendant in the criminal prosecution made on
4	the record before a judge. If the defendant elects to proceed pro se in the criminal case, the court
5	shall advise the defendant of the twenty-one (21) day deadline provided in subsection (a) of this
6	section, for the defendant to file any constitutional objection to the release of the recording in the
7	pending criminal case as part of the court's advisement. The court shall hold a hearing on any
8	objection no later than seven (7) days after it is filed and issue a ruling no later than three (3) days
9	after the hearing.
10	42-160-7. Annual reports.
11	(a) Beginning July 1, 2023, and every July 1 thereafter, the attorney general shall create an
12	annual report including all of the information that is reported to the attorney general pursuant to
13	subsection (b) of this section, aggregated and broken down by the law enforcement agency that
14	employs peace officers, along with the underlying data.
15	(b) Beginning January 1, 2023, and every January 1 thereafter, the Rhode Island state police
16	and each local law enforcement agency that employs peace officers shall provide an annual report
17	to the attorney general containing the following information:
18	(1) All use of force by its peace officers that results in death or serious bodily injury,
19	including:
20	(i) The date, time, and location of the use of force;
21	(ii) The perceived demographic information of the person contacted; provided, that the
22	identification of these characteristics is based on the observation and perception of the peace officer
23	making the contact and other available data;
24	(iii) The names of all peace officers who were at the scene, identified by whether the peace
25	officer was involved in the use of force or not; except that the identity of other peace officers at the
26	scene not directly involved in the use of force shall be identified by the officer's identification
27	number unless the peace officer is charged criminally or is a defendant to a civil suit arising from
28	the use of force;
29	(iv) The type of force used, the severity and nature of the injury, whether the peace officer
30	suffered physical injury, and the severity of the peace officer's injury;
31	(v) Whether the peace officer was on duty at the time of the use of force;
32	(vi) Whether a peace officer unholstered a weapon during the incident;
33	(vii) Whether a peace officer discharged a firearm during the incident;
34	(viii) Whether the use of force resulted in a law enforcement agency investigation and the

1	result of the investigation; and
2	(ix) Whether the use of force resulted in a citizen complaint and the resolution of that
3	complaint;
4	(2) All instances when a peace officer resigned while under investigation for violating
5	department policy;
6	(3) All data relating to contacts conducted by its peace officers, including:
7	(i) The perceived demographic information of the person contacted; provided, that the
8	identification of these characteristics is based on the observation and perception of the peace officer
9	making the contact and other available data;
0	(ii) Whether the contact was a traffic stop;
1	(iii) The time, date, and location of the contact;
2	(iv) The duration of the contact;
3	(v) The reason for the contact;
4	(vi) The suspected crime;
5	(vii) The result of the contact, such as:
16	(A) No action, warning, citation, property seizure, or arrest;
17	(B) If a warning or citation was issued, the warning provided or violation cited;
8	(C) If an arrest was made, the offense charged; and
9	(D) If the contact was a traffic stop, the information collected, which is limited to the driver;
20	(viii) The actions taken by the peace officer during the contact, including, but not limited
21	to, whether:
22	(A) The peace officer asked for consent to search the person, and, if so, whether consent
23	was provided;
24	(B) The peace officer searched the person or any property, and, if so, the basis for the
25	search and the type of contraband or evidence discovered, if any;
26	(C) The peace officer seized any property and, if so, the type of property that was seized
27	and the basis for seizing the property;
28	(D) A peace officer unholstered a weapon during the contact; and
29	(E) A peace officer discharged a firearm during the contact;
30	(4) All instances of unannounced entry into a residence, with or without a warrant,
31	including:
32	(i) The date, time, and location of the use of unannounced entry;
33	(ii) The perceived demographic information of the subject of the unannounced entry;
34	provided, that the identification of these characteristics is based on the observation and perception

1	of the peace officer making the entry and other available data;
2	(iii) Whether a peace officer unholstered a weapon during the unannounced entry; and
3	(iv) Whether a peace officer discharged a firearm during the unannounced entry.
4	(c) The Rhode Island state police and local law enforcement agencies shall not report the
5	name, address, social security number, or other unique personal identifying information of the
6	subject of the use of force, victim of the official misconduct, or persons contacted, searched, or
7	subjected to a property seizure. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the data
8	reported pursuant to this section shall be available to the public.
9	(d) The attorney general shall maintain a statewide database with data collected pursuant
10	to this section, in a searchable format, and publish the database on its website.
11	(e) The Rhode Island state police and any local law enforcement agency that fails to meet
12	its reporting requirements pursuant to this section is subject to the suspension of its funding by its
13	appropriating authority.
14	42-160-8. Documented excessive force.
15	Notwithstanding any provision of law, if any peace officer is convicted of or pleads guilty
16	or nolo contendere to a crime involving the unlawful use or threatened use of physical force, a
17	crime involving the failure to intervene in the use of unlawful force, or is found civilly liable for
18	the use of unlawful physical force, or is found civilly liable for failure to intervene in the use of
19	unlawful force, the chief law enforcement officer for the offender's department shall impose
20	discipline up to and including termination to the extent permitted by the provisions of chapter 28.6
21	of title 42.
22	42-160-9. Restricted force in response to protests.
23	In response to a protest or demonstration, a law enforcement agency and any person acting
24	on behalf of the law enforcement agency shall not:
25	(1) Discharge kinetic impact projectiles and all other non- or less-lethal projectiles in a
26	manner that targets the head, pelvis, or back;
27	(2) Discharge kinetic impact projectiles indiscriminately into a crowd; or
28	(3) Use chemical agents or irritants, including pepper spray and tear gas, prior to issuing
29	an order to disperse in a sufficient manner to ensure the order is heard and repeated if necessary,
30	followed by sufficient time and space to allow compliance with the order.
31	42-160-10. Civil action for deprivation of rights.
32	(a) A peace officer, employed by a local government who, under color of law, subjects or
33	causes to be subjected, including failing to intervene, any other person to the deprivation of any
34	individual rights that create binding obligations on government actors secured by the United States

1	Constitution, or by the state constitution, is liable to the injured party for legal or equitable relief or
2	any other appropriate relief.
3	(b)(1) Statutory immunities and statutory limitations on liability, damages, or attorneys'
4	fees shall not apply to claims brought pursuant to this section.
5	(2) Qualified immunity is not a defense to liability pursuant to this section.
6	(c) In any action brought pursuant to this section, a court shall award reasonable attorneys'
7	fees and costs to a prevailing plaintiff. In actions for injunctive relief, a court shall deem a plaintiff
8	to have prevailed if the plaintiff's suit was a substantial factor or significant catalyst in obtaining
9	the results sought by the litigation. When a judgment is entered in favor of a defendant, the court
10	may award reasonable costs and attorney fees to the defendant for defending any claims the court
11	finds frivolous.
12	(d) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a peace officer's employer shall indemnify
13	its peace officers for any liability incurred by the peace officer and for any judgment or settlement
14	entered against the peace officer for claims arising pursuant to this section; except that, if the peace
15	officer's employer determines that the officer did not act upon a good faith and reasonable belief
16	that the action was lawful, then the peace officer shall be personally liable and shall not be
17	indemnified by the peace officer's employer for five percent (5%) of the judgment or settlement or
18	twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000), whichever is less. Notwithstanding any provision of this
19	section to the contrary, if the peace officer's portion of the judgment is uncollectible from the peace
20	officer, the peace officer's employer or insurer shall satisfy the full amount of the judgment or
21	settlement. A public entity does not have to indemnify a peace officer if the peace officer was
22	convicted of a criminal violation for the conduct from which the claim arises.
23	(5) A civil action pursuant to this section shall be commenced within three (3) years after
24	the cause of action accrues.
25	42-160-11. Use of force by peace officers.
26	(a) Peace officers, in carrying out their duties, shall apply nonviolent means, when possible,
27	before resorting to the use of physical force. A peace officer may use physical force only if
28	nonviolent means would be ineffective in effecting an arrest, preventing an escape, or preventing
29	an imminent threat of serious bodily injury or death to the peace officer or another person.
30	(b) When physical force is used, a peace officer shall:
31	(1) Not use deadly physical force to apprehend a person who is suspected of only a minor
32	or nonviolent offense;
33	(2) Use only a degree of force consistent with the minimization of injury to others;
34	(3) Ensure that assistance and medical aid are rendered to any injured or affected persons

