

**03\_SB 321 Testimony - Sydnor - JPR.pdf**

Uploaded by: Charles Sydnor III

Position: FAV

CHARLES E. SYDNOR III, ESQ.  
*Legislative District 44*  
Baltimore County

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.<sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>2</sup>

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 County<sup>3</sup>—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

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

<sup>2</sup> Maryland Department of State Police, Testimony on Senate Bill 661, 2024 Session, [https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/cmte\\_testimony/2024/jpr/14oSy417YtyoEk6WeKGZG56Nrh3HAKBwa.pdf](https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/cmte_testimony/2024/jpr/14oSy417YtyoEk6WeKGZG56Nrh3HAKBwa.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> <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.<sup>4</sup>

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."<sup>5</sup>

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

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<sup>4</sup> 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>.

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

**SB0321writtentestimonyPDF.pdf**

Uploaded by: Daniel Franklin

Position: FWA



# Morningside Police Department

6901 Ames Street  
Morningside, MD 20746  
Phone: 301-736-7400



**Daniel J. Franklin**  
**Chief of Police**

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**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 extending to the right.

Chief Daniel J. Franklin #0255  
Morningside Police Department

**MCPA - MSA SB 321 -Use of Body Worn Cameras-SWA.pd**

Uploaded by: Samira Jackson

Position: FWA



# 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**.

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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.**

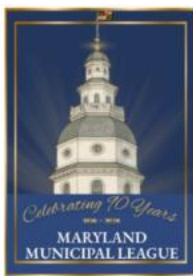
On page 2, in line 2, insert “(1) after the first bracket and in line 5, strike “REGARDLESS OF RANK” and in line 7, strike “CONDUCTING” down through “DUTIES” in line 8 and insert “ENGAGED IN A LAW ENFORCEMENT ENCOUNTER”.

**(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.**

# **SB321**

Uploaded by: Angelica Thupari

Position: UNF



## 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](mailto:angelicab@mdmunicipal.org). Thank you for your consideration.

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

47 State Circle, Suite 403 Annapolis, Maryland 21401

(410) 295-9100 [www.mdmunicipal.org](http://www.mdmunicipal.org)

# **SB0321\_ Public Safety - Law Enforcement Agencies -**

Uploaded by: Trudy Tibbals

Position: UNF

**SB0321: Public Safety - Law Enforcement Agencies - Use of Body-Worn Cameras:**  
Please vote **TO OPPOSE** this bill.

Dear Judicial Proceedings Committee:

I am writing to express my **strong opposition to SB 0321**, concerning the use of body-worn cameras by law enforcement agencies.

While transparency and accountability are important goals, **SB 0321 takes a one-size-fits-all, state-mandated approach that undermines local control, creates serious due-process concerns, and risks unintended consequences for both officers and the public.**

Local law enforcement agencies already operate under detailed body-worn camera policies tailored to their communities, resources, and operational realities. **SB 0321 overrides those locally developed policies** and substitutes rigid statewide requirements that fail to account for differences among jurisdictions. Decisions about deployment, activation, retention, and review of footage are best made at the local level, where agencies are directly accountable to the communities they serve.

Equally troubling are the **due-process implications**. Expansive recording mandates and altered access or disclosure rules **risk compromising ongoing investigations, officer safety, and the privacy rights of victims, witnesses, and bystanders**. Any system governing evidentiary recordings must include **clear standards, procedural protections, and limits on discretionary enforcement**. SB 0321 does not adequately provide those safeguards.

Body-worn cameras should be tools that support lawful policing and public trust—not instruments that invite **after-the-fact second-guessing, selective enforcement, or politicization** of split-second decisions made in dangerous circumstances. Poorly designed mandates can discourage proactive policing and ultimately harm public safety.

Maryland should support transparency **without sacrificing due process, local governance, effective law enforcement or the safety of law enforcement officers**. **SB 0321 fails to strike that balance.**

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to **oppose SB 0321**.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Respectfully,  
Trudy Tibbals



**MSP\_LOI\_SB0321.pdf**

Uploaded by: Breanna Mowbray

Position: INFO



**State of Maryland**  
**Department of State Police**  
Government Affairs Unit  
Annapolis Office (410) 260-6100

**POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION**

**DATE:** February 5, 2026

**BILL NUMBER:** Senate Bill 321                      **POSITION:** Letter of Information

**BILL TITLE:** Public Safety - Law Enforcement Agencies – Use of Body-Worn Cameras

**REVIEW AND ANALYSIS**

This legislation seeks to expand the use of body-worn cameras worn by law enforcement officers, regardless of rank, when in uniform, in public, and performing law enforcement duties. This expansion includes the Superintendent, their command staff, and any officer who could be in uniform at any time in public.

Under current Maryland law, law enforcement officers must wear body-worn cameras (BWCs) when interacting with the public or participating in a law enforcement activity and when displaying their badge or other official insignia. With the passage of police accountability legislation in 2021, the legislature mandated a statewide policy for the use of BWCs, which requires all police agencies to use BWCs by July 1, 2025, and that the camera shall record and save at least 60 seconds of footage immediately prior to the officer activating the record button. Use of the BWC is controlled by the model policy developed by the Police Training and Standards Commission, which must be adopted by every law enforcement agency.

