



Maryland Chiefs of Police Association

Maryland Sheriffs' Association



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr., Chair and
Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Darren Popkin, Executive Director, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee
Andrea Mansfield, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee
Samira Jackson, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee

DATE: February 5, 2026

RE: **SB 321 Public Safety – Law Enforcement Agencies – Use of Body-Worn
Cameras**

POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) **SUPPORT SB 321 WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill requires each sworn law enforcement officer, regardless of rank, to wear a body-worn camera while the officer is in uniform, in public, and while conducting law enforcement related duties.

MCPA and MSA fully support the use of body-worn cameras by law enforcement officers. However, both organizations are concerned about the broad nature of the bill. Command staff, many of whom do not currently wear body-worn cameras, would be required do so while in uniform, in public, and while conducting law enforcement related duties. These circumstances would include community meetings, conversations with constituents in the community, and testimony before public bodies. MCPA and MSA do not believe these are the types of situations the bill is trying to address and is therefore offering amendments to narrow the scope.

The amendments attached to this testimony define law enforcement encounter as “an encounter between an officer and a member of the public that is required to be recorded according to the policy on the use of body-worn cameras developed by the law enforcement agency.” The amendments then specify what types of encounters do not meet that definition to address the circumstances raised above. The amendments also give the option to the law enforcement agency to issue body-worn cameras to the agencies command staff or sworn officers who do not regularly engage in law enforcement encounters.

Lastly, we want to emphasize that the purchase, maintenance, and long-term cloud storage of body-worn camera footage impose significant ongoing costs on local law enforcement agencies. As drafted, these requirements function as an unfunded mandate. We respectfully request that the

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General Assembly consider mechanisms for state cost-sharing or direct financial support to ensure compliance does not strain local budgets or divert resources from core public safety functions.

MCPA and MSA respectfully request the Committee issue a **FAVORABLE** report on **SB 321 WITH AMENDMENTS**.

AMENDMENTS TO SB321
FIRST READING FILE BILL

On page 1, following line 17, insert

(a) In this section, THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANING INDICATED:

(1) “law enforcement agency” has the meaning stated in § 3-201 of this title.

(2) (i) “LAW ENFORCEMENT RELATED ENCOUNTER” MEANS AN ENCOUNTER BETWEEN AN OFFICER AND A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC THAT IS REQUIRED TO BE RECORDED ACCORDING TO THE POLICY ON THE USE OF BODY-WORN CAMERAS DEVELOPED BY A LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBSECTION (d) OF THIS SECTION.

(ii) “LAW ENFORCEMENT RELATED ENCOUNTER” DOES NOT INCLUDE A CASUAL GREETING GIVEN TO THE PUBLIC, AN ENCOUNTER IN WHICH A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC SEEKS INFORMATION SUCH AS DIRECTIONS OR OTHER GENERAL INFORMATION, OR ANY OTHER INTERACTION THAT IS NOT REQUIRED TO BE RECORDED ACCORDING TO THE POLICY ON THE USE OF BODY-WORN CAMEARS DEVELOPED BY A LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBSECTION (d) OF THIS SECTION.

On page 2, in line 2, insert “(1) after the first bracket and in line 5, strike “REGARDLESS OF RANK” and in line 7, strike “CONDUCTING” down through “DUTIES” in line 8 and insert “ENGAGED IN A LAW ENFORCEMENT ENCOUNTER”.

(2) THIS SUBSECTION DOES NOT REQUIRE A LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY TO, OR PROHIBIT A LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY FROM, ISSUING BODY-WORN CAMERAS TO SWORN MEMBERS OF THE AGENCY’S EXECUTIVE COMMAND STAFF OR SWORN OFFICERS WHO DO NOT REGULARLY ENGAGE IN LAW ENFORCEMENT ENCOUNTERS.