1	as soon as practicable; and
2	(4) Ensure that any identified relatives or next of kin of persons who have sustained serious
3	bodily injury or death are notified as soon as practicable.
4	(c) A peace officer is prohibited from using a chokehold upon another person. For the
5	purposes of this subsection, "chokehold" means a method by which a person applies sufficient
6	pressure to a person to make breathing difficult or impossible and includes, but is not limited to,
7	any pressure to the neck, throat, or windpipe that may prevent or hinder breathing or reduce intake
8	of air, "Chokehold" also means applying pressure to a person's neck on either side of the windpipe,
9	but not to the windpipe itself, to stop the flow of blood to the brain via the carotid arteries.
10	(d) A peace officer is justified in using deadly physical force to make an arrest only when
11	all other means of apprehension are unreasonable given the circumstances and:
12	(1) The arrest is for a felony involving conduct including the use or threatened use of deadly
13	physical force;
14	(2) The suspect poses an immediate threat to the peace officer or another person; and
15	(3) The force employed does not create a substantial risk of injury to other persons.
16	(e) A peace officer shall identify himself or herself as a peace officer and give a clear verbal
17	warning of his or her intent to use firearms or other deadly physical force, with sufficient time for
18	the warning to be observed, unless to do so would unduly place peace officers at risk of injury, or
19	would create a risk of death or injury to other persons. Notwithstanding any other provisions in this
20	section, a peace officer is justified in using deadly force if the peace officer has an objectively
21	reasonable belief that a lesser degree of force is inadequate and the peace officer has objectively
22	reasonable grounds to believe, and does believe, that he/she or another person is in imminent danger
23	of being killed or of receiving serious bodily injury.
24	42-160-12. Duty to report use of force by peace officers Duty to intervene.
25	(a) A peace officer shall intervene to prevent or stop another peace officer from using
26	physical force that exceeds the degree of force permitted, if any, by the provisions of this chapter.
27	This intervention shall include, but not be limited to, circumstances in which the other peace officer
28	is carrying out an arrest of any person, placing any person under detention, taking any person into
29	custody, booking any person, or in the process of crowd control or riot control, without regard for
30	chain of command.
31	(b) A peace officer who intervenes as required by subsection (a) of this section, shall report
32	the intervention to his or her immediate supervisor.
33	(c) At a minimum, the report required by subsection (b) of this section shall include the
34	date, time, and place of the occurrence; the identity, if known, and description of the participants;

and a description of the intervention actions taken. This report shall be made in writing within ten 1 2 (10) days of the occurrence of the use of such force and shall be appended to all other reports of 3 the incident. (d) A member of a law enforcement agency shall not discipline or retaliate in any way 4 against a peace officer for intervening as required by subsection (a) of this section, or for reporting 5 6 unconstitutional conduct, or for failing to follow what the officer reasonably believes is an 7 unconstitutional directive. 8 (e) Any peace officer who fails to intervene to prevent the use of unlawful force as 9 prescribed in this section commits a misdemeanor punishable by confinement of not more than one year and/or a fine of not more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000). Nothing in this subsection shall 10 prohibit or discourage prosecution of any other criminal offense related to failure to intervene, 11 12 including a higher charge, if supported by the evidence. 13 (f) When an internal investigation finds that a peace officer failed to intervene to prevent 14 the use of unlawful physical force as prescribed in this section, this finding shall be presented to the attorney general in order that he or she can determine whether charges should be filed pursuant 15 16 to this section; provided, however, nothing in this subsection shall prohibit the attorney general 17 from charging an officer with failure to intervene before the conclusion of any internal 18 investigation. 19 (g) In addition to any criminal liability and penalty under the law, when an internal 20 investigation finds that a peace officer failed to intervene as required by subsection (a) of this section in an incident resulting in serious bodily injury or death to any person, the peace officer's 21 22 employer shall subject the peace officer to discipline, up to and including termination, pursuant to 23 the provisions of chapter 28.6 of title 42. (h) In a case in which the department of the attorney general charges a peace officer with 24 25 offenses related to and based upon the use of excessive force but does not file charges against any other peace officer or officers who were at the scene during the use of force, the attorney general 26 shall prepare a written report explaining the attorney general's basis for the decision not to charge 27 any other peace officer with any criminal conduct and shall publicly disclose the report to the 28 29 public; except that if disclosure of the report would substantially interfere with or jeopardize an 30 ongoing criminal investigation, the attorney general may delay public disclosure for up to fortyfive (45) days. The attorney general shall post the written report on its website. Nothing in this 31

section is intended to prohibit or discourage criminal prosecution of an officer who failed to intervene for conduct in which the facts support a criminal charge, including under a complicity

32

33 34

theory, or for an inchoate offense.

1	42-160-13. Training.
2	Each law enforcement agency in the state shall train its peace officers regarding compliance
3	with the provisions of this chapter.
4	42-160-14. Peace officer Involved death investigations Disclosure.
5	Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, with respect to a peace officer involved in
6	an investigation resulting in death, if the attorney general refers the matter under investigation to
7	the grand jury, the attorney general shall release a statement at the time the matter is referred to the
8	grand jury disclosing the general purpose of the grand jury's investigation. If a no true bill is
9	returned, the grand jury shall issue and publish a report.
10	42-160-15. Profiling Officer identification.
11	(a) If a peace officer shall make a contact, whether consensual or nonconsensual, for the
12	purpose of enforcing the law or investigating possible violations of the law, then after making
13	contact, a peace officer shall report to the peace officer's employing agency:
14	(1) The perceived demographic information of the person contacted; provided, that the
15	identification of these characteristics is based on the observation and perception of the peace officer
16	making the contact and other available data;
17	(2) Whether the contact was a traffic stop;
18	(3) The time, date, and location of the contact;
19	(4) The duration of the contact;
20	(5) The reason for the contact:
21	(6) The suspected crime;
22	(7) The result of the contact, such as:
23	(i) No action, warning, citation, property seizure, or arrest;
24	(ii) If a warning or citation was issued, the warning provided or violation cited;
25	(iii) If an arrest was made, the offense charged;
26	(iv) If the contact was a traffic stop, the information collected, which is limited to the driver
27	(6) The actions taken by the peace officer during the contact, including, but not limited to
28	whether:
29	(i) The peace officer asked for consent to search the person, vehicle, or other property, and
30	if so, whether consent was provided;
31	(ii) The peace officer searched the person or any property, and, if so, the basis for the search
32	and the type of contraband or evidence discovered, if any;
33	(iii) The peace officer seized any property, and, if so, the type of property that was seized
34	and the basis for seizing the property;

