



Legislative Testimony
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**Written Testimony Supporting
House Bill 5475, An Act Concerning Viewing of
Body Camera Footage During an Investigation**

Senator Doyle, Senator Kissel, Representative Tong, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Kaley Lentini, and I am legislative counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut (ACLU-CT). I am here to testify in support of House Bill 5475, An Act Concerning Viewing of Body Camera Footage During an Investigation.

With the right policies and laws in place, police body cameras can be a tool to increase police accountability. The ACLU-CT therefore supports this bill's goal to clarify statewide law governing how police use body cameras in Connecticut. This bill recognizes Connecticut's interest in requiring police departments with body cameras to follow policies that prioritize the public's interests in police accountability, and we believe the bill could be strengthened with more protections for the public interest.

If controlled by the right laws and policies, police body cameras can promote police accountability, deter police misconduct, and provide objective evidence to help resolve complaints and investigations into police conduct without infringing on people's privacy rights. The ACLU-CT encourages the committee to amend this bill to require police departments to release body camera footage when there is a strong public interest in that video, such as a police use of force or a complaint against a police employee, that outweighs privacy concerns. At minimum, police departments should be required to release body camera footage to the victim of a police use of force, or to that victim's family if that person was killed by police.

We also support preventing police departments from invoking "investigative privilege," as they have in Connecticut, as a basis for withholding body camera footage when a police officer is the person suspected of wrongdoing. The rationale for invoking this privilege—tipping off the subject of an investigation—does not apply when the subject is a police officer, particularly when police are allowed to review body

camera footage before filing a report. To that end, we also support prohibiting police from viewing video footage in advance of filling out reports if the video footage depicts a police use of force.

We encourage this committee to support House Bill 5475.