SENATE, No. 4912

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

222nd LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED NOVEMBER 23, 2026

Sponsored by:
Senator GORDON M. JOHNSON
District 37 (Bergen)

SYNOPSIS

Exempts law enforcement body worn camera recordings from disclosure under State's open public records law under certain circumstances.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.

AN ACT concerning law enforcement body worn camera recordings and amending P.L.1995, c.23.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. Section 1 of P.L.1995, c.23 (C.47:1A-1.1) is amended to read as follows:

1. As used in P.L.1963, c.73 (C.47:1A-1 et seq.) as amended and supplemented:

"Biotechnology" means any technique that uses living organisms, or parts of living organisms, to make or modify products, to improve plants or animals, or to develop micro-organisms for specific uses; including the industrial use of recombinant DNA, cell fusion, and novel bioprocessing techniques.

"Body worn camera" means a mobile video recording system worn by a law enforcement officer.

"Child protective investigator in the Division of Child Protection and Permanency" means an employee of the Division of Child Protection and Permanency in the Department of Children and Families whose primary duty is to investigate reports of child abuse and neglect, or any other employee of the Department of Children and Families whose duties include investigation, response to, or review of allegations of child abuse and neglect.

"Commercial purpose" means the direct or indirect use of any part of a government record for sale, resale, solicitation, rent, or lease of a service or any use by which the user expects a profit either through commission, salary, or fee. "Commercial purpose" shall not include the use of a government record for any purpose by:

(1) the news media, or any parent company, subsidiary, or affiliate of any news media, as defined by section 2 of P.L.1977, c.253 (C.2A:84A-21a);

(2) any news, journalistic, educational, scientific, scholarly, or governmental organization;

(3) any person authorized to act on behalf of a candidate committee, joint candidate committee, political committee, continuing political committee, political party committee, or legislative leadership committee, as defined by section 3 of P.L.1973, c.83 (C.19:44A-3), registered with the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission;

(4) any labor organization;

(5) any contractor signatory to a collective bargaining agreement seeking information material to the enforcement of State or federal statutes or regulations regarding, but not limited to, wage and hour protections, workplace safety, or public procurement and

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

public bidding, including, but not limited to, requests for certified payrolls or information about all bids submitted in response to a public procurement process subsequent to the deadline for the submission of all bids for that solicitation;

(6) any employee, agent, contractor, or affiliates of any entity identified in paragraphs (1) through (5) of this definition in this section; or

(7) any non-profit entity, including organizations or individuals qualified for exemption from federal taxation pursuant to section 501(c)(3) of the federal Internal Revenue Code, 26 U.S.C. s.501(c)(3) and section 501(c)(4) of the federal Internal Revenue Code, 26 U.S.C. s.501(c)(4), when the entity does not sell, resell, solicit, rent, or lease a government record to an unaffiliated third party in a way in which the entity expects a fee.

"Constituent" means any State resident or other person communicating with a member of the Legislature.

"Criminal investigatory record" means a record which is not required by law to be made, maintained or kept on file that is held by a law enforcement agency which pertains to any criminal investigation or related civil enforcement proceeding.

"Custodian of a government record" or "custodian" means in the case of a municipality, the municipal clerk and in the case of any other public agency, the officer officially designated by formal action of that agency's director or governing body, as the case may be.

"Government record" or "record" means any paper, written or printed book, document, drawing, map, plan, photograph, microfilm, data processed or image processed document, information stored or maintained electronically or by sound-recording or in a similar device, or any copy thereof, that has been made, maintained or kept on file in the course of his or its official business by any officer, commission, agency or authority of the State or of any political subdivision thereof, including subordinate boards thereof, or that has been received in the course of his or its official business by any such officer, commission, agency, or authority of the State or of any political subdivision thereof, including subordinate boards thereof. The terms shall not include inter-agency or intra-agency advisory, consultative, or deliberative material

"Labor organization" means any organization which exists and is constituted for the purpose, in whole or in part, of collective bargaining, of dealing with employers concerning grievances, terms or conditions of employment, or of other mutual aid or protection in connection with employment.