1	(iv) A peace officer unifostered a weapon during the contact, and
2	(v) A peace officer discharged a firearm during the contact.
3	(b) A peace officer shall provide, without being asked, the peace officer's business card to
4	any person whom the peace officer has detained in a traffic stop but has not cited or arrested. The
5	business card shall include identifying information about the peace officer, including, but not
6	limited to, the peace officer's name, division, precinct, and badge or other identification number; a
7	telephone number that may be used, if necessary, to report any comments, positive or negative,
8	regarding the traffic stop; and information about how to file a complaint related to the contact. The
9	identity of the reporting person and the report of any such comments that constitute a complaint
10	shall initially be kept confidential by the receiving law enforcement agency, to the extent permitted
11	by law. The receiving law enforcement agency shall be permitted to obtain some identifying
12	information regarding the complaint to allow initial processing of the complaint. If it becomes
13	necessary for the further processing of the complaint for the complainant to disclose the
14	complainant's identity, the complainant shall do so or, at the option of the receiving law
15	enforcement agency, the complaint may be dismissed.
16	42-160-15. Public integrity Patterns in practice.
17	(a) It shall be unlawful for any governmental authority, or any agent thereof, or any person
18	acting on behalf of a governmental authority, to engage in a pattern or practice of conduct by peace
19	officers or by officials or employees of any governmental agency that deprives persons of rights,
20	privileges, or immunities secured or protected by the constitution or laws of the United States or
21	the state of Rhode Island.
22	(b) Whenever the attorney general has reasonable cause to believe that a violation of this
23	section has occurred, the attorney general, for or in the name of the state of Rhode Island, may in a
24	civil action obtain any and all appropriate relief to eliminate the pattern or practice. Before filing
25	suit, the attorney general shall notify the government authority or any agent thereof, and provide it
26	with the factual basis that supports his or her reasonable cause to believe a violation occurred. Upon
27	receipt of the factual basis, the government authority, or any agent thereof, has sixty (60) days to
28	change or eliminate the identified pattern or practice, if the identified pattern or practice is not
29	changed or eliminated after sixty (60) days, the attorney general may file a civil lawsuit.
30	SECTION 2. Chapter 11-1 of the General Laws entitled "General Provisions" is hereby
31	amended by adding thereto the following section:
32	11-1-12. Criminal offenses for conduct of a peace officer.
33	It shall be a felony punishable by imprisonment for not more than ten (10) years if serious
34	injury results, and in the event that serious bodily injury does not result, punishment shall be

1	imprisonment for not more than three (3) years for any peace officer that uses the following force
2	when said force is not justified pursuant to § 42-160-11:
3	(1) Conducting a "chokehold" on an alleged suspect or criminal assailant which is defined
4	pursuant to § 42-160-11(c).
5	(2) Using their foot as a weapon to kick an alleged suspect or criminal assailant in the head
6	and/or head area.
7	(3) Using a motor vehicle to drive in the immediate direction of an alleged suspect or
8	criminal assailant in the manner as to use said vehicle as a weapon against an alleged suspect or
9	criminal assailant.
10	SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.
	vinedot de la constanta de

LC002010

EXPLANATION

BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

OF

AN ACT

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- RISHOD K. GORE JUSTICE IN POLICING ACT OF 2021

- 1 This act would provide police reform by requiring body cameras and makes certain
- 2 methods of restraint a felony such as chokeholds and using the foot as a weapon.
- This act would take effect upon passage.

LC002010

Steven Brown <sbrown@riaclu.org>

Sent:

Thursday, September 23, 2021 10:42 AM

To:

bwcstatewidepolicy; rulesregs@risp.gov

Cc:

Kate Sabatini

Subject:

Body Worn Camera ANPR

Attachments:

Attorney General ANPR body camera testimony w:exhibits.pdf

[External email: Use caution with links and attachments]

On behalf of the ACLU of Rhode Island, attached please find our comments in response to the ANPR your agencies recently issued regarding the adoption of a policy governing police body-worn cameras.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of our views.

Steven Brown
Executive Director
ACLU of Rhode Island
128 Dorrance Street, Suite 400
Providence, RI 02903
401-831-7171 (phone)
401-831-7175 (fax)
he/him/his



128 Dorrance Street, Suite 400 Providence, RI 02903 Phone: (401) 831-7171 Fax: (401) 831-7175 www.riaclu.org info@riaclu.org

COMMENTS ON ATTORNEY GENERAL/DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY ADVANCE NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULEMAKING ON "POLICY FOR USE AND OPERATION OF BODY-WORN CAMERAS" [110-RICR-10-00-1] [270-RICR-50-00-03] September 23, 2021

As an oversight tool for both the police and the community, the potential deployment of body-worn cameras (BWC) throughout the state is a positive development which recognizes the role that these devices can play in promoting transparency and accountability. Since the regulations implementing the program will be key in ensuring that these goals are met, the ACLU of Rhode Island appreciates the opportunity to provide input at the ANPR stage, and before detailed regulations to implement a BWC program for interested police departments are formally proposed for additional comment.

Our comments touch upon some key issues that we have encountered in reviewing the policies that have thus far been considered or adopted by the few law enforcement agencies in Rhode Island currently equipped with BWCs. In light of the DPS's role in drafting these regulations, we enclose a letter we submitted in August analyzing the BWC policy that was adopted by the State Police in running a pilot BWC program this year (Appendix B). In addition, we strongly encourage the Attorney General and Department of Public Safety to carefully review and make use of a detailed model BWC policy that was drafted by the National ACLU, and which is also enclosed with this testimony (Appendix A).

• Activation of the cameras. Clear, concrete standards as to when cameras may be activated are essential to a BWC policy. Beyond immediate officer safety concerns, any subjectivity in decisions to turn body cameras on or off will raise concerns about what is not being captured by cameras, and why. Further,

camera activation should not await an adversarial interaction. Instead, the policy should require that BWCs be activated immediately upon responding to a call for service or at the initiation of any other law enforcement or investigative encounter between a police officer and a member of the public, and that the cameras not be turned off until the interaction has completely ended, including any interaction between officers on the scene following the arrest or departure of the person. This will capture, from the beginning to the end, stops, frisks, searches, arrests, consensual interviews and searches, and enforcement actions of all kinds. The policy should further require police to promptly notify people that they are being recorded.

- First Amendment Protection. One instance when cameras should not be used is to record individuals engaged in protected free speech activity, such as rallies and protests. In light of the potential chilling effect such recordings could have on the exercise of protected First Amendment activity, a ban should be made explicit in the policy.
- *Public Access to Footage*. The key goal of utilizing BWCs is or certainly should be the promotion of transparency and accountability. Those objectives simply cannot be achieved if public access to camera footage of high-profile incidents is unduly delayed. Recordings of incidents of alleged police misconduct should be released sooner rather than later and the policy should acknowledge this goal.

