

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2021 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 727
Judiciary

(Delegate Moon)

Law Enforcement – Body–Worn Cameras – Capabilities

This bill requires the body-worn camera policy of the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission (MPTSC) to require that a body-worn camera purchased or otherwise procured for use by a law enforcement officer on or after January 1, 2022, automatically record and save two minutes of audio and video footage immediately prior to the officer activating the record button on the device.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill is not expected to materially affect State finances or operations. MPTSC can implement the bill with existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: Potential increase in expenditures for storage and redaction of body-worn camera footage for law enforcement agencies, as discussed below. Revenues are not affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: MPTSC must develop and publish online a policy for the issuance and use of a body-worn camera by a law enforcement officer that addresses specified factors, including mandatory, prohibited, and discretionary recording; when a recording may be ended; and retention of recordings.

Local Expenditures: The bill may increase local expenditures for storage and redaction of body camera footage. For example, Prince George’s County advises that its equipment is currently set at a 30-second record/save mode, and additional storage costs will likely be incurred once the recording mode is increased by 90 seconds per incident. The Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) advises that the bill’s two-minute requirement does not have a fiscal effect, since the county has unlimited storage. However, MCPD advises that it has one employee who redacts body camera footage, and the bill requires the department to hire more individuals. MCPD cannot determined the associated personnel costs at this time, however.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: SB 583 (Senator Hettleman) - Judicial Proceedings.

Information Source(s): Montgomery and Prince George’s counties; City of Bowie; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Office of the Public Defender; Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services; Department of State Police; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 10, 2021
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