This main change caused by Senate Bill 321 raises significant concerns for both sworn officers and agencies. First and foremost, the bill requires the Department to purchase additional cameras, storage space, and licensing agreements. The Chief and their command staff routinely handle information that, if recorded, could risk unintended exposure of confidential personnel issues and ongoing investigations not appropriate for public disclosure. They attend public hearings and private meetings with legislative and executive staff, where discussions are often privileged or classified. Criminal investigators who are in uniform would be required to wear BWCs at crime scenes involving traumatic or sensitive circumstances. These changes substantially depart from the original law's intent and would have major fiscal and operational impacts on the Maryland State Police (MSP).

As written, the bill's mandate would include BWCs for all sworn officers in the MSP and the Office of the State Fire Marshal. This requirement will increase demands on MSP's IT and Public Information Act operations. MSP currently has 1,300 cameras but will need 261 more for sworn staff and 75 for the Office of the State Fire Marshal, for a total of 1,636 devices. Certain ranks do not wear BWCs, depending on their job and public contact. The superintendent

**State of Maryland**  
**Department of State Police**  
Government Affairs Section  
Annapolis Office (410) 260-6100

**POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION**

(Colonel), Bureau Chiefs (Lt. Colonel), and some Majors do not wear BWCs. All Field Operations Bureau barracks troopers up to Lieutenant are required to have BWCs, while Majors and Captains generally do not. However, divisions like the Special Operations Division may issue cameras up to Major depending on public involvement. The Criminal Investigation Unit and other specialized units' use of BWCs would also vary depending on their responsibilities. Currently, no members of the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) are mandated to wear a BWC. However, if this bill were passed, it would change.

The estimated first-year cost to purchase additional BWCs is approximately \$740,000, which includes docks, software, licensing, and storage. Ongoing annual maintenance and video storage costs are projected to increase by approximately \$500,000 beginning in the second year and increasing every year thereafter. Operationally, the increased number of cameras will significantly increase the workload of the IT unit responsible for training, equipment servicing, and replacing damaged cameras and associated hardware. To support this workload, MSP anticipates the need for an additional CNS II position, along with associated equipment and a state vehicle.

The Public Information Act unit spends thousands of hours annually reviewing BWCs video and documents for over 4,000 public requests. Reviewing each hour of footage takes four hours, as every frame requires individual attention. MSP anticipates an increase in requests, especially for command staff footage, thus requiring one more Management Associate to maintain timely responses.

The law, as written as a part of Police Accountability, is working. Requiring the Training and Standards Commission to create the model policy is working. During this difficult budget year, this mandate is very expensive and cannot be absorbed in our budget.

The Maryland Department of State Police respectfully submits this information for your consideration as you evaluate Senate Bill 321.

# **DBM LOC SB321 Public Safety - Law Enforcement Agen**

Uploaded by: Dana Phillips

Position: INFO

WES MOORE  
*Governor*

ARUNA MILLER  
*Lieutenant Governor*



YAAKOV "JAKE" WEISSMANN  
*Acting Secretary*

MARC L. NICOLE  
*Deputy Secretary*

**TITLE: SB0321 Public Safety - Law Enforcement Agencies - Use of Body-Worn Cameras**

**DATE: February 5th 2026**

**COMMITTEE: Judicial Proceedings**

**POSITION: Letter of Concern**

**SUMMARY OF BILL:** SB 321 expands the current law requiring the use of body cameras to include any situation when an officer is in uniform, in public, and conducting law enforcement-related duties. It also applies to all sworn law enforcement officers, regardless of rank, in all law enforcement agencies, not just state and county police.

**EXPLANATION:** The Department notes because the bill will apply to all law enforcement agencies, defined as "a governmental police force, sheriff's office, or security force or law enforcement organization of the State, a county, or a municipal corporation that by statute, ordinance, or common law is authorized to enforce the general criminal laws of the State," any agency or local law enforcement office not currently using body-worn cameras at the level required by this bill will face massive initial and ongoing costs. These include the physical procurement of camera hardware, docking stations, and the massive server infrastructure needed for high-definition video data storage. The bill will also likely increase the fiscal cost of procuring body-worn cameras, data storage, and related equipment. This legislation would have a potentially significant fiscal impact.

Additionally, the bill does not define what constitutes "law enforcement-related duties," nor does it define what it means for an officer to be "in public" or what it means to be in "uniform". This lack of clarity creates significant ambiguity, leading to inconsistent application. These undefined terms could apply to a wide range of activities not covered by existing body-worn camera policies, forcing agencies to develop new, more complex guidelines, which could impact bargaining implications.

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*Governor*

ARUNA MILLER  
*Lieutenant Governor*



YAAKOV "JAKE" WEISSMANN  
*Acting Secretary*

MARC L. NICOLE  
*Deputy Secretary*

The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) is charged with submitting a balanced budget to the General Assembly annually and will be working with the General Assembly to achieve structural balance over the long term. This mission is further complicated by significant federal uncertainty in both policy and budgetary areas, which requires the State to maintain a higher degree of fiscal resilience. The Department urges caution when passing legislation that significantly increases expenditures without commensurate reductions elsewhere. In light of the current fiscal crisis, the state government must be disciplined and strategic in its funding decisions to protect essential services. Any legislation that increases spending should include specific, identified, and sustainable funding offsets.

**For additional information, contact Dana Phillips at  
(410) 260-6068 or [dana.phillips@maryland.gov](mailto:dana.phillips@maryland.gov)**

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