

Bill: HB-2: General Appropriations Act 2021-01-21 08:00 AM - (H) JAS on Judicial Branch, Law Enforcement, and Justice

Position: Opponent

Representing an Entity/Another Person: No

Organization: N/A

Name: Mayson Simmons

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City, State: Polson

Written Statement: Here are some comments to chew on - Vine is used to harass offenders. Anyone can sign up. HEP C treatment is impossible to get. Where is MCE budget and savings fund mentioned? There is a HUGE problem with the lack of religious based programing and the MT Supreme Court said in June 2018 its a constitutional issue but DOC and BOPP ignores the decision. DOC creates victims I am one DOC has never done a damn thing to help me emotional or financially My victimization for PREA has been ignored Questions go unanswered The 2017 Victim who testified to this committee has never been approached by DoC for any services Why? The most recent predator (Hagstrom) was convicted but is not in Con Web Why? Why are the bunk beds still up? they put them up in 2017 to do a large jail dump to get the funding the committee was withholding due to high jail numbers DOC commits are overridden to prison but once in prison only BOPP can release and the BOPP is facing a huge work load due to this rise. I signed 4 or 5 safety contracts when in MWP and was never seen by Mental Health ended up having a breakdown and attempting suicide due to harassment of 3 inmates which was empowered by Warden No corrective action was taken I was in lock up isolation for days with other inmates telling staff I was "talking weird" "not responding". Multiple staff ignored the warnings. Own Tela Med said I had a full breakdown.

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Position: Proponent

Representing an Entity/Another Person: Yes

Organization: Montana Federation of Public Employees

Name: Larry Nielsen

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City, State: Helena

Written Statement: MFPE supports the proposed budget, however, we do have concerns over the proposed vacancy savings for twenty-four seven security staff, infirmary workers and other front line workers.

Bill: HB-2: General Appropriations Act 2021-01-22 08:00 AM - (H) JAS on Judicial Branch, Law Enforcement, and Justice

Position: Opponent

Representing an Entity/Another Person: Yes

Organization: #LetThemComeHome and incarcerated persons in MT

Name: Laurie Little Dog

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Phone: (406) 308-3378

City, State: Bozeman. MT

Written Statement: For your consideration, please review the attached PDFs and appropriate adequate funding into the 2021 budget for DOC bodycams to reduce liabilities and increase correctional safety and transparency in Montana Corrections.

Thank you.

INDUSTRIES / CORRECTIONS

# AXON CORRECTIONS

Axon Corrections provides rapidly advancing, world-class technologies to promote officer safety, offender safety, and public safety across the Corrections spectrum, directly supporting prisons, probation and parole, and juvenile justice.

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ALL

## In Depth Commitment to Safety

### How bodycams in corrections can improve outcomes and accountability

Body-worn cameras provide an objective record that can discourage bad behavior, decrease the likelihood of frivolous grievances and make it easier to investigate when incidents do occur.

Jul 20, 2020

By Corrections1 BrandFocus Staff

It's a fact: Correctional facilities benefit when their officers wear body-worn cameras, thanks to the impartial documentation of officer/inmate interactions that bodycam video provides.

"You have a tool that can help you get to the truth," said Richard Roy, consultant and retired New York State Department of Corrections deputy commissioner/inspector general and chief of investigations. "That's the bottom line of any investigation, whether it is looking into staff or inmate behaviors."

Historically, correctional facilities have used fixed video cameras to seek the truth but with limited success. This is because fixed cameras have blind spots and don't record audio. At the same time, fixed cameras can be expensive to install due to the need to build camera mounts and run cable conduits to their locations.

"In contrast, bodycams don't have blind spots and everything that's happening in front of the officer is being recorded, including audio, which gives you a better context of what's happening," said Jeffrey Beard, consultant and retired secretary of the California and Pennsylvania departments of corrections. "Bodycams are also quicker and cheaper to deploy, because you don't need all that infrastructure."

## **HOW BODYCAMS CAN IMPROVE OUTCOMES**

People generally behave better when they know that others can see what they're doing. As a result, the presence of bodycams recording what actually happens can deter inmates from breaking rules, fighting and making false claims against officers. They can also deter COs from using undue or excessive force on the job.

