

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6066

As of January 17, 2012

Title: An act relating to video and audio recording by law enforcement officers.

Brief Description: Concerning video and audio recording by law enforcement officers.

Sponsors: Senators Kline, Nelson, Murray, Shin and Kohl-Welles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Judiciary: 1/17/12.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Staff: Katherine Taylor (786-7434)

Background: Restrictions and requirements regarding intercepting, recording, or divulging private communication; intercepting private communication; intercepted communication in evidence; and violating the right to privacy do not apply to police, fire, emergency medical service, emergency communication center, and poison center personnel if the sound recordings correspond to video images recorded by video cameras mounted in law enforcement vehicles.

All law enforcement officers must be in uniform while wearing a sound recording device that makes recordings corresponding to videos recorded by video cameras mounted in law enforcement vehicles. A sound recording device that makes a recording must be operated simultaneously with the video camera when the operating system has been activated for an event. No sound recording device may be intentionally turned off by the law enforcement officer during the recording of an event. Once the event has been captured, the officer may turn off the audio recording and place the system back into pre-event mode.

Summary of Bill: Law enforcement officers may make sound recordings that correspond to video images recorded by video cameras worn by law enforcement officers. All law enforcement officers must be in uniform while wearing a sound recording device that makes recordings corresponding to videos recorded by video cameras worn by law enforcement officers.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 13, 2012.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Want to move forward with a pilot project involving these kind of audio recordings. There is a big public benefit from allowing these audio recordings. We need to clarify restrictions for cameras worn by law enforcement officers. Many cities already allow officers to record audio from cameras worn on their person. These cameras produce the best evidence, promote civility between officers and the public, reduce litigation costs, highlight good police work, and they are not too costly.

OTHER: The media is denied access to videos. Language should be taken out of the applicable statute to clarify production of videos to the media.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Craig Engelking, City of Seattle; Bruce Harrell, Seattle Council member.

OTHER: Rowland Thompson, Allied Daily Newspapers; Judy Endejan, KOMO TV.