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DEPUTY MAJORITY WHIP

Judicial Proceedings Committee
Executive Nominations Committee
Legislative Policy Committee

Joint Committees

Administrative, Executive, and
Legislative Review

Children, Youth, and Families

Senate Chair, Legislative Ethics



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony for SB 321
Public Safety – Law Enforcement Agencies – Use of Body-Worn Cameras
Before the: Judicial Proceedings Committee
February 5, 2026

Good afternoon Chair Smith, members of the committee.

Body-worn cameras, or body cams, are vital tools for both law enforcement agencies and the public. They provide a clearly documented, firsthand account of encounters between the police and the public, whether arrests, incidents, or other interactions.¹

Senate Bill 321 is a minor but necessary 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 cams. Law enforcement departments like the Maryland State Police have interpreted “officers who regularly interact with the public” to include most members of the Field Operations Bureau as well as the SWAT team, but not command staff or certain special division officers, like those in the Licensing Division.²

Commanders can routinely become involved in critical operational incidents, such as protests, mass-casualty events, or police shootings. These events—such as the 2025 incident in which the Cheverly Police Chief shot and killed a suspect in Prince George’s County³—provide evidence of the urgency of this legislation. Officers should be held to a high standard, regardless of rank.

SB 321 alters the law slightly to require more officers to wear body cams. Under SB 321, all sworn officers who are in uniform, in public, and conducting law enforcement related duties would be required to wear body cams. Every officer’s encounter with the public should be subject to that

¹ <https://www.theiacp.org/perspectives-on-body-worn-cameras>

² Maryland Department of State Police, Testimony on Senate Bill 661, 2024 Session, https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/cmtc_testimony/2024/jpr/14oSy417YtyoEk6WeKGZG56Nrh3HAKBwa.pdf.

³ <https://oag.maryland.gov/News/Pages/Independent-Investigations-Division-Investigating-a-Fatal-Officer-Involved-Shooting-in-Riverdale--.aspx>

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same clear documentation provided by a body-worn camera, regardless of the officer's rank or division. The Police Executive Research Forum reported that body-worn cameras improve officer professionalism and allow agencies to identify larger structural issues within their departments.⁴

Concerns regarding privacy or recording of internal deliberations are unfounded. Command staff would be subject to the same regulations as rank-and-file officers. As part of the Police Accountability Act of 2021, every police department was required to develop and issue a written body-worn camera policy based on minimum standards. The Police Training and Standards Commission issued a model policy in 2022, suggesting that officers be mandated to activate body cams when encounters with the public are "investigative or enforcement in nature," for example, but not during "routine administrative activities."⁵

For these reasons, I ask for a favorable report on SB 321.

⁴ Lindsay Miller, Jessica Toliver, & Police Executive Research Forum, *Implementing a Body-Worn Camera Program: Recommendations and Lessons Learned* (2014),

<https://www.justice.gov/iso/opa/resources/472014912134715246869.pdf>.

⁵ <https://mpetc.dpscs.maryland.gov/pdf/Body-Worn%20Camera%20Model%20Policy.pdf>