Beard recounts a conversation with an inmate during a recent visit to a state correctional facility where bodycams are in use:

"The inmate replied that the officers tend to now practice de-escalation techniques more than they did in the past," he said, "so the inmate recognized that the officers were behaving better. So were the inmates, because nobody really likes to be caught on film doing something that they shouldn't be doing."

In addition to fewer complaints, reducing the number of physical altercations in a correctional facility means fewer medical expenses for treating injured inmates and fewer sick days and workers' compensation claims for injured staff.

"Bodycam video will deter frivolous filings, grievances and complaints," said Beard, "and when lawsuits do occur, they will be easier to investigate. There's going to be money saved as a result."

## **HOW BODYCAMS CAN IMPROVE ACCOUNTABILITY**

Because bodycam video (and audio) shows what actually happened during an incident, these tools make it easier for corrections facility managers to find out who did what.

"The camera documents what happened so you can hold staff and inmates accountable," said Roy. "You can use it as evidence in a disciplinary hearing or criminal case, if necessary."

Bodycam video also improves accountability and promotes a sense of fairness and transparency in an otherwise closed and controlled environment.

"Whether it's against the inmates or a staff member who was doing something that's inappropriate, people have to be held accountable," said Beard. "Bodycam video allows you to do that in a much more transparent way than when you just go in and have one group saying one thing and another group saying another."

Bodycam video can also be used for training and performance review purposes.

"The video that you get from the bodycams can be used for training: 'Look how good of a job this person did de-escalating this situation,' or, 'Here's some problems that we observed in another situation – what could have been done better there to handle that situation?'" said Beard. "I think the importance of using the bodycam video for training simply can't be overestimated."

## **USEFUL IN EVEN LIMITED DEPLOYMENTS**

Even if your facility cannot afford to equip all COs with body-worn cameras, deploying a limited number of bodycams can still improve outcomes and enhance accountability.

“There’s a lot of specialized uses of bodycams that can make a difference,” said Beard. “For instance, a lot of times in our restricted housing units where we hold disciplinary cases or in mental health units, there are questions about how staff are responding and how things are being handled, and using bodycams in those specialized units can help provide transparency and help answer those questions.”

Bodycams can likewise be useful in managing K-9 team complaints and investigating prisoner transport issues, as well as record what happens during a cell extraction and keep an eye on visiting rooms to make sure everyone is acting appropriately.

## **ACCESSING THE VIDEO EASILY**

For effective legal use, bodycam video means must be easy to store, access and be easily cross-referenced with fixed camera footage and other evidence to support accurate, efficient investigations.

This is where [Axon](#) comes to the fore with its cloud-based video storage system for bodycams and its [Axon Evidence](#) (aka Evidence.com) website for Axon users.

“The advantage of having incident video stored in the cloud is that managers can look at that video before they even go out to investigate the incident,” said Beard. “Meanwhile, Evidence.com allows you to access videos of a specific incident captured by multiple bodycams and fixed cameras and download them as one file, making going from one camera view to another simple and fast.”

## **THE BOTTOM LINE**

Bodycams are a cost-effective problem-solver for correctional facilities. They can make life safer and calmer for everyone inside an institution, while also saving money due to fewer physical injuries, less property damage and reduced inmate lawsuits.

“I know that if I were still a secretary in a state, I certainly would be looking at putting them in,” said Beard, “particularly in certain specialized areas and even a wider deployment as I moved forward with it.”

For a successful bodycam program, it is vital that correctional facilities have clear, detailed policies governing all aspects of bodycam footage access and review, and facility staff need to understand the policy and procedures and be trained in how to use the tools, says Roy.

“If you don’t hold them accountable and you allow them to shut the cameras off when they should be on, then you’re almost wasting your time,” said Roy. “However, I think most agencies realize that, work through it, and have effective policies that staff can follow so it works for everybody involved. If people step over the line, it’s going to be documented. If people do the right thing and comply, that’s going to be documented, too.”

Date: January 22, 2021

Attn: Joint Subcommittee on Judiciary, Law Enforcement and Justice Appropriations (HB2)

Re: Montana Department of Corrections

Bodycams for prison staff

Dear Appropriations Committee:

I am very pleased with Governor Gianforte's appointment of Mr. Brian Gootkin as Director of the DOC. Living in Bozeman, I have met with him in his office on some community issues and have experienced that Mr. Gootkin takes pride in his work, interfaces with the public well and will implement fresh ideas to improve the Department of Corrections overall.

