
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Anna Caballero, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

SB 691 (Wahab) - Body-worn cameras: policies

Version: April 21, 2025

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: May 12, 2025

Policy Vote: PUB. S. 6 - 0

Mandate: Yes

Consultant: Liah Burnley

Bill Summary: SB 691 requires law enforcement agencies to update their body worn camera policies to limit recording in private medical situations.

Fiscal Impact: Unknown, potentially significant cost pressures (General Fund, local funds) to state and local law enforcement agencies to the extent that they are required to update their policies pursuant to this bill. The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies for certain costs mandated by the state. To the extent the Commission on State Mandates determines that the provisions of this bill create a new program or impose a higher level of service on counties may claim reimbursement of those costs.

Background: Body-worn cameras are small video recording devices worn by law enforcement officers—typically attached to their uniforms, vests, or glasses—that capture audio and video of their interactions with the public. There is no requirement that law enforcement officers in this state wear body worn cameras.

Proposed Law:

- On or before July 1, 2026, each law enforcement agency that has a body-worn camera policy shall update that policy to provide guidance to personnel who wear body-worn cameras regarding the circumstances in which they are required to reasonably and temporarily limit the recording of medical or psychological evaluations, procedures, or treatment performed by emergency service personnel that may cause embarrassment or humiliation to the patient, including, but not limited to, circumstances in which the person's groin or breasts are exposed while the emergency service personnel is performing a medical or psychological evaluation, procedure, or treatment.
- The policy update shall provide personnel who wear body-worn cameras with sufficient discretion to enable them to respond appropriately in a variety of situations.
- The policy update shall include a procedure for emergency service personnel to request the redaction of evidentiary recordings of a patient undergoing medical or psychological evaluation, procedure, or treatment by emergency service personnel.
- Emergency personnel may request that law enforcement personnel who wear body-worn cameras limit the recording of a patient receiving medical or psychological evaluation, procedure, or treatment.

- Law enforcement personnel shall respond to the request in accordance with the policy update required by this subdivision.

Related Legislation: SB 337 (Menjivar), among other things, requires CDCR to establish policies and procedures relating to the implementation and operation of a body-worn camera system that include circumstances under which a body-worn camera may be deactivated. SB 337 is pending in this Committee.

Staff Comments: By requiring each law enforcement agency to develop its own policy on when officers may turn off their body-worn cameras, this bill risks a fragmented application of the law, potentially causing confusion about when individuals are entitled to privacy—especially in circumstances where more than one agency may be involved.

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