

To: Iowa Legislative Services Agency
From: Iowa Department of Public Safety
Re: Fingerprint and Palm Print Requirements Pre-File Bill Request

November 27, 2023

Background (e.g. current law or status):

Current Iowa law provides that under certain circumstances, a peace officer having grounds to make an arrest may issue a citation in lieu of making an arrest. This practice is known as “Cite and Release.” While these policies are designed to streamline certain processes, they can inadvertently lead to a lack of fingerprinting. Missing fingerprints can undermine the accuracy, reliability, and completeness of criminal history records.

Additionally, Iowa law requires fingerprints be taken but leaves palm prints as optional. It is estimated that 30% of latent prints found at crime scenes come from the palm and approximately 77% of unresolved palm print latent matches come from the lower palm.

Solution:

Require fingerprints be taken in a timely manner in instances of cite and release. Require palm prints be taken in addition to fingerprints.

Goal:

Maintain complete and accurate criminal history records, helping to keep the public and law enforcement personnel safe.