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Legislative District 5
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MINORITY WHIP

Finance Committee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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**SB 330—Public Safety – Law Enforcement – Body–Worn Cameras
(Body–Worn Camera Appropriation and Financing Act of 2023)**

Chair Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

I am here today to introduce Senate Bill 330, the Body Worn Camera Appropriation and Financing Act of 2023. This bill is a continuation of work from the Law Enforcement Body-Worn Camera Taskforce which I was proud to serve on as Senate designee, and I thank President Ferguson for the appointment. The goal was to establish cost-efficient ways to scale the use and acquisition of body-worn cameras. Access to body-worn cameras will provide increased accountability in law enforcement, provide transparency and police oversight, and most of all increase trust and strengthen police-civilian relationships.

Police agencies and law enforcement personnel from around the state have told us they want to have this important tool to ensure transparency, help identify bad actors and serve as an invaluable training tool. The only issue that could delay full implementation is how to pay for it. That's why I've sponsored SB 330. It's a common sense, bipartisan bill that will ensure that body camera systems are affordable and accessible for all our local law enforcement agencies.

SB 330 will allow for state-wide negotiation of body camera contracts, acquisition of devices, and storage for BWC's, which will help eliminate the significant financial barriers that many law enforcement agencies encounter when attempting to implement a BWC program. This is a problem especially true for Maryland's smaller or mid-sized agencies. This approach will streamline the resources necessary for a successful BWC program and will offer a standardized state-wide system that reflects the needs of law enforcement and promises transparency while integrating those BWC programs that already exist in the state.

The costs for body-worn cameras can fall between \$1,791 and \$3,788 per officer/ camera and when you are an agency with a handful of officers, your budget may not be able to bear such a cost. That's why the state needs to step in and help these agencies cover the expense of these cameras they are mandated to have.

I want to thank the stakeholders on this task force, from law enforcement, community organizations, and civil liberty advocates who have been working with us for years to get this done right and are continuing to work with us on friendly amendments which will be provided to the committee once we receive them from the amendment office.

I respectfully request a favorable vote on SB 330.