A government record shall not include the following information which is deemed to be confidential for the purposes of P.L.1963, c.73 (C.47:1A-1 et seq.) as amended and supplemented:

information received by a member of the Legislature from a constituent or information held by a member of the Legislature concerning a constituent, including, but not limited to, information in written form or contained in any e-mail or computer data base, or in any telephone record whatsoever, unless it is information the constituent is required by law to transmit;

any memorandum, correspondence, notes, report or other communication prepared by, or for, the specific use of a member of the Legislature in the course of the member's official duties, except that this provision shall not apply to an otherwise publicly-accessible report which is required by law to be submitted to the Legislature or its members;

any copy, reproduction or facsimile of any photograph, negative or print, including instant photographs and videotapes of the body, or any portion of the body, of a deceased person, taken by or for the medical examiner at the scene of death or in the course of a post mortem examination or autopsy made by or caused to be made by the medical examiner except for use by a legal next of kin, a legal representative, or an attending physician of the deceased person, for use as a court of this State permits, or for use by any law enforcement agency in this State or any other state or federal law enforcement agency;

criminal investigatory records;

the portion of any criminal record concerning a person's detection, apprehension, arrest, detention, trial or disposition for unlawful manufacturing, distributing, or dispensing, or possessing or having under control with intent to manufacture, distribute, or dispense, marijuana or hashish in violation of paragraph (11) of subsection b. of N.J.S.2C:35-5, or a lesser amount of marijuana or hashish in violation of paragraph (12) of subsection b. of that section, or a violation of either of those paragraphs and a violation of subsection a. of section 1 of P.L.1987, c.101 (C.2C:35-7) or subsection a. of section 1 of P.L.1997, c.327 (C.2C:35-7.1) for distributing, dispensing, or possessing, or having under control with intent to distribute or dispense, on or within 1,000 feet of any school property, or on or within 500 feet of the real property comprising a public housing facility, public park, or public building, or for obtaining, possessing, using, being under the influence of, or failing to make lawful disposition of marijuana or hashish in violation of paragraph (3) or (4) of subsection a., or subsection b., or subsection c. of N.J.S.2C:35-10, or for a violation of any of those provisions and a violation of N.J.S.2C:36-2 for using or possessing with intent to use drug paraphernalia with that marijuana or hashish;

victims' records, except that a victim of a crime shall have access to the victim's own records;

any written request by a crime victim for a record to which the victim is entitled to access as provided in this section, including,

but not limited to, any law enforcement agency report, domestic violence offense report, and temporary or permanent restraining order;

personal firearms records, except for use by any person authorized by law to have access to these records or for use by any government agency, including any court or law enforcement agency, for purposes of the administration of justice;

personal identifying information received by the Division of Fish and Wildlife in the Department of Environmental Protection in connection with the issuance of any license authorizing hunting with a firearm;

trade secrets and proprietary commercial or financial information obtained from any source. For the purposes of this paragraph, trade secrets shall include software, applications, and code obtained by a public body under a licensing agreement which prohibits its disclosure;

any record within the attorney-client privilege. This paragraph shall not be construed as exempting from access attorney or consultant bills or invoices except that such bills or invoices may be redacted to remove any information protected by the attorney-client privilege;

administrative or technical information regarding computer hardware, tablets, telephones, electronic computing devices, software applications, and networks or devices which operate on or as a part of a computer network or related technologies within the same, which shall include system logs, event logs, transaction logs, tracing logs, or any logs which are reasonably construed to be similar to the same and generated by the devices or servers covered within this paragraph, which, if disclosed, could jeopardize computer security, or related technologies;

emergency or security information or procedures for any buildings or facility which, if disclosed, would jeopardize security of the building or facility or persons therein;

security measures and surveillance techniques which, if disclosed, would create a risk to the safety of persons, property, electronic data or software;

security alarm system activity and access reports, including video footage, for any public building, facility, or grounds unless the request identifies a specific incident that occurred, or a specific date and limited time period at a particular public building, facility, or grounds, and is deemed not to compromise the integrity of the security system by revealing capabilities and vulnerabilities of the system;

information which, if disclosed, would give an advantage to competitors or bidders, including detailed or itemized cost estimates prior to bid opening;

information generated by or on behalf of public employers or public employees in connection with any sexual harassment

complaint filed with a public employer or with any grievance filed by or against an individual or in connection with collective negotiations, including documents and statements of strategy or negotiating position;

information which is a communication between a public agency and its insurance carrier, administrative service organization or risk management office;

information which is to be kept confidential pursuant to court order;

any copy of form DD-214, NGB-22, or that form, issued by the United States Government, or any other certificate of honorable discharge, or copy thereof, from active service or the reserves of a branch of the Armed Forces of the United States, or from service in the organized militia of the State, that has been filed by an individual with a public agency, except that a veteran or the veteran's spouse or surviving spouse shall have access to the veteran's own records;

