

State of Maryland

Commission on Civil Rights

“Our vision is to have a State that is free from any trace of unlawful discrimination.”



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February 9, 2021

House Bill 152 – Law Enforcement – Department of State Police – Body–Worn Cameras **POSITION: Support**

Dear Chairperson Clippinger, Vice Chairperson Atterbeary, and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (“MCCR”; “The Commission”) is the State agency responsible for the enforcement of laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and state contracts based upon race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, physical and mental disability, and source of income.

House Bill 152 requires the Department of State Police to issue by January 1, 2022, body-worn cameras to all police employees, except for those assigned to detail at the Maryland State House. The bill further directs the Department to adopt policies and procedures for the use of body-worn cameras. While MCCR understands that this bill does not appropriate funding to carry out this mandate, MCCR nonetheless, as a matter of policy, supports the use of body-worn cameras by law enforcement officers while on duty or when responding to an incident. With the proper protocols in place, body-worn cameras can be an effective tool at capturing the crucial evidence of misconduct needed to hold offending officers accountable. The cameras can not only protect citizens from harm, but also protect officers who are carrying out their duties by the letter of the law and applicable procedure.

Because of this, the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights urges a favorable vote on HB152. Thank you for your time and consideration of the information contained in this letter. The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights looks forward to the continued opportunity to work with you to improve and promote civil rights in Maryland.