

GARY SIMMONS
Legislative District 12B
Anne Arundel County

Judiciary Committee
Subcommittees

Criminal Law and Procedure
Family and Juvenile Law



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 152
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3581 • 301-858-3581
800-492-7122 Ext. 3581
Gary.Simmons@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Good afternoon, Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the Committee,

Delegate Gary Simmons in support of HB349. This bill strengthens and clarifies Maryland's body-worn camera requirements by ensuring that every sworn law enforcement officer, regardless of rank, wears and activates a body-worn camera while in uniform, in public, and conducting law-enforcement-related duties.

In 2021, Maryland took an important step forward by requiring certain agencies to implement body-worn camera programs, later expanding that requirement statewide. That reform was meaningful. But as written, the current law applies only to officers who "regularly interact with members of the public." HB349 closes that gap. Public trust should not depend on job title, assignment, or interpretation of who interacts "regularly." If an officer is sworn, in uniform, in public, and performing official duties, the expectation should be clear and consistent.

Body-worn cameras protect the public, and they also protect officers. They provide objective documentation of interactions, reduce disputes about what occurred, and strengthen accountability and transparency. In my years in law enforcement, I understood how quickly situations can escalate or be misunderstood. Video provides clarity where memory and perception may differ.

I recognize there is a fiscal impact. For the Department of State Police, general fund expenditures are estimated at approximately \$1.2 million in FY 2027, reflecting equipment purchases, staffing, and storage. Some counties can comply within existing resources; others may incur additional costs. But we must remember that body-worn cameras are no longer a new or experimental tool. They are an established best practice in modern policing.

This bill does not alter collective bargaining protections or existing policy standards set by the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission. It simply ensures uniform application.

HB349 is about consistency, transparency, and strengthening public confidence in law enforcement across Maryland.

I respectfully ask for a favorable report.

Delegate Gary Simmons
Anne Arundel County, District 12b