That is why, at least for use of force or other high-profile incidents, the policy should not merely rely on the time frame authorized by the Access to Public Records Act as the standard for releasing body camera footage to the public. APRA sets a floor, not a ceiling, and reliance on that floor in these situations could enable law enforcement agencies to unnecessarily prolong the release of video footage that the public deserves to see. The timing for release of recordings in controversial cases of police-public interaction should be measured in days, not weeks or months. While the APRA time frame may be relevant for run-of-the-mill requests for BWC footage, expedited release is essential in more high-profile situations. We therefore urge that the policy require release of body camera footage within one week of a "use of force" or other incident that has prompted public controversy.

The Attorney General has previously opined that BWC footage of contested incidents should not be released until any investigation by that office is "substantially complete," but this has the potential to keep footage of highly publicized incidents secret for months. This, we submit, can only breed mistrust and undermine the promise of BWCs. We would expect key witnesses to be interviewed promptly, especially since memories quickly fade, so there should not be a need for a lengthy period of time to elapse before releasing BWC footage in those high-profile situations. The public should be able to judge the footage independently without having to wait for the Office of the Attorney General to substantially complete its investigation and share its own views as to the content and ramifications of what appears on the video.

Independently of this, people who are the subject of BWC footage should be allowed to view the recordings promptly. Presently under APRA, a person who is the subject of a police report has no greater right than a member of the general public to obtain a copy of the report. However, we believe the subject of video recordings, and their legal representatives, should be entitled to access video involving themselves regardless of any APRA restrictions. Finally, we believe that municipalities should be given the independent discretion to release BWC footage without awaiting state approval.

• Police Review of BWC Footage. The policy should strictly limit the viewing by officers of body camera videos prior to their submitting documentation related to any incident involving use of force, an arrest or any other confrontation with a member of the public that might lead to an internal complaint of any kind. Permitting officers to review footage before filing all of their documentation in these situations will undoubtedly raise questions about possible manipulation of the reports or the validity of an officer's memory. Some current BWC policies prohibit prior review only for "serious use of force" incidents, but this is too limited. There are many situations which do not rise to that level of interaction where an officer inadvertently coloring their memory by viewing video prior to documenting the incident could be just as problematic.

- Retention of BWC Footage. Well-defined standards should be in place as to what types of footage should be archived and the purposes for which archived footage can be reviewed. Videos capturing use of force, detention or arrest, or any incidents that are the topic of an internal affairs complaint should be automatically flagged for extended retention.
- Facial Recognition. The policy should explicitly prohibit the utilization of facial recognition or other technologies in conjunction with the use of BWCs that have the potential of bolstering police surveillance. A technology which was designed as a tool for officer accountability should not be twisted into a surveillance system to be used against communities. The rise of biometric surveillance technologies gives government an unprecedented power to track, classify, and discriminate against people based on their most personal features, and the regulations should prevent any such use of BWCs from the start.
- *Privacy*. The policy should take into account legitimate privacy concerns and plainly delineate the circumstances when a camera should be turned off. The ACLU model policy cites a handful of such situations where the person being recorded should have a say in whether the camera should be deactivated, such as for certain searches of residences, sensitive interviews of crime victims, and interactions with anonymous sources. In addition, any request by an individual to an officer to stop recording should itself be captured on the video.

In responding to APRA requests, police departments should make use of blurring technology to protect the privacy of third parties captured on video. Thanks to this redaction capability, there is no reason for police departments to otherwise edit, or deny access to, camera footage sought under APRA on the grounds that protecting the privacy of innocent third parties prevents release.

• *Penalties for Violations*. Despite the fact that Providence police have been wearing cameras for a number of years, a series of high-profile incidents in the past year have documented failures by officers to activate their cameras. It is important that the policy make clear that disciplinary sanctions are warranted for such conduct. In addition, as the ACLU model policy specifies, an officer's failure to activate their camera should create rebuttable evidentiary presumptions in civil and criminal cases.

The ACLU of RI appreciates your consideration of our views and is hopeful that these suggestions will be incorporated into the draft regulation that will be submitted for a public hearing in the next round.

Enclosures

APPENDIX A



A MODEL ACT FOR REGULATING THE USE OF BODY WORN CAMERAS BY LAW ENFORCEMENT

Be it enacted by the [NAME OF THE STATE LEGISLATIVE BODY]:

SECTION 1.

- Only law enforcement officers with the authority to conduct searches and make arrests shall be permitted to wear a body camera. Such body cameras shall be worn in a location and manner that maximizes the camera's ability to capture video footage of the officer's activities.
- (b) With respect to body camera activation and deactivation:
 - (1) Both the video and audio recording functions of the body camera shall be activated whenever a law enforcement officer is responding to a call for service or at the initiation of any other law enforcement or investigative encounter between a law enforcement officer and a member of the public, except that when an immediate threat to the officer's life or safety makes activating the camera impossible or dangerous, the officer shall activate the camera at the first reasonable opportunity to do so.
 - (2) The body camera shall not be deactivated until the encounter has fully concluded and the law enforcement officer leaves the scene.
 - All body cameras shall be equipped with, and at all times have activated, a pre-event buffering mode that causes the body camera to continuously record and retain the most recent 30 seconds of video and audio prior to an officer's activation of their body camera. Such pre-event recordings shall attach to, and be considered a part of, any recording that result from an officer's activation of their body camera.

- (c) A law enforcement officer who is wearing a body camera shall notify the subject(s) of the recording that they are being recorded by a body camera as close to the inception of the encounter as is reasonably possible.
- (d) Notwithstanding the requirements of subsection (b):
 - (1) Prior to entering a private residence without a warrant or in non-exigent circumstances, a law enforcement officer shall ask the occupant if the occupant wants the officer to discontinue use of the officer's body camera. If the occupant responds affirmatively, the law enforcement officer shall immediately discontinue use of the body camera;
 - When interacting with an apparent crime victim, a law enforcement officer shall, as soon as practicable, ask the apparent crime victim, if the apparent crime victim wants the officer to discontinue use of the officer's body camera. If the apparent crime victim responds affirmatively, the law enforcement officer shall immediately discontinue use of the body camera; and
 - (3) When interacting with a person seeking to anonymously report a crime or assist in an ongoing law enforcement investigation, a law enforcement officer shall, as soon as practicable, ask the person seeking to remain anonymous, if the person seeking to remain anonymous wants the officer to discontinue use of the officer's body camera. If the person seeking to remain anonymous responds affirmatively, the law enforcement officer shall immediately discontinue use of the body camera.
- (e) All law enforcement offers to discontinue the use of a body camera made pursuant to subsection (d), and the responses thereto, shall be recorded by the body camera prior to discontinuing use of the body camera.
- (f) Body cameras shall not be used surreptitiously.
- (g) Body cameras shall not be used to gather intelligence information based on First Amendment protected speech, associations, or religion, or to record activity that is unrelated to a response to

