

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2023

A N A C T

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- PROHIBITION ON THE USE OF
POLICE ROBOT TECHNOLOGY

Introduced By: Senators Acosta, Mack, Kallman, and Murray

Date Introduced: February 16, 2023

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 165

4 PROHIBITION ON THE USE OF POLICE ROBOT TECHNOLOGY

5 **42-165-1. Definitions.**

6 When used in this chapter, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

7 (1) "Law enforcement officer" means any permanently employed city or town police
8 officer, state police officer, or peace officer as defined in § 12-7-21; provided that, this shall not
9 include members of the explosive operation division of law enforcement bureau of the office of the
10 state fire marshal.

11 (2) "Police robot dog" means any machine, that looks similar in appearance to a dog, that
12 can collect information, process it, and use it to act upon the world and is operated either
13 autonomously by computers or by an individual remotely.

14 (3) "Robot" means any machine that can collect information, process it, and use it to act
15 upon the world and is operated either autonomously by computers or by an individual remotely.

16 (4) "UAVs" is an acronym that means unmanned aerial vehicles.

17 (5) "Unmanned aerial vehicles" means an aircraft that is navigated without a pilot on board.

18 (6) "Weapon" means a device designed to inflict death or serious physical injury.

1 **42-165-2. Use of robots prohibited.**

2 (a) No law enforcement officer shall, while carrying out their duties, whether on-duty or
3 off-duty, authorize the use, attempted use or threatened use of a robot, police robot dog, or UAVs
4 armed with any weapon.

5 (b) The prohibition against the use of an armed robot does not apply to situations when an
6 armed robot is being used to mitigate an explosives-related incident or to breach a barricade.

7 (c) No law enforcement officer shall, while carrying out their duties, whether on-duty or
8 off-duty, authorize the use of a robot, police robot dog, or UAVs in a physical manner that is
9 substantially likely to cause death or serious physical injury, regardless of whether or not the robot
10 or UAV is armed with a weapon.

11 (d) No department that employs peace officers shall receive or accept any public or private
12 financial funding for the purchase or procurement of any police robot dogs.

13 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 -- PROHIBITION ON THE USE OF
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1 This act would prohibit any on-duty or off-duty law enforcement officer from utilizing any
2 armed robot, police robot dog, or UAV, within the scope of their employment except for situations
3 when an armed robot is being used to mitigate an explosives-related incident or to breach a
4 barricade. This act would also prohibit any department employing police officers from receiving or
5 accepting any public or private funding for the purchase or procurement of any police robot dogs.

6 This act would take effect upon passage.

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