

2025 -- S 0811

LC001289

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

A N A C T

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- THE BODY CAMERAS FOR
CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES ACT -- THE WILLIE WASHINGTON, JR. ACT

Introduced By: Senators Mack, Euer, Kallman, Acosta, Valverde, Quezada, Pearson,
McKenney, and Bell

Date Introduced: March 14, 2025

Referred To: Senate 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 56.1

4 THE BODY CAMERAS FOR CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES ACT

5 **42-56.1-1. Short title.**

6 This act shall be known and may be cited as "The Willie Washington, Jr. Act".

7 **42-56.1-2. Definitions.**

8 The following words shall have the following meanings in this chapter:

9 (1) "Body camera" means a portable video recording device worn by correctional staff to
10 capture incidents occurring in real-time within correctional facilities.

11 (2) "Incarcerated individuals" means any person held in custody within a facility operated
12 by the department of corrections.

13 (3) "Staff" means employees or contractors of the department of corrections, including
14 correctional officers, supervisors, and administrators.

15 **42-56.1-3. Body camera requirements.**

16 (a) All correctional staff assigned to direct supervision roles shall wear body cameras while
17 on duty within the facilities.

18 (b) Staff shall activate body cameras during interactions with incarcerated individuals

1 including, but not limited to:

2 (1) Use of force incidents;

3 (2) Transporting individuals;

4 (3) Medical emergencies; and

5 (4) Disciplinary proceedings.

6 (c) Cameras shall record continuously during the aforementioned interactions and may only
7 be deactivated once the situation is resolved and no further actions are anticipated.

8 **42-56.1-4. Data access and retention.**

9 (a) Recordings shall be retained for a minimum of sixty (60) days, after which the recording
10 shall be securely deleted unless required for an ongoing investigation or legal proceeding.

11 (b) Access to recordings is strictly limited to authorized personnel including investigators,
12 supervisors, and legal counsel as necessary.

13 (c) Incarcerated individuals shall be informed through posted notices regarding the use of
14 body cameras within the facility. When practical, individuals shall be notified if recording is
15 occurring at the time of the incident. Individuals shall have the right to request review of footage
16 that directly involves the individual under appropriate circumstances.

17 **42-56.1-5. Accountability and oversight.**

18 (a) The department of corrections shall establish an independent board pursuant to the
19 provisions of subsection (b) of this section to oversee the review of recorded incidents involving
20 use of force, complaints against staff, or other critical incidents involving incarcerated individuals.

21 (b) An independent incident oversight board (IIOB) shall be established, consisting of
22 members appointed by key stakeholders, including representatives from civil rights organizations,
23 legal experts, mental health professionals, formerly incarcerated individuals, and community
24 leaders.

25 (c) The IIOB shall:

26 (1) Oversee the review of recorded incidents involving use of force, complaints against
27 staff, or other critical incidents involving incarcerated individuals and investigate the complaints
28 and incidents. Conduct periodic assessments and audits of facility operations, policies, and
29 practices.

30 (2) Provide recommendations for improvements and reforms to the department of
31 corrections based on findings.

32 **42-56.1-6. Reporting requirement -- Training -- Non-compliance.**

33 (a) The department of corrections shall provide biannual reports to general assembly
34 detailing the number of incidents recorded, access requests made by incarcerated individuals, and

1 incidents reviewed by the incident review board.

2 (b) Comprehensive training shall be provided to all staff on the proper use of body cameras,
3 data privacy, and the importance of maintaining the dignity and rights of incarcerated individuals.

4 (c) Any staff who fail to comply with body camera policies established in this chapter shall
5 face disciplinary actions up to and including termination of employment, as well as potential civil
6 liabilities.

7 (d) The department of corrections shall conduct regular audits to ensure compliance with
8 this legislation and assess the effectiveness of body camera utilization.

9 **42-56.1-7. Implementation.**

10 The department shall implement and establish the necessary protocol and training programs
11 within six (6) months after passage.

12 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- THE BODY CAMERAS FOR
CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES ACT -- THE WILLIE WASHINGTON, JR. ACT

1 This act would establish the body cameras for correctional facilities act which would
2 mandate all department of corrections staff with direct supervision rolls to wear body cameras while
3 on duty in their assigned facility.

4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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