

HOUSE No. 1540

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

David M. Rogers

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act requiring audiovisual recordings of certain police interrogations.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

David M. Rogers

24th Middlesex

Paul Brodeur

32nd Middlesex

HOUSE No. 1540

By Mr. Rogers of Cambridge, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1540) of David M. Rogers and Paul Brodeur relative to requiring audiovisual recordings of certain police interrogations. The Judiciary.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. 3590 OF 2017-2018.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-First General Court
(2019-2020)

An Act requiring audiovisual recordings of certain police interrogations.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 263 is hereby amended by adding the following section:-

2 Section 10. (a) For the purposes of this section, the following words shall have the
3 following meanings:-

4 “Custodial interrogation”, any interrogation during which: (i) a reasonable person in the
5 subject's position would consider himself or herself to be in custody and (ii) a question is asked
6 that is reasonably likely to elicit an incriminating response.

7 “Electronic recording”, a time-stamped, audiovisual recording including a motion picture,
8 videotape or digital recording.

9 “Major felony”, a felony punishable by imprisonment in the state prison for life or a
10 violation of section 13, 13b, 13b ½, 16 or 24 of chapter 265.

11 “Place of detention”, a building or a police station that is a place of operation for a police
12 department or county sheriff department or other law enforcement agency, , that is owned or
13 operated by a law enforcement agency at which persons are or may be held in detention in
14 connection with criminal charges against those persons; provided, however, that place of
15 detention shall not include a courthouse.

16 (b) An oral, written or sign language statement of a person accused of the commission of
17 a major felony made as a result of a custodial interrogation conducted at a place of detention that
18 is not electronically recorded, or the electronic recording: (i) is not substantially accurate or was
19 intentionally altered; or (ii) does not include an audible instruction directed at and made in the
20 presence of the accused that the custodial interrogation is being recording by an audiovisual
21 recording device shall be presumed to be inadmissible for purposes of showing that the accused
22 committed a major felony if there was a negligent disregard for standard police practice and
23 procedure. The presumption of inadmissibility may be overcome by a preponderance of the
24 evidence that the statement was voluntarily given and is reliable, based on the totality of the
25 circumstances; provided, however, that after such analysis, a judge may, in the judge’s
26 discretion, based on all factors present admit said evidence.

27 (c) If, during the course of an electronically recorded custodial interrogation conducted
28 pursuant to this section, the accused makes a statement that creates a reasonable suspicion to
29 believe the accused has committed an offense other than the commission of a major felony, the
30 interrogators may, without the accused's consent, continue to record the interrogation as it relates

31 to the other offense notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary. A oral, written or sign
32 language statement of an accused made as a result of an interrogation pursuant to this subsection
33 shall be presumed to be inadmissible as evidence against the accused in any criminal proceeding
34 if there was a negligent disregard for standard police practice and procedure. The presumption
35 of inadmissibility may be overcome by a preponderance of the evidence that the statement was
36 voluntarily given and is reliable, based on the totality of the circumstances; provided, however,
37 that after such analysis, a judge may, in the judge's discretion, based on all factors present admit
38 said evidence.

39 (d) An electronic recording made pursuant this section shall be preserved until such time
40 as the defendant's conviction for any offense relating to the statement is final and all appeals are
41 exhausted, or the prosecution of such offenses is barred by law. Prior to conviction or acquittal, a
42 statement recorded pursuant to this section shall be exempt from disclosure as a public record
43 within the meaning of chapter 66.

44

45 (e) If an oral, written or sign language statement of a person accused of the commission
46 of a major felony made as a result of a custodial interrogation conducted at a place of detention
47 is admitted into evidence and the statement was not electronically recorded, or the electronic
48 recording: (i) is not substantially accurate or was intentionally altered; or (ii) does not include an
49 audible instruction directed at and made in the presence of the accused that the custodial
50 interrogation is being recording by an audiovisual recording device, the court shall instruct the
51 jurors to consider the statement with great caution and care.

52 (f) Nothing in this section shall preclude the admission of a statement made: (i) by the
53 accused in open court at his or her trial, before a grand jury, or at a preliminary hearing; (ii)
54 voluntarily, whether or not the result of a custodial interrogation, that has a bearing on the
55 credibility of the accused as a witness; (iii) spontaneously and not in response to a question; (iv)
56 after questioning that is routinely asked during the processing of the arrest of the suspect; (v)
57 during a custodial interrogation by a suspect who requests, prior to making the statement, to
58 respond to the interrogator's questions only if an electronic recording is not made of the
59 statement, provided that an electronic recording is made of the statement of agreeing to respond
60 to the interrogator's question, only if a recording is not made of the statement; (vi) during a
61 custodial interrogation that is conducted out-of-state; or (vii) at a time when the interrogators are
62 unaware of facts and circumstances that would create probable cause to believe that the accused
63 committed a major felony required to be recorded pursuant to this section. The commonwealth
64 shall bear the burden of proving, by a preponderance of the evidence, that 1 of the exceptions
65 described in this subsection is applicable. Nothing in this section shall preclude the admission of
66 a statement, otherwise inadmissible under this section, that is used only for impeachment and not
67 as substantive evidence.

68 (g) Pursuant to any request of discovery, the prosecutor shall provide a copy or transcript
69 of any electronic recording to the defense counsel of record or to the defendant if the defendant
70 is not represented by defense counsel.

71 (h) The attorney general shall promulgate rules and regulations regarding technical
72 requirements of electronic recording. Such rules and regulations shall require the use of two
73 cameras, featuring both the suspect as well as the officer, in such recordings. Such rules and

74 regulations shall ensure that an electronic recording is produced using equipment and procedures
75 that are designed to prevent alteration of the recording's audio or visual record.

76 SECTION 2. Section 99 of chapter 272 of the General Laws is hereby amended by
77 inserting after the word "herein", in line 55, the following words:- ; and provided further that it
78 shall not constitute an interception for an investigative or law enforcement officer, as defined in
79 this section, to record a custodial interrogation for purposes of and in accordance with section 10
80 of chapter 263.

81 SECTION 3. Nothing in section 10 of chapter 263 of the General Law, inserted by
82 section 1, shall preclude the admission of a statement made in a custodial interrogation taking
83 place on or before the effective date of this act.