

Alexis Rattray

H5928

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Dear Members of House Judiciary Committee,

I urge you to support House bill 5928. My name is Alexis Rattray and I am writing this to share my thoughts on the importance of body-worn cameras for Rhode Island Correctional staff. As someone who attends the School of Social Work at Rhode Island College, I believe in helping and advocating for people without a voice. I believe that the body cameras will provide transparency and accountability which are crucial in ensuring a safe environment for both incarcerated individuals and the staff.

While doing research and meeting with other people who are passionate about this bill, I came across letters from a number of incarcerated individuals who share their experiences in the prison. I would like to be their voice and share a part of what they wrote in one of their letters: "I have been assaulted by a correctional officer while I had handcuffs on. He took my two hands and slammed them up and down between two steel openings... My two hands were bruised and I have nerve damage in my left hand". In that same letter they shared another instance of being abused: "I was arrested and brought to seg. During this arrest the officer was abusive. He actually abused me and during strip search violated the PREA Act (The Prison Rape Elimination Act). Now I am being told his word is more credible than mine and he denies his offences." Now, Imagine having a son, daughter, or loved one in the prison system. Would you like to know that they are going through this abuse and are not able to have a voice to speak

up because their truth isn't credible? Being able to read these letters made any questions I had about body cameras go right out the window. If only there was footage of the events that took place to really show how the correctional officers treated these human beings. There can be change once this bill is passed.

In conclusion, implementing body-worn cameras for Rhode Island Correctional Staff is essential for promoting transparency, accountability, and safety within our correctional facilities. By ensuring that both staff and incarcerated individuals are held to a standard of conduct, we can foster an environment of trust and respect. I urge you to consider the positive impact that this technology can have on our justice system and to take action towards its implementation. Thank you for allowing me to share my thoughts on this important issue.