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DEPUTY MAJORITY WHIP

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Baltimore County Senate Delegation



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony for Senate Bill 661
Public Safety– Law Enforcement– Use of Body-Worn Cameras
February 21, 2024

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

Seante Bill 661 (“SB 661”) is a minor, yet crucial change to our law. Current law requires each law enforcement officer who regularly interacts with members of the public as part of their official duties to use body-worn cameras (“BWC”). SB 661 alters the law slightly, requiring the use of BWCs by each law enforcement officer, regardless of rank, to use a BWC, while the officer is in uniform, in public, and conducting law enforcement related duties.

BWCs are vital tools for both law enforcement agencies and the public. “BWCs can be used for documentation purposes, to include interactions with victims, witnesses, and others during police-public encounters; arrests; and critical incidents.” BWCs provide a “clearly documented, firsthand, objective account of what was said[.]”¹ BWCs also present detailed, visual images that “can provide investigators, prosecutors, and juries with far more detailed, accurate, and compelling evidence.”² Further, BWCs provide ways for agencies to evaluate officer performance.³ Thus, it is imperative to have all uniformed officers conducting law enforcement related duties in public to be required to use BWCs.

To Marylanders and law enforcement officers, I respectfully request a favorable report for SB 661.

¹ International Association of Chiefs of Police, *Body-Worn Cameras*, at 2, (last visited Feb. 15, 2024), <https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/BWCs%20June%202020.pdf>.

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*