

August 20, 2026

Dear candidates and elected officials,

We, the undersigned, encourage you to make body-worn camera transparency a priority in your public safety platform and in the upcoming 2027-2028 General Assembly. Body-worn cameras (“BWCs”) have the potential to strengthen trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve, but that trust depends on policies that promote accountability, consistency, and transparency.



In 2021, the Delaware General Assembly [created a law](#) that required law enforcement officers to wear and use body worn cameras during interactions with the public. That same law directed the Council on Police Training to [establish statewide standards](#) for camera activation, use, storage, and management. **While the law required the recording of public interactions, it did not establish a clear public right to access the body-worn camera footage.** As a result, obtaining footage has often depended on agency discretion, litigation, or public advocacy rather than a predictable, transparent process. Some recent examples include:

1. Dewey Beach Police (2025)

The ACLU of Delaware submitted a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for body-worn camera footage after allegations that a group of young people experienced racial discrimination during a police encounter. The Town of Dewey Beach denied the FOIA request and the footage was only released after the [ACLU of Delaware filed a lawsuit](#).

2. Wilmington Officer Involved Killing of Kadir Skinner (2026)

After the fatal police killing of Kadir Skinner, community members and civil rights advocates publicly urged the release of body-worn camera footage. The Delaware Department of Justice later [released footage](#), citing the public interest.

The public’s right to know should not depend on the whims of an official’s willingness to release footage. Delawareans agree: [a July 2026 poll of Delaware residents](#) found that **81% believe that body-worn camera footage should be made public.**

Body-worn cameras are only as good as the policies put in place to ensure they live up to their potential as a tool for increased police transparency and accountability, but body-worn cameras cannot fulfill their transparency purpose if agencies routinely deny public access. **State law must be changed to explicitly require that body-worn camera footage must be available to the public.**

We ask that you consider supporting reforms that include the following principles:



- Require that BWCs be activated whenever a law enforcement officer is responding to a call for service or at the initiation of any other investigative encounter between a police officer and a member of the public, with narrowly defined exceptions for legitimate privacy concerns or when interacting with crime victims.
- Establish the right and a clear process to access and inspect body-worn camera footage for
 - o people who are subjects of the footage and/or their designated legal counsel
 - o parents of minor subjects of the footage and/or their designated legal counsel
 - o spouses, next of kin and legally authorized and/or their designated legal counsel
- Establish a process through the Freedom of Information Act for members of the public to request footage where the subject of the video footage is recorded being killed, shot by a firearm, grievously injured, or the incident is otherwise of public concern involving a law enforcement officer or other government employee.
- Ensure that body camera video footage is not permanently withheld from the public on the basis that it is an investigatory record or was compiled for law enforcement purposes. Policy should preference the release of footage in all circumstances unless officials can show clearly that releasing the footage would cause injury, and the officials must propose a reasonable timeline to release the footage

The promise of body-worn cameras was to improve accountability, build public trust, and provide objective evidence of interactions between the police and the public. That promise is sorely weakened when recordings are inaccessible to the public except through lawsuits or prolonged, often heartbreaking, cries from the community.

We hope that you will publicly share your position on body-worn camera transparency and consider championing meaningful reforms if elected. Delawareans deserve the promise of transparency and accountability. Thank you for your willingness to serve and for your consideration of this very important issue.

Signed,
ACLU of Delaware
NOCAP Delaware
Southern Delaware Alliance for Racial Justice
Tide Shift Justice Project
Women's March Sussex