



Maryland Municipal League
The Association of Maryland's Cities and Towns

T E S T I M O N Y

February 25, 2020

Committee: House Judiciary

Bill: HB 739 – Law Enforcement Body Camera Task Force

Position: Support with Amendment

Reason for Position:

The Maryland Municipal League supports House Bill 739 with a technical amendment, which would create a task force to study the options for economical storage of audio and video recordings made by body-worn cameras.

Body-worn cameras have proven to be a useful transparency tools for local governments in Maryland. The initial costs of body-worn cameras were manageable and sometimes offset by grants. However, after the wave of early adoption, police departments and local jurisdictions began to experience the real costs: storage. Across the nation, police departments have since scrapped programs and proposals.

In a Washington Post article last year, Jim Pasco, executive director at the National Fraternal Order of Police was quoted: “The easy part is buying the body cameras and issuing them to the officers. They are not that expensive. But storing all the data that they collect — that cost is extraordinary. The smaller the department, the tougher it tends to be for them.”

MML believes that this legislation could help identify solutions to the storage cost problems plaguing local police departments, and ultimately, save body-worn programs in Maryland.

The amendment sought by the League, is to replace the appointments in (b)(4)(ii) and (b)(4)(v) with “two representatives of the Maryland Municipal League.” Of the two groups references, one is a department of MML, and the other is an ad hoc committee within MML. It would be more appropriate to let the League pick the members best suited for this task force.

The League therefore respectfully requests that this committee provide HB 739 with a favorable report, including the technical amendment.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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