- a call for service or a law enforcement or investigative encounter between a law enforcement officer and a member of the public.
- (h) Law enforcement officers shall not activate a body camera while on the grounds of any public, private or parochial elementary or secondary school, except when responding to an imminent threat to life or health.
- (i) Body camera video footage shall be retained by the law enforcement agency that employs the officer whose camera captured the footage, or an authorized agent thereof, for six (6) months from the date it was recorded, after which time such footage shall be permanently deleted.
 - (1) During the six (6) month retention period, the following persons shall have the right to inspect the body camera footage:
 - (A) Any person who is a subject of body camera video footage, and/or their designated legal counsel;
 - (B) A parent of a minor subject of body camera video footage, and/or their designated legal counsel;
 - (C) The spouse, next of kin or legally authorized designee of a deceased subject of body camera video footage, and/or their designated legal counsel;
 - (D) A law enforcement officer whose body camera recorded the video footage, and/or their designated legal counsel, subject to the limitations and restrictions in this Act;
 - (E) The superior officer of a law enforcement officer whose body camera recorded the video footage, subject to the limitations and restrictions in this Act; and
 - (F) Any defense counsel who claims, pursuant to a written affidavit, to have a reasonable basis for believing a video may contain evidence that exculpates a client.
 - (2) The right to inspect subject to subsection (i)(1) shall not include the right to possess a copy of the body camera video footage, unless the release of the body camera footage is otherwise authorized by this Act or by another applicable law.

- (3) When a body camera fails to capture some or all of the audio or video of an incident due to malfunction, displacement of camera, or any other cause, any audio or video footage that is captured shall be treated the same as any other body camera audio or video footage under the law.
- (j) Notwithstanding the retention and deletion requirements in subsection (i):
 - (1) Video footage shall be automatically retained for no less than three (3) years if the video footage captures an interaction or event involving:
 - (A) Any use of force; or
 - (B) An encounter about which a complaint has been registered by a subject of the video footage.
 - (2) Body camera video footage shall also be retained for no less than three (3) years if a longer retention period is voluntarily requested by:
 - (A) The law enforcement officer whose body camera recorded the video footage, if that officer reasonably asserts the video footage has evidentiary or exculpatory value;
 - (B) Any law enforcement officer who is a subject of the video footage, if that officer reasonably asserts the video footage has evidentiary or exculpatory value;
 - (C) Any superior officer of a law enforcement officer whose body camera recorded the video footage or who is a subject of the video footage, if that superior officer reasonably asserts the video footage has evidentiary or exculpatory value;
 - (D) Any law enforcement officer, if the video footage is being retained solely and exclusively for police training purposes;
 - (E) Any member of the public who is a subject of the video footage;
 - (F) Any parent or legal guardian of a minor who is a subject of the video footage; or
 - (G) A deceased subject's spouse, next of kin, or legally authorized designee.
- (k) To effectuate subsections (j)(2)(E), (j)(2)(F) and (j)(2)(G), any member of the public who is a

subject of video footage, the parent or legal guardian of a minor who is a subject of the video footage, or a deceased subject's next of kin or legally authorized designee, shall be permitted to review the specific video footage in question in order to make a determination as to whether they will voluntarily request it be subjected to a three (3) year retention period.

- (I) All video footage of an interaction or event captured by a body camera, if that interaction or event is identified with reasonable specificity and requested by a member of the public, shall be provided to the person or entity making the request in accordance with the procedures for requesting and providing government records set forth in the [NAME OF STATE OPEN RECORDS ACT/FOIA LAW].
 - (1) Notwithstanding the public release requirements in subsection (l), the following categories of video footage shall not be released to the public in the absence of express written permission from the non-law enforcement subject(s) of the video footage:
 - (A) Video footage not subject to a minimum three (3) year retention period pursuant to subsection (j); and
 - (B) Video footage that is subject to a minimum three (3) year retention period solely and exclusively pursuant to subsection (j)(1)(B) or (j)(2).
 - Notwithstanding any time periods established for acknowledging and responding to records requests in [NAME OF STATE OPEN RECORDS ACT/FOIA LAW], responses to requests for video footage that is subject to a minimum three (3) year retention period pursuant to subsection (j)(1)(A), where a subject of the video footage is recorded being killed, shot by a firearm, or grievously injured, shall be prioritized and the requested video footage shall be provided as expeditiously as possible, but in no circumstances later than five (5) days following receipt of the request.
 - (3) Whenever doing so is necessary to protect personal privacy, the right to a fair trial, the identity of a confidential source or crime victim, or the life or physical safety of any

person appearing in video footage, redaction technology may be used to obscure the face and other personally identifying characteristics of that person, including the tone of the person's voice, provided the redaction does not interfere with a viewer's ability to fully, completely, and accurately comprehend the events captured on the video footage.

- (A) When redaction is performed on video footage pursuant to subsection (l)(3), an unedited, original version of the video footage shall be retained pursuant to the requirements of subsection (i) and (j).
- (B) Except pursuant to the rules for the redaction of video footage set forth in subsection (I)(3) or where it is otherwise expressly authorized by this Act, no other editing or alteration of video footage, including a reduction of the video footage's resolution, shall be permitted.
- (4) The provisions governing the production of body camera video footage to the public in this Act shall take precedence over all other state and local laws, rules, and regulations to the contrary.
- (m) Body camera video footage may not be withheld from the public on the basis that it is an investigatory record or was compiled for law enforcement purposes where any person under investigation or whose conduct is under review is a police officer or other law enforcement employee and the video footage relates to that person's on-the-job conduct.
- (n) Any video footage retained beyond six (6) months solely and exclusively pursuant to subsection (j)(2)(D) shall not be admissible as evidence in any criminal or civil legal or administrative proceeding.
- (o) No government agency or official, or law enforcement agency, officer, or official may publicly disclose, release, or share body camera video footage unless:
 - (1) Doing so is expressly authorized pursuant to this Act or another applicable law; or
 - (2) The video footage is subject to public release pursuant to subsection (l), and not

exempted from public release pursuant to subsection (1)(1).

- (p) No law enforcement officer shall review or receive an accounting of any body camera video footage that is subject to a minimum three (3) year retention period pursuant to subsection (j)(1) prior to completing any required initial reports, statements, and interviews regarding the recorded event, unless doing so is necessary, while in the field, to address an immediate threat to life or safety.
- (q) Video footage that is not subject to a minimum three (3) year retention period shall not be viewed by any superior officer of a law enforcement officer whose body camera recorded the footage absent a specific allegation of misconduct.
- (r) No body camera shall be equipped with, or have its video footage or other data subjected to, facial recognition or any other form of biometric analysis. No video footage or other body camera data shall be subjected to any other form of automated analysis or analytics unless:
 - (A) A judicial warrant providing authorization is obtained;
 - (B) The judicial warrant specifies the precise, previously-recorded video recording or body camera data to which the authorization applies;
 - (C) The authorizing court finds there is probable cause to believe the video footage or body camera data contains evidence that is relevant to an ongoing felony criminal investigation; and
 - (D) The judicial warrant is consistent with the prohibitions contained in Section 1(g) of this Act.
- (s) Video footage shall not be divulged or used by any law enforcement agency for any commercial or other non-law enforcement purpose.
- (t) Where a law enforcement agency authorizes a third-party to act as its agent in maintaining body camera footage, the agent shall not be permitted to independently access, view, or alter any video footage, except to delete videos as required by law or agency retention policies.

