



**Testimony for the House Judiciary Committee
January 28, 2020**

**HB 239 Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission -
Body-Worn Camera Policy**

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The ACLU of Maryland supports HB 239, which would require the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission to develop and publish a policy for body-worn cameras by officers who use approved technology while working off-duty.

In order for police BWCs to fulfill the promise of transparency and accountability and improved trust between law enforcement and communities being over-policed and racially-profiled, departments must have strong policies that ensure cameras are used for accountability, not surveillance—this applies with equal force in the context of off-duty officers.

For the ACLU of Maryland, the challenge of body-worn cameras by law enforcement officers presents a potential conflict between the cameras' potential to invade privacy and their benefit when it comes to police accountability. Police officers enter people's homes and encounter bystanders, suspects, and victims in a wide variety of sometimes stressful and private situations. Stored BWC records provide a vast trove of data that law enforcement could turn into a surveillance tool.

Ultimately, implementation of BWCs can be a win-win — but only if they are deployed within an appropriate policy framework that ensures they protect the public, are used in ways that are transparent to the public, and don't become yet another system for routine surveillance of our communities.

For the foregoing reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB 239.