



TESTIMONY

HB0349 – Public Safety – Law Enforcement – Use of Body-Worn Cameras

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Simmons

Committee: House Judiciary

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Aileen Alex, Co-Chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in support of HB0349 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. We are an association of unpaid citizen advocates—individuals and grassroots groups in every district across the state—representing and supporting more than 30,000 Marylanders.

HB0349 strengthens Maryland’s public-safety framework by requiring law enforcement agencies to ensure that every sworn officer, regardless of rank, uses a body-worn camera while in uniform, in public, and performing law-enforcement duties. This bill closes gaps in current practice and ensures that body-worn camera use is consistent, predictable, and not dependent on jurisdiction, rank, or internal policy changes.

This legislation matters because transparency is one of the most effective tools we have for building trust between communities and law enforcement. Body-worn cameras protect everyone involved by creating an objective record of interactions.

In the current national climate, where political tensions are high and public demonstrations are more frequent, many Marylanders, myself included, feel increasingly vulnerable when exercising our First Amendment rights. Knowing that officers are required to use body-worn cameras provides a measure of safety and accountability that helps people engage in civic life without fear of misrepresentation or retaliation.

Ensuring that law enforcement interactions are documented strengthens public confidence and helps prevent misunderstandings and misconduct. For these reasons, we respectfully urge a **FAVORABLE** report on HB0349.