



## POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

Bill: HB 727 Law Enforcement – Body–Worn Cameras – Capabilities

Position: Favorable

Date: February 12, 2021

Dear **Judicial Proceedings Committee:**

The Maryland Office of the Public Defender supports HB 727, because it is common sense legislation necessary to rebuild community trust in law enforcement. Police accountability and transparency are of highest importance, and the recent deaths of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and many others at the hands of law enforcement have further brought to light why this bill is so important. In the midst of social unrest of this past year following these untimely deaths, the consensus for police accountability and transparency only continues to grow.

This proposed legislation would require body cameras to record footage two minutes before an officer turns it on instead of 30 seconds. By requiring 2 minutes of recording before the officer turns on the body camera instead of 30 seconds, this bill strengthens the accountability and transparency provided by body cameras. As public defenders, we've seen body cameras catch exculpatory and mitigating evidence for our clients. Especially in the 30 seconds of filming recorded before officers turn on their camera. By increasing the 30 seconds to two minutes, more potentially exculpatory evidence could be found. Additionally, it would provide an accountability incentive to officers.

For these reasons the Office of the Public Defender supports a favorable report on this bill.