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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

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A N A C T

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- THE BODY CAMERAS FOR
CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES ACT

Introduced By: Representatives Morales, Sanchez, Giraldo, Cruz, Stewart, Potter, Tanzi,
and Cotter

Date Introduced: February 27, 2026

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 56.4

4 THE BODY CAMERAS FOR CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES ACT

5 **42-56.4-1. Short title.**

6 This act shall be known and may be cited as "The Body Cameras for Correctional Facilities
7 Act".

8 **42-56.4-2. Definitions.**

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

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

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

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

16 **42-56.4-3. Body camera requirements.**

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

1 **(b) Staff shall activate body cameras during interactions with incarcerated individuals**
2 **including, but not limited to:**

3 **(1) Use of force incidents;**

4 **(2) Transporting individuals;**

5 **(3) Medical emergencies; and**

6 **(4) Disciplinary proceedings.**

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

9 **42-56.4-4. Data access and retention.**

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

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

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

18 **(d) Access by staff involved in recorded incidents. Any staff member involved in a**
19 **recorded use-of-force incident, complaint, or other critical incident shall submit an initial written**
20 **report prior to reviewing any body camera recording of the incident. Following submission of the**
21 **initial report, the staff member may review the recording and, if necessary, submit a supplemental**
22 **report, which shall be clearly designated as such and include the date and time of submission.**

23 **42-56.4-5. Accountability and oversight.**

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

27 **(b) An independent incident oversight board (“IIOB”) shall be established, consisting of**
28 **members appointed by key stakeholders, including representatives from civil rights organizations,**
29 **legal experts, mental health professionals, formerly incarcerated individuals, and community**
30 **leaders.**

31 **(c) The IIOB shall:**

32 **(1) Oversee the review of recorded incidents involving use of force, complaints against**
33 **staff, or other critical incidents involving incarcerated individuals and investigate the complaints**
34 **and incidents and conduct periodic assessments and audits of facility operations, policies, and**

1 practices.

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

4 (d) Rules and regulations. The attorney general and director of the department of
5 corrections shall promulgate rules and regulations pursuant to chapter 35 of title 42 (administrative
6 procedures”) to implement and enforce the provisions of this chapter. Such rules and regulations
7 shall include, but not be limited to:

8 (1) Standards governing the activation, deactivation, storage, retention, auditing, and
9 preservation of body camera recordings;

10 (2) Procedures governing access to recordings by staff, incarcerated individuals,
11 investigators, legal counsel, and oversight entities;

12 (3) The authority, procedures, and responsibilities of the independent incident oversight
13 board; and

14 (4) Enforcement mechanisms and corrective actions for noncompliance.

15 (5) The attorney general and director shall provide meaningful opportunity for public
16 comment, including at least one public hearing, prior to the adoption of any final rule or regulation.

17 **42-56.4-6. Reporting requirement, training and non-compliance.**

18 (a) The department of corrections shall provide biannual reports to the general assembly
19 detailing the number of incidents recorded, access requests made by incarcerated individuals, and
20 incidents reviewed by the incident review board.

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

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

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

28 **42-56.4-7. Implementation.**

29 (a) Legislative intent and passage. It is the intent of the general assembly to enhance safety,
30 accountability, and transparency within Rhode Island's correctional system and for the protection
31 of correctional officers, inmates, and staff that incidents subject to recording be captured in their
32 entirety.

33 (b) General implementation timeline. The department shall implement and establish the
34 necessary protocol and training programs for the statewide use of body cameras within six (6)

1 months of the effective date of this chapter and written policies.

2 (c) Pilot program required. To ensure effective and accountable implementation, the
3 department shall initiate a structured pilot program within the timeframe set forth in subsection (b)
4 of this section. The pilot program shall deploy body-worn cameras in two (2) to three (3) high-
5 interaction operational settings, such as a housing unit and transportation detail.

6 (d) Pilot program duration. The pilot program shall be conducted for a period of not less
7 than six (6) months and not more than twelve (12) months.

8 (e) Funding responsibility. The director of the department of corrections, in coordination
9 with the attorney general's office, shall be responsible for identifying, writing, and obtaining all
10 necessary grants or other external funding from federal, state, or private sources to fully fund the
11 pilot program described in this section. A report on funding efforts shall be included in the
12 department's biannual report to the general assembly as required under § 42-56.4-6.

13 (f) Pilot oversight and evaluation. The pilot program shall be governed by the rules
14 promulgated under chapter 56 or title 42 ("corrections department") and shall be subject to
15 oversight by the independent incident oversight board ("IIOB"). The department shall evaluate key
16 metrics including activation compliance, use-of-force incident resolution, complaint adjudication,
17 and safety indicators. The department shall provide a mid-pilot report and a final evaluation report
18 to the general assembly.

19 (g) Report and expansion plan. The final report required under subsection (f) of this section
20 shall include a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis, recommended policy adjustments based on
21 pilot findings, and a clear, evidence-based plan for statewide expansion, modification, or
22 discontinuation of the body camera program.

23 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

1 This act would require correctional staff assigned to direct supervision roles over
2 incarcerated individuals to wear and activate body cameras during specified interactions with
3 incarcerated individuals and establish standards for recording, retention, access, and reporting. It
4 would create an independent incident oversight board to review recorded incidents, investigate
5 complaints, and recommend reforms. The act would also mandate training, biannual reporting,
6 disciplinary consequences for noncompliance, and a pilot program funded through grants or other
7 external sources, with evaluation and a plan for potential statewide implementation.

8 This act would take effect upon passage.

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