



**State of Maryland  
Department of State Police**  
Government Affairs Section  
Annapolis Office (410) 260-6100

**POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION**

**DATE:** February 9, 2021

**BILL NUMBER:** House Bill 152                      **POSITION:** Letter of Concern

**BILL TITLE:** Law Enforcement – Department of State Police – Body-Worn Cameras

**REVIEW AND ANALYSIS:**

This legislation seeks to require the Maryland State Police (MSP) to purchase a body-worn camera for every sworn member by January 1, 2022. The cameras shall be used by all police employees to include plain clothes, undercover, and supervisory personnel while on duty. The bill does not apply to police employees assigned to work in the State House.

The Maryland State Police does support the use of body cameras and in car camera systems to provide transparency and added integrity to law enforcement operations. However, the mandates in House Bill 152 are not consistent with the recommendations of the Workgroup to Address Police Reform and Accountability, and the Body Camera Task Force. This legislation requires the expenditure of over \$2 million in four months by the MSP. This mandate does not consider the state budget process and it does not provide a funding mechanism. The Workgroup recommended all police agencies purchase body cameras and gave local and state law enforcement until 2025 to arrange for financing of this mandate.

MSP is currently in the third year of a five-year contract to purchase and install new In-Car Camera recording systems. MSP has installed over 400 cameras in patrol cars at our 23 barracks state wide. The Department has already purchased an additional 137 in car cameras for installation in 2021. MSP has spent over \$2 million on our current system. The goal of the MSP is to equip every road patrol trooper, Corporal and below in the Field Operations Bureau, with a camera system consistent with our mission and budget.

MSP has had In-Car camera systems since the mid 1990's. When Body-Worn cameras entered the field of law enforcement, MSP evaluated their use as it relates to our mission. The majority of our work is performed in and around the police car. Using that as our guide, MSP reviewed the value of each system consistent with our needs and budget. While MSP has determined that the in car camera system provided MSP the better operational value, the Superintendent has agreed with the Workgroup that a body Camera could supplement our operations if properly funded and staffed. There are no funds in the FY 21 or FY 22 budget for body cameras.