



Morningside Police Department

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Daniel J. Franklin
Chief of Police

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

FROM: Chief Daniel J. Franklin #0255
Morningside Police Department

RE: Written Testimony Supporting SB 0321 with suggested amendments
Public Safety - Law Enforcement Agencies - Use of Body-Worn Cameras

DATE: February 3, 2026

Greetings Chairman Smith and the members of the Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee.

My name is Daniel Franklin, and I am the Chief of Police for the Morningside Police Department in Prince George's County, Maryland. After careful review of SB 0321 sponsored by Senator Sydnor, I am submitting this written testimony **supporting with amendments** the passage of the bill.

As written, the bill reads “A law enforcement agency shall require the use of body–worn cameras (BWCs), subject to the policy on the use of body–worn cameras developed by the law enforcement agency, by each SWORN law enforcement officer, REGARDLESS OF RANK, employed by the law enforcement agency WHILE THE OFFICER IS IN UNIFORM, IN PUBLIC, AND CONDUCTING LAW ENFORCEMENT–RELATED DUTIES.”

Speaking as the Chief of Police for a small Prince George's County municipality, if I am at work, I am in uniform and in public 100% of the time. Additionally, ANY of my “duties” are law enforcement related if I have any human contact including council meetings, council work sessions, daily interactions with my staff, inter-agency informational exchanges, virtual meetings, in-person meetings, court testimony (where BWCs are prohibited), and even testimony in front of the General Assembly.

Any BWC program comes at a significant cost per officer to the agency. In addition to the cost of the hardware required, there are substantial software and cloud storage costs that are unavoidable when deploying BWCs. That cost becomes difficult to justify with sporadic use as would be the case by mandating Command Staff to wear BWCs. Just to provide some background, my agency spends in excess of \$97,000 for a contract covering eleven (11) officers with our BWC vendor.

There is also the issue of what constitutes “in uniform”. In some agencies, the traditional police uniform that most people envision is not always what “in uniform” is. This bill if passed as written could compromise some covert efforts by mandating the wear and deployment of BWCs.

I would respectfully suggest the following edits:

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.

I would offer my full support if the above amendments are written into the bill.

For all the reasons that I have listed above, I respectfully request your consideration of my position **supporting with amendments** the passage of SB 0381.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D.J. Franklin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Chief Daniel J. Franklin #0255
Morningside Police Department