

**Government Administration and Elections Committee**  
**JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT**

**Bill No.:** SB-431

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

**Title:** AND DASHBOARD CAMERAS.

**Vote Date:** 3/22/2024

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 3/18/2024

**File No.:**

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**SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Government Administration & Elections Committee

**REASONS FOR BILL:**

This bill would allow a public agency to charge a redaction fee for the disclosure of records from police-worn equipment or dashboard cameras that contains footage or audio that is redacted and not allowed to be disclosed under law.

The substitute language clarifies what can be considered redactable information based on the definition of what constitutes a violation of privacy.

**RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

Colleen Murphy, Executive Director, FOI Commission: Opposes this bill because broad exemptions from disclosure of records do not serve in the best interest of the public, as a crime could be occurring at a private residence and is necessary to be included in the public records. States that they acknowledge and understand that police departments have faced increased costs for reviewing records, but these costs should not result in increased fees which serve as barriers to public access to records.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

CT Police Chiefs Association: Supports this bill because it is important that police departments producing transparent and publicly available records are adequately compensated for the time and money it takes to review such records. States that this bill

acknowledges the advancement in the technology used by departments to record these records. Also states that certain police departments are requiring staffs of over 15 full time civilians to review and redact records.

Neil Dryfe, Chief of Police, Cheshire Police Department: Supports this bill because it will help police departments with the flood of requests for body camera footage and protect the privacy of residents who call the police to their private property. States that this bill considers the advances in technology used by police departments that were not in place when the FOIA was written, and that it would not interfere with the right of citizens to view public information, but instead will help police departments reduce the costly burden of having to review and redact certain records.

Betsy Gara, Executive Director, COST: Supports this bill because it recognizes the fact the municipalities are facing substantial costs while having to redact certain information from police body-worn cameras. States that this bill would authorize a police department or any other public agency to charge a reasonable fee to compensate for the cost of having to review these files.

Randy Collins, Associate Director of Policy, The CCM: Supports this bill because it would allow municipalities to charge a reasonable fee to reflect the time and money necessary to fulfill certain requests. States that the bill does not discourage requests or disclosure of records but will help municipalities recuperate the costs from having to review and redact certain files.

L.J. Fusaro, Chief of Police, Town of Groton: Supports this bill because it accounts for the time and money that is required to properly review and redact footage and audio from body-worn cameras. States that an example of the time it takes to review certain footage is that a recent request for a recording of an investigation that required officers to visit two addresses will take dozens of hours to review and redact, and that this bill would allow for departments to be properly compensated for this time and work.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

Jeffrey Daniels, Legislative Co-Chair, CT Council on FOI: Opposes this bill because it unnecessarily expands the scope of what can be redacted and simultaneously establishes an uncertain and unknown fee that doesn't have a method for determination. States that the bill does not acknowledge the reality that some of the most critical police actions can take place inside a private residence, and that these records need to be available at a reasonable cost to ensure maximum transparency.

Jess Zaccagnino, Policy Counsel, ACLU CT: Opposes this bill because it is important for police body-worn camera records to be available to ensure an open and transparent government. Requests that (3) of Section 1 be removed entirely to prevent the unnecessary expansion of what records can be redacted. States that it is important to prevent the abuse of FOI laws, but this bill goes too far in restricting public access.

Several individuals expressed opposition to this bill.

These individuals include:

Nicholas D'Amato  
Gary Corigliano  
Sandra DeBlois  
Several anonymous individuals

**Reported by: Gabriel Marques, Assistant Clerk      Date: 4/2/2024**