

SB 556 BWC AG Testimony in Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Carrie Williams

Position: FAV



State of Maryland
Office of the Attorney General

February 22, 2022

TO: The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr., Chair, Judicial Proceedings
Committee

FROM: Carrie J. Williams, Assistant Attorney General

RE: Attorney General's Support for SB 556

The Attorney General urges the Judicial Proceedings Committee to report favorably on SB 556. SB 556 mandates that all law enforcement agencies require the use of body-worn cameras by July 1, 2025. Currently, only the law enforcement agencies of a county are required to have body-worn cameras by July 1, 2025.

Body-worn cameras promote transparency in law enforcement. They can also corroborate witness testimony and provide training opportunities. Expanding the requirement for body-worn cameras to all law enforcement agencies will help create uniformity and consistency in law enforcement in Maryland.

The Attorney General urges a favorable report on SB 556.

cc: Members of the Committee

SB0556 Sen Sydnor Testimony for JPR.pdf

Uploaded by: Charles E. Sydnor III

Position: FAV

CHARLES E. SYDNOR III, ESQ.
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Judicial Proceedings Committee

—
Joint Committees

Children, Youth, and Families
Ending Homelessness



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Senator Charles E. Sydnor III
Testimony Regarding SB 556: Public Safety –
Law Enforcement Agencies – Body-Worn Cameras
Before the Judicial Proceedings Committee
February 23, 2022

Good afternoon Chair Smith, members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee.

I bring to the Committee today a bill to cure a concern resulting from Senate Bill 71 passed during the 2021 Regular Session. Section 1 of Chapter 60 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 2021. Article-Public Safety, Section 3-511 of the Annotated Code of Maryland paragraph (c) subsection (2) contains language to identify law enforcement agencies not previously identified in paragraph (c) subsection (1). These law enforcement agencies will have a deadline of July 1, 2025 to require the use of body-worn cameras subject to the policy developed by the law enforcement agency. The identification of these law enforcement agencies included the phrase “of a county” which has resulted in some confusion in determining which agencies are referenced. The removal of this designation “of a county” will provide greater clarity for those who are governed by the July 1, 2025 requirement.

For the aforementioned reasons, I ask that this bill be reported out favorably.

2022-02-23 SB 556 (BWC - Support).pdf

Uploaded by: Hannibal Kemerer

Position: FAV

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February 23, 2022

To: The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee

From: Dana Mulhauser
Chief, Independent Investigations Division
Office of the Attorney General

Re: SB 556 – Public Safety – Law Enforcement Agencies – Body-Worn Cameras – **Support**

The Office of Attorney General urges this Committee to favorably report SB 556. If passed, the bill would expand the state's body-worn-camera requirement to cover entities other than counties. Under current state law, counties are required to have body-worn cameras but other law-enforcement entities in the state are not. There is no practical reason for this distinction, and we support extending the body-worn camera requirement to other law-enforcement agencies.

Body-worn cameras are crucial to the investigation of officer-involved fatalities and other uses of force. Studies have found that they reduce officer use of force, allow for faster and more accurate resolution of investigations, save money by reducing the costs associated with citizen complaints, and are supported by most officers themselves. *See e.g.* Braga, et al. "The Benefits of Body-Worn Cameras: New Findings from a Randomized Controlled Trial at the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department." Final report to the Nat'l Institute of Justice, 2013-IJ-CX-0016, September 2017 ("BWC-wearing officers generated significantly fewer complaints and use of force reports relative to control officers without cameras. . . In addition, our cost-benefit analysis revealed that savings from reduced complaints against officers, and the reduced time required to resolve such complaints, resulted in substantial cost savings for the police department."); Miller et al. 2014. *Implementing a Body-Worn Camera Program: Recommendations and Lessons Learned*. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.