any copy of an oath of allegiance, oath of office or any affirmation taken upon assuming the duties of any public office, or that oath or affirmation, taken by a current or former officer or employee in any public office or position in this State or in any county or municipality of this State, including members of the Legislative Branch, Executive Branch, Judicial Branch, and all law enforcement entities, except that the full name, title, and oath date of that person contained therein shall not be deemed confidential;

that portion of any document which discloses the social security number, credit card number, debit card number, bank account information, month and day of birth, any personal email address required by a public agency for government applications, services, or programs, any telephone number or driver license number of any person, or, in accordance with section 2 of P.L.2021, c.371 (C.47:1B-2), that portion of any document which discloses the home address, whether a primary or secondary residence, of any active, formerly active, or retired judicial officer, law enforcement officer, child protective investigator in the Division of Child Protection and Permanency, or prosecutor, or, as defined in section 1 of P.L.2021, c.371 (C.47:1B-1), any immediate family member thereof; except for use by any government agency, including any court or law enforcement agency, in carrying out its functions, or any private person or entity acting on behalf thereof, or any private person or entity seeking to enforce payment of court-ordered child support; except with respect to the disclosure of driver information by the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission as permitted by section 2 of P.L.1997, c.188 (C.39:2-3.4); except with respect to the disclosure of information included in records and documents maintained by the Department of the Treasury in connection with the State's business registry programs; and except that a social security number contained in a record required by law to be made,

maintained or kept on file by a public agency shall be disclosed when access to the document or disclosure of that information is not otherwise prohibited by State or federal law, regulation or order or by State statute, resolution of either or both houses of the Legislature, Executive Order of the Governor, rule of court or regulation promulgated under the authority of any statute or executive order of the Governor;

that portion of any document that discloses the personal identifying information of any person provided to a public agency for the sole purpose of receiving official notifications;

a list of persons identifying themselves as being in need of special assistance in the event of an emergency maintained by a municipality for public safety purposes pursuant to section 1 of P.L.2017, c.266 (C.40:48-2.67) and their personal identifying information;

a list of persons identifying themselves as being in need of special assistance in the event of an emergency maintained by a county for public safety purposes pursuant to section 6 of P.L.2011, c.178 (C.App.A:9-43.13) and their personal identifying information;

that portion of any document that requires and would disclose personal identifying information of persons under the age of 18 years, except with respect to the disclosure of driver information by the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission as permitted by section 2 of P.L.1997, c.188 (C.39:2-3.4) or the disclosure of driver information to any insurer or insurance support organization, or a self-insured entity, or its agents, employees, or contractors, for use in connection with claims investigation activities, antifraud activities, rating, or underwriting, and except with respect to the disclosure of voter information on voter and election records pursuant to section 8 of P.L.2024, c.16 (C.47:1A-5.3);

personal identifying information disclosed on domestic animal permits, licenses, and registration;

structured reference data that helps to sort and identify attributes of the information it describes, referred to as metadata, or any extrapolation or compilation thereof, which shall include the SMTP header properties of emails, except that portion that identifies authorship, identity of editor, and time of change;

New Jersey State Firemen's Association financial relief applications;

owner and maintenance manuals;

data classified under the "Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996," Pub.L.104-191; **[**and**]**

any indecent or graphic images of a person's intimate parts, as defined in section 10 of P.L.2024, c.16 (C.47:1A-5.2), that are captured in a photograph or video recording without the prior written consent of the subject of the photograph or video footage, as defined in section 10 of P.L.2024, c.16 (C.47:1A-5.2); and

any body worn camera recording that is requested for a commercial purpose.

A government record shall not include, with regard to any public institution of higher education, the following information which is deemed to be privileged and confidential:

pedagogical, scholarly and/or academic research records and/or the specific details of any research project conducted under the auspices of a public higher education institution in New Jersey, including, but not limited to, research, development information, testing procedures, or information regarding test participants, related to the development or testing of any pharmaceutical or pharmaceutical delivery system, except that a custodian may not deny inspection of a government record or part thereof that gives the name, title, expenditures, source and amounts of funding and date when the final project summary of any research will be available;

test questions, scoring keys and other examination data pertaining to the administration of an examination for employment or academic examination;

records of pursuit of charitable contributions or records containing the identity of a donor of a gift if the donor requires non-disclosure of the donor's identity as a condition of making the gift provided that the donor has not received any benefits of or from the institution of higher education in connection with such gift other than a request for memorialization or dedication;

valuable or rare collections of books or documents obtained by gift, grant, bequest or devise conditioned upon limited public access;

information contained on individual admission applications; and

information concerning student records or grievance or disciplinary proceedings against a student to the extent disclosure would reveal the identity of the student.

Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the requirements to provide and make publicly available the information pursuant to section 5 of P.L.1963, c.150 (C.34:11-56.29) and section 5 of P.L.1999, c.238 (C.34:11-56.52).

"Judicial officer" means any active, formerly active, or retired federal, state, county, or municipal judge, including a judge of the Tax Court and any other court of limited jurisdiction established, altered, or abolished by law, a judge of the Office of Administrative Law, a judge of the Division of Workers' Compensation, and any other judge established by law who serves in the executive branch.

"Law enforcement agency" means a public agency, or part thereof, determined by the Attorney General to have law enforcement responsibilities.

"Law enforcement officer" means a person whose public duties include the power to act as an officer for the detection,

apprehension, arrest, and conviction of offenders against the laws of this State.

"Member of the Legislature" means any person elected or selected to serve in the New Jersey Senate or General Assembly.

"Personal firearms record" means any information contained in a background investigation conducted by the chief of police, the county prosecutor, or the Superintendent of State Police, of any applicant for a permit to purchase a handgun, firearms identification card license, or firearms registration; any application for a permit to purchase a handgun, firearms identification card license, or firearms registration; any document reflecting the issuance or denial of a permit to purchase a handgun, firearms identification card license, or firearms registration; and any permit to purchase a handgun, firearms identification card license, or any firearms license, certification, certificate, form of register, or registration statement. For the purposes of this paragraph, information contained in a background investigation shall include, but not be limited to, identity, name, address, social security number, telephone number, fax number, driver's license number, email address, or social media address of any applicant, licensee, registrant, or permit holder.

"Public agency" or "agency" means any of the principal departments in the Executive Branch of State Government, and any division, board, bureau, office, commission or other instrumentality within or created by such department; the Legislature of the State and any office, board, bureau or commission within or created by the Legislative Branch; and any independent State authority, commission, instrumentality or agency. The terms also mean any political subdivision of the State or combination of political subdivisions, and any division, board, bureau, office, commission or other instrumentality within or created by a political subdivision of the State or combination of political subdivisions, and any independent authority, commission, instrumentality or agency created by a political subdivision or combination of political subdivisions.

"Victim of a crime" means a person who has suffered personal or psychological injury or death or incurs loss of or injury to personal or real property as a result of a crime, or if such a person is deceased or incapacitated, a member of that person's immediate family.

"Victim's record" means an individually identifiable file or document held by a victims' rights agency which pertains directly to a victim of a crime except that a victim of a crime shall have access to the victim's own records.

"Victims' rights agency" means a public agency, or part thereof, the primary responsibility of which is providing services, including, but not limited to, food, shelter, or clothing, medical, psychiatric, psychological or legal services or referrals, information and referral services, counseling and support services, or financial services to

victims of crimes, including victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, violent crime, child endangerment, child abuse or child neglect, and the Victims of Crime Compensation Board, established pursuant to P.L.1971, c.317 (C.52:4B-1 et seq.) and continued as the Victims of Crime Compensation Office pursuant to P.L.2007, c.95 (C.52:4B-3.2 et al.) and Reorganization Plan No. 001-2008.

As used in this section, "personal identifying information" means information that may be used, alone or in conjunction with any other information, to identify a specific individual. Personal identifying information shall include, but shall not be limited to, the following data elements: name, social security number, credit card number, debit card number, bank account information, month and day of birth, any personal email address required by a public agency for government applications, services, or programs, personal telephone number, the street address portion of any person's primary or secondary home address, or driver license number of any person. "Personal identifying information" shall not include any street address, mailing address, email address, or telephone number of a public agency. "Personal identifying information" shall not include the email address of a governmental affairs agent.

(cf: P.L.2024, c.16, s.1)

2. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This bill exempts law enforcement body worn camera recordings from disclosure under the State’s open public records act (OPRA) if the recording was requested for a commercial purpose.

Under current law, “commercial purpose” is defined as the direct or indirect use of any part of a government record for sale, resale, solicitation, rent, or lease of a service or any use by which the user expects a profit either through commission, salary, or fee. In addition to certain other exceptions, “commercial purpose” does not include the use of a government record for any purpose by the news media, or any parent company, subsidiary, or affiliate of any news media, as defined under current law or any news, journalistic, educational, scientific, scholarly, or governmental organization.