- (u) Should any law enforcement officer, employee, or agent fail to adhere to the recording or retention requirements contained in this chapter, intentionally interfere with a body camera's ability to accurately capture video footage, or otherwise manipulate the video footage captured by a body camera during or after its operation:
 - (1) Appropriate disciplinary action shall be taken against the individual officer, employee or agent;
 - (2) A rebuttable evidentiary presumption shall be adopted in favor of criminal defendants who reasonably assert that exculpatory evidence was destroyed or not captured; and
 - (3) A rebuttable evidentiary presumption shall be adopted on behalf of civil plaintiffs suing the government, a law enforcement agency and/or law enforcement officers for damages based on police misconduct who reasonably assert that evidence supporting their claim was destroyed or not captured.
- (v) The disciplinary action requirement and rebuttable presumptions in subsection (t) may be overcome by contrary evidence or proof of exigent circumstances that made compliance impossible.
- (w) Whenever a law enforcement officer equipped with a body camera is involved in, a witness to, or within viewable sight range of either a police use of force that results in a death, a police use of force where the discharge of a firearm results in an injury, or any law enforcement officer conduct that becomes the subject of a criminal investigation:
 - (1) Such officer's body camera shall be immediately seized by the officer's agency or department, or the agency or department conducting the related criminal investigation, and maintained in accordance with the rules governing the preservation of evidence;
 - (2) All data on the seized body camera shall be maintained in accordance with the

- rules governing the preservation of evidence; and
- (3) A copy of the data on the seized body camera shall made in accordance with prevailing forensic standards for data collection and reproduction and shall be made available to the public where required pursuant to Section 1(1) of this Act.
- (x) Any body camera video footage recorded in contravention of this Act or any other applicable law may not be offered as evidence by any government entity, agency, department, prosecutorial office, or any other subdivision thereof in any criminal or civil action or proceeding against any member of the public.
- (y) Any law enforcement policy or other guidance regarding body cameras, their use, or the video footage therefrom that is adopted by a state, county, or local government entity or agency, including any police or sheriff's department, shall be made publicly available on that entity's or agency's website.
- (z) Nothing in this chapter shall be read to contravene any laws governing the maintenance, production, and destruction of evidence in criminal investigations and prosecutions.
- (aa) As used in this Act:
 - (1) "Law enforcement officer" shall mean any person authorized by law to conduct searches and effectuate arrests and who is employed by the state, by a state subsidiary, or by a county, municipal, or metropolitan form of government.
 - (2) "Subject of the video footage" shall mean any identifiable law enforcement officer or any identifiable suspect, victim, detainee, conversant, injured party, or other similarly situated person who appears on the body camera recording, and shall not include people who only incidentally appear on the recording.
 - (3) "Use of force" shall mean any action by a law enforcement officer that (A) results in death, injury, complaint of injury, or complaint of pain that persists beyond the

use of a physical control hold, or (B) involves the use of a weapon, including a personal body weapon, chemical agent, impact weapon, extended range impact weapon, sonic weapon, sensory weapon, conducted energy device, or firearm, against a member of the public, or (C) involves any intentional pointing of a firearm at a member of the public.

(4) "Video footage" shall mean any images or audio recorded by a body camera.

SECTION 2. This Act shall take effect [DATE]

APPENDIX B



128 Dorrance Street, Suite 400 Providence, RI 02903 Phone: (401) 831-7171 Fax: (401) 831-7175 www.riaclu.org info@riaclu.org

August 19, 2021

Col. James Manni, Superintendent Rhode Island State Police 311 Danielson Pike North Scituate, RI 02857

Dear Col. Manni:

With the completion of your agency's pilot program on the use of body-worn cameras by state troopers and your plans to implement a permanent program, the ACLU of Rhode Island has reviewed the State Police policy that was adopted for the pilot program. Before your agency adopts a policy for the permanent BWC program, I wanted to share with you some of our organization's thoughts on the pilot policy and offer suggested changes that we hope you will consider. Our comments follow immediately below.

- Section V(A)(1) provides that "Members shall activate camera systems when it is safe and practicable." We would urge that the language be changed to read: "Members shall activate camera systems unless it unsafe and impracticable." This change in emphasis is simply designed to make clear that activating cameras is the default position.
- Section V(E) addresses "Recording of Victims/Witnesses" and allows the recording of victims and witnesses to be discontinued to address "any reasonable expectation of privacy." This open-ended authority should be clarified and narrowed, as the comments of these individuals will often be critical to public understanding of an incident under scrutiny. Further, we appreciate that some of these conversations may very well deserve privacy protection from the general public, but in almost all instances we assume these recordings will be helpful to the department itself in pursuing criminal investigations. If there are privacy considerations that warrant discontinuing recordings even for internal purposes, they too should be spelled out more clearly.
- Section V(F) allows troopers to temporarily mute recordings "while consulting with other law enforcement officers or supervisors." We believe this is an overly broad and open-ended exception; such conversations may provide useful background on incidents, and often there would not be any countervailing interests warranting non-recording. Although it too could be more focused, the Massachusetts state police policy, cited in the Appendix to your agency's pilot program report, would serve as a better starting point as it

limits muting of recordings to specified circumstances, such as protecting the safety of victims or witnesses, revealing confidential strategy, etc.

- Section V(G)(e) allows camera deactivation when the "event is of a sensitive nature" and the trooper has weighed "camera system discretionary recording situations" in "Section V,F,4" of the policy. We have two concerns about this provision. First, there is no "Section V,F,4." More substantively, Section V(G) is addressing circumstances when activated recordings should be concluded. If another section of the policy already gives the trooper authority not to record an event of a "sensitive nature," there is no need for re-including it here, as it only creates confusion and suggests the addition of yet another exception to the policy's recording requirements.
- Section VII(A)(2)(a) allows troopers, with one exception, broad authority to review BWC recordings "for the purposes of completing an investigation and preparing official reports." The exception, contained in Section VII(B)(2), allows access in "serious use of force" situations only after the trooper has provided a recorded statement. However, there are important reasons to limit trooper access to body camera footage in many other instances besides those involving use of serious force.

There are many situations which do not amount to "serious use of force" as defined in RISP policy, but where an officer inadvertently coloring their memory by viewing video prior to documenting the incident may be just as problematic and therefore also warrants a ban on premature viewing of the recording. We believe subsection (B)(2) should thus be expanded to apply to videos capturing any use of force, incidents leading to arrest, or any other confrontation with a member of the public that might reasonably lead to filing of a complaint or to an internal or external investigation. The language of this section should also be refined to clarify that it applies to all troopers who were witness to the incident, not just those directly involved in the confrontation or arrest.

• Section VII(F)(2) provides that recordings are "presumptively subject to a public records request." However, this section does not indicate that the records will be presumptively subject to disclosure, which we believe they should be. We also believe that recordings of incidents of alleged police misconduct should be released sooner rather than later and that the policy should itself encourage prompt release in those instances. The Attorney General has opined that BWC footage of contested incidents should not be released until any investigation by that office is "substantially complete," which could keep footage of highly-publicized incidents secret for months. However, as there is no basis in APRA for such an extreme limitation on disclosure, the time for release of recordings in such instances should be measured in days, not an indefinite period of time which could stretch for months.