For the foregoing reasons, the Office of the Attorney General urges a favorable report of Senate Bill 556.

cc: Committee Members

Body cameras - add privacy - testimony - senate -

Uploaded by: Lisae C Jordan

Position: FWA



Working to end sexual violence in Maryland

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Testimony Supporting Senate Bills 558 and 556 with Amendments
Lisae C. Jordan, Executive Director & Counsel
February 23, 2022

The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA) is a non-profit membership organization that includes the State's seventeen rape crisis centers, law enforcement, mental health and health care providers, attorneys, educators, survivors of sexual violence and other concerned individuals. MCASA includes the Sexual Assault Legal Institute (SALI), a statewide legal services provider for survivors of sexual assault. MCASA represents the unified voice and combined energy of all of its members working to eliminate sexual violence. MCASA urges the Judicial Proceedings Committee to issue favorable reports on Senate Bills 558 and 556 with Amendments.

Senate Bill 558 and 556 – Body Worn Cameras – Expansion and Training

SB558 and SB556 address many aspects of the use of body-worn cameras by law enforcement including contracts for equipment, storage of footage, and costs of equipment. The bill also specifies that the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission must develop and publish online a policy for the disclosure of body-worn camera recordings to the public. The policy shall consider several factors including individual privacy.

MCASA supports the bill with an **amendment that prohibits the release of body-worn camera footage depicting a victim or information that could identify a victim of sexual assault, child abuse, domestic violence, or elder abuse**. This amendment achieves an important balance between policy transparency, police accountability, and victim privacy. The amendment should also **require victim consent prior to any release of a body-worn camera footage to a third party outside the scope of a criminal or civil legal proceeding and notice of all requests for the video footage**. Senate Bill 31 contains strong provisions addressing these issues and could provide the source for these amendments or reported favorably on its own.

MCASA supports the use of body-worn cameras. In a 2015 survey, 88% of victims of sexual assault or domestic violence reported that police “sometimes” or “often” do not believe victims or blamed victims for the violence.¹ In that same survey, 83% of those surveyed thought police “sometimes” or “often” do not take allegations of sexual assault and domestic violence seriously. Over 80% believed that police-community relations with marginalized communities influenced survivors’ willingness to call the police. The accountability and transparency created

¹ https://www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/field_document/2015.10.20_report_-_responses_from_the_field_0.pdf

by the use of body-worn cameras by law enforcement is an important part of increasing trust and confidence in law enforcement.

For victims of sexual assault to develop more trust and confidence in law enforcement it is critical for them to know that the body-worn camera recordings will not simply be released to the perpetrator or the public and that strong enforceable provisions be included in our laws.

**The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault urges the
Judicial Proceedings Committee to
report favorably on Senate Bill 558 and Senate Bill 556 with Amendments**



SB 556_UNF_MML.pdf

Uploaded by: Bill Jorch

Position: UNF



Maryland Municipal League

The Association of Maryland's Cities and Towns

TESTIMONY

February 23, 2022

Committee: Senate Judicial Proceedings

Bill: SB 556 - Public Safety – Law Enforcement Agencies – Body-Worn Cameras

Position: Oppose

Reason for Position:

The Maryland Municipal League opposes Senate Bill 556, which mandates that municipal police agencies equip their officers with body worn cameras yet provides no financial assistance to local agencies to operate these expensive programs.

Broader use of police body cameras promotes transparency in public safety and their increased use in the State carries many benefits. In fact, about 40 out of the 88 municipal police agencies see the benefits of body worn cameras and already have implemented them to some degree within their agency. This is not the root of MML's opposition.

The bill, however, lays down a significant unfunded mandate on municipal police agencies. There is enormous fiscal impact of acquisition of the cameras and equipment, ongoing maintenance of the devices, storage of the footage, and review and redaction for Public Information Act requests. This financial burden to municipal police agencies, particularly the smaller ones, would be immense without some degree of State subsidy.

Another bill introduced this year, SB 558, imposes the same mandate but also provides some for State financial support to police agencies to implement widespread body camera usage. It is this bill, with amendments discussed with the sponsor, that MML sees as the path toward Statewide body camera usage.

While MML certainly view the widespread usage of police body cameras as an effective way to improve transparency in law enforcement, the unfunded mandate on municipal agencies is problematic, and there is another bill that provides a vehicle to address these concerns. For these reasons the League respectfully requests that this committee provide Senate Bill 556 with an unfavorable report.

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