

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1524
By: Sherman, Sr.
Corrections
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Constituents have expressed concerns about correctional officer accountability and suggest that requiring the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) to adopt a policy regarding body worn cameras will accelerate the implementation of the body worn camera initiative that is already underway. For example, TDCJ's FY 2024-2025 legislative appropriations request requested funding to provide body worn cameras to correctional officers working on 23 maximum security facilities throughout the state, citing that "the acquisition and use of body-worn cameras will assist in preventing and de-escalating confrontational situations that occur between correctional officers and inmates." H.B. 1524 seeks to address the issue by requiring all correctional officers in TDCJ facilities to be equipped with activated body worn cameras while performing their duties as officers. The legislation will provide for consistent accountability, address reduced staff time for investigating abuse claims, and increase the safety and security of those incarcerated and working in correctional facilities.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 1524 amends the Government Code to require the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), not later than January 1, 2024, to adopt a policy for the use of body worn cameras by correctional officers at facilities operated by or under contract with TDCJ. The policy must require that each correctional officer be equipped with a body worn camera during the officer's shift and keep the camera activated during the performance of the officer's duties.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2023.