We share common ground in that we want to see Director Gootkin succeed in his new position. I am asking for your help in seeing to it that he has the necessary tools to do this immense task, effectively.

Members of the Law and Justice Interim Committee and the Criminal Justice Oversight Committee have gained thorough insight to the longstanding barriers to effectively manage operations in Montana's secure facilities. Testimony on a myriad of recurring issues have substantiated the fact that a new method of transparency in day-to-day operations at MSP and MWP must be integrated.

Please consider allocating an appropriate amount of money from the State's general fund (or an appropriate account) to equip prison staff (ie: correctional officers, lieutenants, sergeants and Command Post) with bodycams and a robust data storage management system. The logistics can be worked out, but I think the data management system should be physically housed at the DOJ, because that is where POST complaints are handled. Director Gootkin should have full immediate access to the read-only files at his immediate disposal.

Equipping prison staff with body cams will:

- Increase transparency in staff-inmate interactions
- Reduce liabilities against the State
- Reduce frivolous grievances
- Decrease PREA
- Potentially aid in disciplinary hearings
- Allow for officer skill enhancement in performance reviews
- Reduce the tedious time spent in writing reports
- And more...

I am almost positive that Mr. Gootkin is accustomed to working with a staff who wear bodycams as part of their uniform. I invite you to reach out to him on estimating the cost of such a system. I imagine a rough estimate would be \$300,000.

I pray that you will please support and take action on this idea to draft and sponsor this critical expense into the 2021 appropriations budget, as body cams will greatly improve the state of the Corrections system in Montana.

Thank you for your sincere consideration,

Laurie Little Dog

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Position: Opponent

Representing an Entity/Another Person: No

Organization: N/A

Name: Benton Little Dog on behalf of diseased inmates

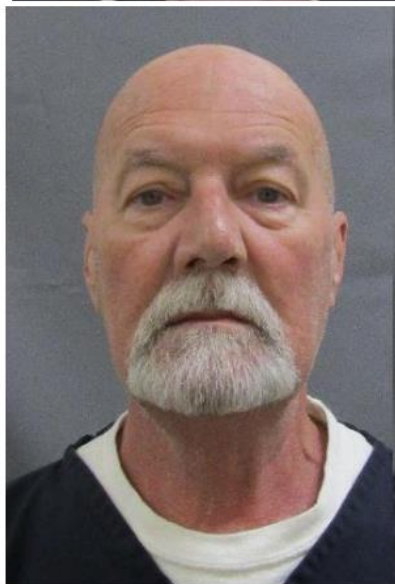
Email: [Bentonlittledog@gmail.com](mailto:Bentonlittledog@gmail.com)

Phone: (505) 660-5678

City, State: Bozeman, MT

Written Statement: Please see my tribute to dead inmates in Montana who needed medical assistance and covid protections but were denied.





**Wards of the State who died (while in custody) with Covid-19 in their bodies since October 2020. \*Two more have dies since January 2021.**

# Cloth "Mask" issued by the State of Montana

**This is NOT PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) according to the CDC**



These masks were made by inmate workers who are employed by Montana Correctional Enterprises. These single-layer fabric masks were sewn out of old Lowside inmate scrub uniforms at Montana State Prison. Inmate were eventually given 2 masks to protect themselves from Covid-19. A discrepancy exists as to where the \$ 4.3 million in CARES Act funding went that was allocated to the DOC. All the while, inmates have no ability to get Clorox wipes, abrasive sponges and CDC recommended sanitizers. Non-infected inmates are forced to remain housed with Covid positive cellmates. They cannot solo- quarantine.

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Position: Opponent

Representing an Entity/Another Person: No

Organization: N/A

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City, State: missoula

Written Statement: Dear Committee members, I hope that by now you all realize that D.O.C would do just fine if the Governor cuts their funding. CCC/CCA Should not be getting reach of Montana and disregarding the well being of the people that their facilities hold. Three men in a two men cell is unacceptable. Yet, somehow its being done at Shelby. D.O.C always tries to use the scare tactic (is that not illegal?) to get their way. They say that if they release inmates that our communities will not be safe. I say that we work on prevention and not just throw people in jails and prison. D.O.C, PreRelease, CCC/CCA and their partners do not care about the publics safety. They care about their bank accounts. If this was not true, we would see real programs in the prisons. We would actually see the impact that the "ROAD MAP" that D.O.C has talked about in their reports, we would see how its changing people.