

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 321
(Senator Sydnor)
Judicial Proceedings

Public Safety - Law Enforcement Agencies - Use of Body-Worn Cameras

This bill alters and expands the application of existing provisions that require specified law enforcement agencies to require the use of a body worn camera (BWC) by each law enforcement officer employed by the law enforcement agency who regularly interacts with members of the public as part of the law enforcement officer's official duties. Under the bill, *all* law enforcement agencies must require the use of a BWC by each *sworn* law enforcement officer, *regardless of rank*, employed by the law enforcement agency *while the officer is in uniform, in public, and conducting law enforcement related duties*.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by at least \$1.4 million, higher education expenditures increase by at least \$563,000, and special fund expenditures increase by at least \$49,000 in FY 2027, as discussed below. Future years reflect annualization, inflation, and minimum ongoing costs. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	1,358,700	695,400	703,600	711,900	720,200
SF Expenditure	49,000	49,000	49,000	49,000	49,000
Higher Ed Exp.	563,000	-	-	-	-
Net Effect	(\$1,970,700)	(\$744,400)	(\$752,600)	(\$760,900)	(\$769,200)

Note: () = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease

Local Effect: Local expenditures increase, potentially significantly, for some jurisdictions. Revenues are not affected. **This bill imposes a mandate on a unit of local government.**

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Chapter 60 of 2021 required, by July 1, 2023, the Department of State Police (DSP), the Anne Arundel County Police Department, the Howard County Police Department, and the Harford County Sheriff's Office to require the use of a BWC by each law enforcement officer employed by the law enforcement agency who regularly interacts with members of the public as part of the law enforcement officer's official duties, subject to the agency's policy on the use of BWCs. By July 1, 2025, a law enforcement agency of a county not mentioned above was required to meet these same requirements.

A BWC that possesses the requisite technological capability must automatically record and save at least 60 seconds of video footage immediately prior to the officer activating the record button on the device.

A law enforcement agency subject to the BWC requirements must develop and maintain a written policy consistent with the policy published by the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission for the use of BWCs. The policy must specify which law enforcement officers employed by the law enforcement agency are required to use BWCs. A law enforcement agency may not negate or alter any of the requirements or policies established in accordance with specified BWC-related provisions through collective bargaining.

State Expenditures: State expenditures (multiple fund types) increase significantly beginning in fiscal 2027 to establish or expand BWC programs within State law enforcement agencies in accordance with the bill's requirements. Information gleaned from a survey of potentially affected State law enforcement agencies is provided below. In summary, general fund expenditures increase by at least \$1.4 million, higher education expenditures increase by at least \$563,000, and special fund expenditures increase by at least \$49,000 in fiscal 2027. Future year expenditures reflect annualization, inflation, and minimum ongoing costs.

Department of State Police

General fund expenditures for DSP increase by at least \$1.2 million in fiscal 2027, which accounts for the bill's October 1, 2026 effective date. This estimate reflects the cost of purchasing additional BWC equipment as well as the cost of hiring one technician and one administrative specialist to manage DSP's expanded BWC program and handle related Public Information Act requests. It includes salaries, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses. The information and assumptions used in calculating the estimate are stated below:

- according to DSP, approximately 261 additional law enforcement officers within DSP require BWCs, and the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) within DSP needs 75 BWCs, at a cost of \$2,200 per device, including initial license, software, and storage costs;
- additional ongoing operating expenses are incurred for user management, licensing, and storage of BWC footage for OSFM; and
- one vehicle is needed for the technician to provide maintenance and support to officers using BWCs.

Positions	2.0
Salaries and Fringe Benefits	\$130,997
BWC Equipment	1,004,200
Automobile Purchase	45,261
Other Operating Expenses	<u>18,282</u>
Total FY 2027 DSP Expenditures	\$1,198,740

Future year expenditures reflect full salaries with annual increases and employee turnover and ongoing operating expenses. To the extent that additional BWC maintenance and storage are needed, out-year expenditures increase further.

