



TESTIMONY

February 5, 2026

Committee: Senate Judicial Proceedings

Bill: SB 321 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Agencies - Use of Body-Worn Cameras

Position: Information

Reason for Position:

The Maryland Municipal League does not take a position on SB 321, but appreciates the opportunity to share the following perspective with the Committee. As introduced, SB 321 would require every law enforcement agency in Maryland to mandate the use of body-worn cameras by all sworn officers, regardless of rank, whenever they are in uniform, in public, and performing law enforcement–related duties.

This is an issue on which MML has engaged previously. We recognize the important role body-worn cameras can play in promoting transparency and accountability for both officers and the public. When properly implemented, body-worn camera programs—supported by clear policies governing activation, data storage, review, redaction, and release—can enhance trust and provide valuable documentation of interactions.

At the same time, a uniform statewide mandate raises significant implementation and fiscal concerns. Body-worn camera programs impose substantial and ongoing costs on law enforcement agencies, including the acquisition and replacement of equipment, system maintenance, long-term data storage, and the staff time required to review and redact footage, particularly in response to Public Information Act requests. The staffing and storage demands associated with video and audio redaction can be especially burdensome.

These costs fall most heavily on municipal police departments, particularly smaller agencies, and can be difficult to absorb without meaningful and sustained State support. Absent adequate funding or flexibility, a mandate of this scope could strain local budgets and operational capacity.

MML has previously weighed in on legislation related to body-worn cameras and remains committed to working collaboratively toward workable solutions. Accordingly, the League respectfully requests to be included in stakeholder discussions on police reform legislation, particularly where proposals involve mandated use of body-worn cameras and potential impacts on local government liability and resources.

For more information, please contact Angelica Bailey Thupari, Director of Advocacy and Public Affairs, at angelicab@mdmunicipal.org. Thank you for your consideration.

Maryland municipalities are home to 88 municipal police departments and roughly 4,000 officers.

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