- Section VII(H) generally prohibits recordings of First Amendment activities, and we applaud this important restriction. However, it allows an exception for when the recording is "directed by a supervisor." This section should contain standards for making use of this exception and further require the supervisor to document in writing the basis and rationale for authorizing a recording under these circumstances.
- Finally, the draft policy contains no guidelines as to penalties for officers who
 violate the policy. Such language is critical in ensuring that any officers who
 do so are held accountable, and punishment is imposed in predictable and
 even-handed ways.

The ACLU hopes you will give careful consideration to these comments in drafting a policy for the permanent BWC program. Thank you for your attention to this, and please feel free to let me know if you have any questions about it.

Sincerely,

Steven Brown Executive Director From:

John Marion < john_marion@commoncauseri.org>

Sent:

Thursday, September 23, 2021 2:04 PM

To:

bwcstatewidepolicy

Cc:

Kate Sabatini

Subject:

Comments from ACCESS/RI

Attachments:

2021 09 22 Body-Worn Camera Testimony final.pdf

[External email: Use caution with links and attachments]

To Whom it May Concern:

Please find attached to this email comments from ACCESS/RI in response to the Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking regarding a Policy for Use and Operation of Body-Worn Cameras.

John Marion Executive Director he/him/his

Common Cause Rhode Island 245 Waterman St., Suite 400A Providence, RI 02906

Like us: www.facebook.com/commoncauseri Follow us: www.twitter.com/commoncauseri

Visit us: www.commoncauseri.org

September 23, 2021

Office of the Attorney General 150 South Main Street Providence, RI 02903

Thank you for soliciting input as part of the Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking regarding a Policy for Use and Operation of Body-Worn Cameras. Such a statewide policy is much needed as the use of body-worn cameras expands in Rhode Island.

We start from the position that the use of body-worn cameras is a welcome measure for holding police officers and police departments accountable as they exercise the police powers of the state. That accountability can only be accomplished if the body-worn cameras are used consistently and the footage they capture is released in a timely manner.

§ 42-161-4 specifies eight (8) areas that a body-worn camera policy must cover:

- 1) Proper use of equipment;
- 2) Data and equipment security;
- 3) Activation and deactivation of cameras;
- 4) Notification to the public of recordings;
- 5) Records retention procedures and timelines;
- 6) Access to data by law enforcement and the public;
- 7) Privacy protections, including redaction procedures, and;
- 8) Compliance monitoring.

Our comments do not address all the areas you are tasked by statute with considering for a policy because our area of interest and expertise is restricted to transparency and accountability.

We believe that body-worn cameras should be used consistently. That means every officer who responds to calls where they interact with the public should be equipped with a body-worn camera.

Body-worn cameras should be activated whenever officers interact with the public in response to a call, or when they are engaged in a law enforcement or investigatory encounter, including but not limited to an arrest, detention, search, or traffic stop. To eliminate the possibility that an officer forgets to activate the camera when they arrive at the scene, they should activate the camera at the moment they are dispatched, if they

are dispatched. In situations where activation of the body-worn camera poses a risk to the officer's safety, they should activate the camera as soon as reasonably possible.

The primary vendors for body-worn cameras allow add-on technology to automatically trigger when the camera records. When an officer discharges their firearm or uses a Taser - or similar less-lethal device - the camera should automatically record without requiring the officer to press a button.

We believe body-worn camera footage should be retained for a minimum of three years. In instances when the footage involves a use of force incident, or when an officer is subject to a complaint, it should be retained for six years.

The release of body-worn camera footage is currently governed by the Access to Public Records Act (APRA). The APRA sets a floor, not a ceiling, for the release of records. In the case of law enforcement records, that floor is already high, and we believe any policy should promote release of body camera footage whenever, and as expeditiously as, possible.

Your office has stated the body-worn camera footage should be released when an investigation is "substantially complete." We believe that is too long a timeframe. We believe that when there is a high-profile incident, including, but not limited to, every time there is a use of force incident, footage should be released within one week. In all other instances, release should be subject to the normal timeframe for records under the Access to Public Records Act.

Reasonable steps must be taken to protect the privacy of members of the public who appear in body-worn camera footage. Minors, victims of crimes, and confidential sources should be redacted using technology that protects their identity. When possible, redaction should be done by blurring a person's identity, not editing the footage.

Any policy should have a clear system for reviewing any deviations from the policy for activation of, retention of, and redaction of the body-worn camera and footage. Officers who deviate from the policy should be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

We appreciate your consideration of our input on this matter.

Signed,

Steven Brown, Executive Director, ACLU of Rhode Island*
Jane Koster, President, League of Women Voters of Rhode Island

Linda Levin, President, ACCESS/RI
John Marion, Executive Director, Common Cause Rhode Island
John Pantalone, Associate Professor of Journalism, University of Rhode Island
Justin Silverman, Executive Director, New England First Amendment Coalition

*The ACLU of Rhode Island is also separately submitting more detailed testimony on this proposal.

From:

Justin Silverman <justin@nefac.org>

Sent:

Friday, September 24, 2021 1:29 PM

To: Subject: bwcstatewidepolicy; rulesregs@risp.gov Comments Re: Police Body-Worn Camera Policies

Attachments:

NEFAC BWC Comments 2.pdf

[External email: Use caution with links and attachments]

Attached are comments on behalf of the New England First Amendment Coalition. Thank you for the opportunity to provide recommendations on how a state-wide police body-worn camera policy should be drafted.

Sincerely,

Justin Silverman

Justin Silverman / Executive Director justin@nefac.org /

NEW ENGLAND FIRST AMENDMENT COALITION

Office: 508.983.6006 / Fax: 617.860.2559 111 Milk Street, Westborough, MA 01581 www.nefac.org

Want to learn more about public records? Start with NEFAC's multimedia FOI Guide!



2006-2021

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Justin Silverman, Esq.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Karen Bordeleau
NEFAC President
The Providence Journal (formerly)
Lynne DeLucia
Fundraising Chairwoman
Connecticut Health I-Team

David Rosen

Communications Chairman
David Rosen Communications (Mass.)
Gregory V. Sullivan, Esq.
Clerk
Malloy & Sullivan (Mass.)

DIRECTORS

Jonathan M. Albano, Esq. Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP (Mass.) Dan Barrett

ACLU of Connecticut Robert A. Bertsche, Esq.

Prince Lobel Tye, LLP (Mass.)

Peter Caruso, Sr., Esq.

Caruso & Caruso, LLP (Mass.)

Linda Conway

New England Newspaper & Press Assoc.

Lia Ernst

ACLU of Vermont

Edward Fitzpatrick

The Boston Globe

Richard Gagliuso, Esq.

Bernstein Shur (N.H.)

George Geers

Academy of New England Journalists

Christopher Hamblett

Barrington, R.I.

Judith Meyer

Sun Journal | Kennebec Journal

Amanda Milkovits

The Boston Globe

Maggie Mulvihill

Boston University

Jennifer Peter

The Boston Globe

Elizabeth Ritvo, Esq. Brown Rudnick, LLP (Mass.)

