



Maryland Municipal League

The Association of Maryland's Cities and Towns

TESTIMONY

February 12, 2021

Committee: House Judiciary

Bill: HB 707 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Reform

Position: Informational

Reason for Position:

The Maryland Municipal League does not have a position on HB 707, but would like to share the following perspective with the Committee. As introduced, this legislation includes several aspects of the police reform debate, but these comments focus on the body camera provision as it has direct municipal fiscal impact.

While all the aspects of police reform addressed in this bill are critically important, MML would like to specifically reference the mandate on police worn body cameras. This is an area of policing that MML has weighed in on before, highlighting its importance for officer and citizen accountability but also the implementation issues.

This bill mandates that police agencies with more than 20 officers require the use of body cameras by October 1, 2020. The recognition that the smaller agencies would struggle with the cost is welcome by smaller municipalities. Also appreciated is the cost sharing provision for acquiring the equipment included in this legislation. However, the higher cost burden related to body worn cameras is in the ongoing storage requirements and review needed for public information act requests, which are not addressed in this bill.

MML has weighed in on other bills related to police body cameras and welcomes the opportunity to craft a solution. For these reasons, the Maryland Municipal League respectfully requests to be included in stakeholder discussions on police reform legislation, particularly related to mandated use of body cameras and government liability.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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