

Date of Hearing: June 24, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

SB 691 (Wahab) – As Amended May 26, 2026

Policy Committee: Public Safety

Vote: 8 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: Yes

Reimbursable: Yes

SUMMARY:

This bill requires each law enforcement agency that has a body-worn camera (BWC) policy to update that policy, on or before July 1, 2027, to include a procedure for emergency service personnel to request — prior to any public release — the redaction of evidentiary and non-evidentiary recordings of a patient undergoing medical or psychological evaluation, procedure, or treatment (MPE) by emergency service personnel. Redaction may include blurring patient care and muting audio. The bill requires an unredacted copy of any redacted recording to be retained consistent with the agency's existing BWC data policies and specifies that it does not limit the protections of the Confidentiality of Medical Information Act (CMIA) or HIPAA, or create a new obligation on law enforcement personnel to render aid.

FISCAL EFFECT:

- 1) Potentially reimbursable state-mandated local program costs (General Fund), likely minor, for local law enforcement agencies that have a BWC policy to perform the one-time update adding the required redaction-request procedure. Because the bill applies only to agencies that already maintain a BWC policy and the mandated activity is a one-time policy revision, these costs are likely minor; whether they rise to a reimbursable mandate is a determination for the Commission on State Mandates. To the extent the Commission finds a reimbursable mandate, costs would be General Fund.
- 2) Possible ongoing costs (General Fund/local) to process redaction requests and perform requested redactions. The bill requires agencies to establish a procedure for emergency service personnel to request redaction but does not require agencies to grant the request, and agencies already perform redactions under existing law so existing redaction infrastructure may absorb a share of the workload. Costs would be largely contingent on request volume and on each agency's discretionary decision whether to grant requests. To the extent the Commission finds a reimbursable mandate, costs would be General Fund.
- 3) Possible costs (General Fund) to state law enforcement agencies that maintain BWC policies to similarly update their policies, process requests, and defend against possible litigation. California Highway Patrol, for its part, reports minor and absorbable costs.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

Knowing they are being recorded by law enforcement can impact patients' willingness to fully cooperate with medics, compromising the safety of the patient as well as first responders. SB 691 will require law enforcement agencies to update their body camera policies to include a process for emergency medical services professionals to request redaction of any video recorded of a patient undergoing a medical evaluation prior to the video being made public.

- 2) **Background.** Existing law states the Legislature's intent that law enforcement agencies adopt BWC policies based on best practices and directs agencies to consider specified best practices for downloading and storing BWC data, including data-retention periods — generally a minimum of 60 days for non-evidentiary data and two years for evidentiary data. Existing law also already requires or authorizes agencies to redact disclosable recordings in specified circumstances, including to protect confidential medical information and personal privacy. This bill adds a new requirement that agencies with a BWC policy update it to include a procedure for emergency service personnel to request redaction of MPE recordings before public release and expands the statute's stated intent to cover the recording of BWC data in addition to its downloading and storage. "Emergency service personnel" is defined by reference and reaches public fire agency employees (firefighters, paramedics, EMTs, and others); it does not reach private ambulance or private medical personnel.
- 3) **Related Legislation.** SB 337 (Menjivar), of the current legislative session, requires, among other things, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to adopt BWC policies addressing circumstances, including confidential medical treatment, under which a camera may be deactivated; it was held on this committee's suspense file.
- 4) **Prior Legislation.** SB 748 (Ting), Chapter 960, Statutes of 2018, established the standard for releasing BWC footage by balancing privacy and public-interest considerations.

AB 69 (Rodriguez), Chapter 461, Statutes of 2015, established the BWC best-practices framework this bill amends.

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