Walter V. Robinson

The Boston Globe

Barbara T. Roessner

Hearst Connecticut (formerly)

Sigmund D. Schutz, Esq.

Preti Flaherty (Maine)

Mike Stanton

University of Connecticut

Emily Sweeney
The Boston Globe

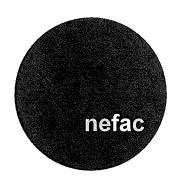
Tim White

WPRI-TV Providence

Janet Wu

WCVB-TV Boston

Affiliations appear for identification purposes only.



New England First Amendment Coalition

Phone 508.983.6006 Fax 617.860.2559 Web nefac.org Twitter @FiveFreedoms Mailing Address 111 Milk Street, Westborough MA 01581

Office of the Attorney General 150 South Main Street Providence, RI 02903 bwcstatewidepolicy@riag.ri.gov

Department of Public Safety 311 Danielson Pike North Scituate, RI 02857 rulesregs@risp.gov

SENT VIA EMAIL

September 24, 2021

To Whom It May Concern,

I'm writing on behalf of the New England First Amendment Coalition, the region's leading advocate for First Amendment freedoms and the public's right to know about government.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments concerning the use and operation of police body-worn cameras. Attached are the suggestions of Access Rhode Island, a coalition of open government advocates that includes our organization. On matters of transparency, the comments provided therein reflect the positions of NEFAC.

Outside the scope of government transparency, we have additional concerns about the use of body-worn cameras to deter or chill First Amendment-protected activity. Any policy that is created by your respective office should have sufficient safeguards in place for citizens exercising their constitutional rights. We recommend including in your policy the following provision:

Body-worn cameras shall not be used to gather intelligence information on any First Amendment-protected activity, including but not limited to peaceful assembly, newsgathering, and religious practice.

Thanks again for your consideration. We look forward to providing additional guidance beyond this initial comment period and throughout the rule-making process.

Justin Silverman
Executive Director

Sincerely

LEADERSHIP CIRCLE DONORS AND MAJOR SUPPORTERS

The Boston Globe THE ROBERTSON FOUNDATION

HEARST | CONNECTICUT

Paul and Ann Sagan







September 23, 2021

Office of the Attorney General 150 South Main Street Providence, RI 02903

Thank you for soliciting input as part of the Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking regarding a Policy for Use and Operation of Body-Worn Cameras. Such a statewide policy is much needed as the use of body-worn cameras expands in Rhode Island.

We start from the position that the use of body-worn cameras is a welcome measure for holding police officers and police departments accountable as they exercise the police powers of the state. That accountability can only be accomplished if the body-worn cameras are used consistently and the footage they capture is released in a timely manner.

§ 42-161-4 specifies eight (8) areas that a body-worn camera policy must cover:

- 1) Proper use of equipment;
- 2) Data and equipment security;
- 3) Activation and deactivation of cameras;
- 4) Notification to the public of recordings;
- 5) Records retention procedures and timelines;
- 6) Access to data by law enforcement and the public;
- 7) Privacy protections, including redaction procedures, and;
- 8) Compliance monitoring.

Our comments do not address all the areas you are tasked by statute with considering for a policy because our area of interest and expertise is restricted to transparency and accountability.

We believe that body-worn cameras should be used consistently. That means every officer who responds to calls where they interact with the public should be equipped with a body-worn camera.

Body-worn cameras should be activated whenever officers interact with the public in response to a call, or when they are engaged in a law enforcement or investigatory encounter, including but not limited to an arrest, detention, search, or traffic stop. To eliminate the possibility that an officer forgets to activate the camera when they arrive at the scene, they should activate the camera at the moment they are dispatched, if they

are dispatched. In situations where activation of the body-worn camera poses a risk to the officer's safety, they should activate the camera as soon as reasonably possible.

The primary vendors for body-worn cameras allow add-on technology to automatically trigger when the camera records. When an officer discharges their firearm or uses a Taser - or similar less-lethal device - the camera should automatically record without requiring the officer to press a button.

We believe body-worn camera footage should be retained for a minimum of three years. In instances when the footage involves a use of force incident, or when an officer is subject to a complaint, it should be retained for six years.

The release of body-worn camera footage is currently governed by the Access to Public Records Act (APRA). The APRA sets a floor, not a ceiling, for the release of records. In the case of law enforcement records, that floor is already high, and we believe any policy should promote release of body camera footage whenever, and as expeditiously as, possible.

Your office has stated the body-worn camera footage should be released when an investigation is "substantially complete." We believe that is too long a timeframe. We believe that when there is a high-profile incident, including, but not limited to, every time there is a use of force incident, footage should be released within one week. In all other instances, release should be subject to the normal timeframe for records under the Access to Public Records Act.

Reasonable steps must be taken to protect the privacy of members of the public who appear in body-worn camera footage. Minors, victims of crimes, and confidential sources should be redacted using technology that protects their identity. When possible, redaction should be done by blurring a person's identity, not editing the footage.

Any policy should have a clear system for reviewing any deviations from the policy for activation of, retention of, and redaction of the body-worn camera and footage. Officers who deviate from the policy should be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

We appreciate your consideration of our input on this matter.

Signed,

Steven Brown, Executive Director, ACLU of Rhode Island*
Jane Koster, President, League of Women Voters of Rhode Island

Linda Levin, President, ACCESS/RI
John Marion, Executive Director, Common Cause Rhode Island
John Pantalone, Associate Professor of Journalism, University of Rhode Island
Justin Silverman, Executive Director, New England First Amendment Coalition

*The ACLU of Rhode Island is also separately submitting more detailed testimony on this proposal.

From: Sent: Brian Daniels

bdaniels@rileague.org>

Friday, September 24, 2021 2:39 PM

To:

bwcstatewidepolicy

Cc:

Kate Sabatini; Sid Wordell; Jordan Day

Subject:

Comment on Body-Worn Cameras, RI League of Cities and Towns

[External email: Use caution with links and attachments]

Title of Rule: Policy for Use and Operation of Body-Worn Cameras

Rule Identifier: 110-RICR-10-00-1

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments as the Office of the Attorney General begins the rulemaking process for the statewide body-worn camera program, as authorized under R.I. Gen. Laws Chapter 42-160.

The Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns appreciates the value of body-worn cameras in improving public safety outcomes and enhancing trust in law enforcement efforts. At this point, the League does not have specific recommendations about policy or operational components that should be included in the rule. However, we strongly encourage the Office of the Attorney General to work closely with the RI Police Chiefs' Association and to provide significant consideration of and deference to their expert views when developing the rule. From my conversation with Chief Sid Wordell, Executive Director of RIPCA, I understand that the rule may address certain topics that are currently covered by local policy and/or state law. As one example, recommendations about when officers should activate their cameras and if/when they should inform the public of recording may vary by scenario, and it is possible that some of these questions will need to be codified in policy at the local level with statewide guidance and best practices. We look forward to reviewing the draft regulations when they are available and expect to provide more substantive feedback at that time.

Thank you again for considering our views.

Best regards, Brian

Brian M. Daniels Executive Director, RI League of Cities and Towns One State Street, Suite 502 Providence, RI 02908 401-272-3434



Distinctive Communities Powerful Alliance