

Government Administration and Elections Committee
JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-1222

AN ACT CONCERNING FEES FOR COPYING, REVIEWING AND REDACTING RECORDS CREATED BY POLICE BODY-WORN EQUIPMENT AND

Title: DASHBOARD CAMERAS.

Vote Date: 3/27/2023

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/20/2023

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Government Administration and Elections Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This legislation gives a public agency the ability to charge a redaction fee for portions of police body-worn equipment or dashboard camera records created and not authorized to be made public under state and federal statute.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Colleen Murphy, Freedom of Information Commission:

The Commission opposes wording in Section 1 of this bill. Rather than constrict present language regarding what may be redacted from police-body worn equipment and dashboard cameras, they suggest that new language that legislates more narrowly when this equipment is turned on. There are also many instances, in their view, in which footage should be disclosed, not redacted. The present language is vague regarding disclosure and redaction and where the separation lies. The Commission also cautions that fees should be structured to be reasonable. Also of note is that there is presently a case regarding police body-worn equipment and the incurred redaction fees in a case before FOI.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Connecticut Police Chiefs Association:

Supports. This group supports the legislation as it will help officers fulfill requests for recordings of police-body worn and dashboard footage in addition to establishing a fee structure for reproducing, redacting or providing such information.

Betsy Gara, Executive Director, Connecticut Council of Small Towns:

Supports. This legislation is beneficial to municipalities and public agencies that are receiving FOI requests for recordings on body-worn and dashboard cameras and the redacting of portions of that information for privacy reasons. It lets these agencies, towns and cities, who must comply with these requests, to charge reasonable fees for the information.

Tommy Perkins:

Supports. Suggests that using Staples might be a good alternative to save money, as they would provide a group discount.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Randy Collins, Connecticut Conference of Municipalities

Opposes. The opposition to this is about increased fees for violating FIO laws. They request that the committee consider a sliding scale system based on occurrences. In addition, the section stating that all municipal public record requests must be posted would be extremely hard to comply with, as many requests are verbal in a face-to-face setting that are not documented. This section would be difficult to enforce.

Raymond Quiles, President, C.O.P.S. Local 550

Opposes. The bills present the local police departments with a task that requires multiple hours when FOI requests are made. They are unable to do their duties as policemen and are not trained to be able to determine what and what cannot be given to a requestor of information the department holds.

Jess Zaccagnino, American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut

Opposes. Believes this legislation does not hold police accountable for their actions by allowing redaction of any portion of an FOI request. It also finds that charging for such information restricts access.

Reported by: Kathleen Zabel

Date: 03-27-2023