Comptroller's Office

General fund expenditures for the Comptroller's Office increase by at least \$139,000 in fiscal 2027, which accounts for the bill's October 1, 2026 effective date. This estimate reflects the cost of leasing 20 BWCs for the Field Enforcement Bureau at a cost of \$3,200 per camera, with an additional initial set-up fee of \$75,000. Future year expenditures reflect ongoing costs for video storage, licensing, and other operational support for the BWCs. To the extent that additional BWC equipment, maintenance, and storage are needed, out-year expenditures increase further.

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Cannabis Commission

General/special fund expenditures for the Alcohol, Tobacco, and Cannabis Commission (ATCC) increase by at least \$70,000 in fiscal 2027 (30% general funds; 70% special funds) to purchase BWC equipment and for user management, licensing, and storage of BWC footage. According to ATCC, field enforcement agents do not currently use BWCs. To meet the bill's requirements, ATCC needs to purchase 35 BWCs at a cost of \$2,000 per camera. Future year expenditures reflect ongoing costs for video storage, licensing, and other operational support for the BWCs. To the extent that additional BWC maintenance and storage are needed, out-year expenditures increase further.

Morgan State University

Higher education expenditures for Morgan State University increase by at least \$563,000 in fiscal 2027, which accounts for the bill's October 1, 2026 effective date. This estimate reflects the cost of purchasing 80 BWCs and for data storage, redaction, and compliance requirements necessary to ensure transparency, accountability, and adherence to Maryland public records and retention laws. To the extent that additional BWC equipment, maintenance, and storage are needed, fiscal 2027 and out-year expenditures increase further.

Bowie State University

Higher education expenditures for Bowie State University likely increase for expanded implementation of its BWC program. Although the university did not provide an estimate of the number of additional BWCs needed to meet the bill's requirements, costs include the purchase of BWCs and the necessary infrastructure to download, store, and retain data for the mandated retention period. Future year expenditures likely include costs for BWC maintenance and data retention and storage.

Other State Law Enforcement Agencies

The fiscal 2026 budget as passed by the General Assembly included \$428,790 for the purchase of BWCs for officers within the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS). As a result, DPSCS advises that it can handle the bill's requirements with existing resources.

The Department of Natural Resources advises that a minor change in policy is necessary as a result of the bill; however, the department reports that it currently has enough licenses for BWC equipment to meet the bill's requirements.

Other State law enforcement agencies may incur costs to expand their BWC programs due to the bill's changes. Any such costs are unknown.

Local Expenditures: While some counties and municipalities already meet or can comply with the bill's expanded BWC requirements using existing resources, expenditures increase, potentially significantly, for other local law enforcement agencies. Based on a limited survey of local governments, the following information was gleaned regarding the anticipated costs to implement the bill:

- Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Howard, and Montgomery counties, the City of Frostburg, and the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission report that they already meet or can handle the expanded BWC requirements with existing resources;
- Harford County estimates costs of approximately \$46,200 annually for the purchase of additional BWCs and related costs;
- Talbot County estimates costs of approximately \$5,900 annually for the purchase of additional cameras and for related costs;
- the Maryland Association of Counties advises that while some counties may be able to meet the bill's requirements using existing resources, other counties could incur costs of up to \$200,000 for the initial purchase of additional BWCs and storage, with other potential costs; and
- the Maryland Municipal League reports that the bill has a notable fiscal impact on municipalities with police departments for the purchase of BWCs, expanded video storage and management, and additional support staff, among other things.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar bills have been introduced within the last three years. See SB 661 and HB 707 of 2024.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's, and Talbot counties; Maryland Association of Counties; Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission; cities of College Park, Frostburg, and Rockville; Maryland Municipal League; Alcohol, Tobacco, and Cannabis Commission; Comptroller's Office; Baltimore City Community College; University System of Maryland; Morgan State University; Department of Budget and Management; Department of General Services; Maryland Department of Labor; Department of Natural Resources; Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services; Department of State Police; Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

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