

# OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

160 Pine Street, Providence, Rhode Island 02903

TELEPHONE: (401) 222-3492

FAX: (401) 222-3287

EMAIL TO: [info@ripd.org](mailto:info@ripd.org)

WEBSITE: [www.ripd.org](http://www.ripd.org)

March 24, 2026

## **TESTIMONY OF THE OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER REGARDING:**

**House Bills No. 8115 and 8116**

**ENTITLED, ACTS RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT --  
CORRECTIONS DEPARTMENT AND THE BODY CAMERAS FOR CORRECTIONAL  
FACILITIES ACT**

Chairwoman Hagan McEntee and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

The Office of the Public Defender **strongly supports** House Bills 8115 and 8116, which would require correctional officers at the prison to wear body-worn cameras (BWCs) during certain interactions with detained individuals, and would require the Department of Corrections to consult with various stakeholders, including the Office of the Public Defender, when creating the policies concerning the wearing of these devices.

Body-worn cameras have been instrumental in allowing courts to review interactions between federal, state, and local police officers and Rhode Islanders. The increase of BWCs not only protects ordinary citizens from abuse or trumped-up charges, but it also protects officers from false claims of excessive force or rules violations. The same would be true if correctional officers were allowed to wear such cameras.

In addition, the presence of body-worn cameras ensures that institutional policies are applied uniformly—something that is especially important in a prison, where the balance of power is very uneven. Allowing body-worn cameras in the prison would help ensure fairer outcomes for all parties and a more efficient administration of justice. Accordingly, we strongly support the passage of these two bills.

Sincerely,  
/s/ Angela M. Yingling

Angela M. Yingling  
Legislative Liaison  
Office of the Public Defender  
401-222-1505  
[ayingling@ripd.org](mailto:ayingling@ripd.org)