



# BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT



**BERNARD C. "JACK" YOUNG**  
Mayor

**MICHAEL S. HARRISON**  
Police Commissioner

**TO:** The Honorable Chair and Members of the Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

**FROM:** Michelle Wirzberger, Esq., Director of Government Affairs, Baltimore Police Dept.

**RE:** Senate Bill 69 Baltimore City – Alcoholic Beverages – Class A7 Licenses – Surveillance System

**DATE:** February 28, 2020

## **POSITION: SUPPORT**

Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan and members of the Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore Police Department **supports** Senate Bill 69.

Senate Bill 69 would require all Class A-7 licensees to operate a digital surveillance system on the licensed premises. The surveillance system must include high-definition cameras that provide continuous, 24-hour monitoring and be placed so that the exterior entryway and the interior of each entryway into the establishment is monitored. The video must be retained for not less than 7 days.

For some time now, the Baltimore Police Department has been working with community and business leaders to increase the amount of privately-owned security cameras placed throughout the city and enrolled in the CitiWatch Community Partnership program. The three principles behind that effort is that the additionally deployed cameras will serve as a deterrent to criminal activity; the footage captured by the cameras would be an evidentiary tool that can be used to prosecute violent crimes; and finally, it provides an opportunity for everyone to play a role in reducing overall crime throughout the city.

In support of that effort, Councilmen Costello and Schleiffer introduced City Council Bill 20-0486 which would provide residents and business owners with a \$150.00 rebate for each camera installed and registered with the CitiWatch Community Partnership program. Commercial properties are eligible for a total rebate amount of \$450.00 for the installation and registration of 3 camera systems.

The Baltimore Police Department believes that Senate Bill 69 fully complements the goals of City Council Bill 20-0486 and furthers the Department's efforts to utilize creative partnerships to deter and solve crimes.

While we enthusiastically support the bill as written, we would suggest the following amendments to make it even more effective:

1. Require each applicable licensee to register with BPD's CitiWatch Community Partnership;
2. Require that the surveillance video be retained for not less than 14 days;
3. Require the holder of the license to post signs on the interior and exterior of the establishment notifying individuals that they are being recorded;
4. Require the holder of the license to provide access to recorded video upon request of the Baltimore Police Department;
5. Require the Board of Liquor License Commissioners to develop regulations *in consultation with* the Baltimore Police Department on or before December 31, 2020; and
6. Expand the qualifying licenses to include Class A Beer, Wine and Liquor Licenses.

Throughout this legislative session, you have indicated that you wanted to support efforts that would aid the Baltimore Police Department in reducing/solving crimes and ensure that the Department has the resources it needs to complete the critical task of keeping residents and visitors safe. Senate Bill 69 creates a mechanism for businesses to serve as a force multiplier for the Baltimore Police Department by installing cameras that will both deter and help solve crimes plaguing our city. Therefore, we respectfully request a **favorable** report on Senate Bill 69.