

State of Maryland

Commission on Civil Rights

“Our vision is to have a State that is free from any trace of unlawful discrimination.”



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February 17, 2021

Senate Bill 583 – Law Enforcement – Body-Worn Cameras – Capabilities **POSITION: Support**

Dear Chairperson Smith, Vice Chairperson Waldstreicher, and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee:

The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (“MCCR”; “The Commission”) is the State agency responsible for the enforcement of laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and state contracts based upon race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, physical and mental disability, and source of income.

Senate Bill 583 requires the Maryland Police Training & Standards Commission to develop a policy for all law enforcement units in Maryland regarding automatically recording and saving 2 minutes of audio and video footage immediately prior to the officer activating the record button of the device. As a matter of policy, MCCR supports the use of body-worn cameras by law enforcement officers while on duty or when responding to an incident. With the proper protocols in place, body-worn cameras can be an effective tool at capturing the crucial evidence of misconduct needed to hold offending officers accountable. The cameras can not only protect citizens from harm, but also protect officers who are carrying out their duties by the letter of the law and applicable procedure.

Because of this, the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights urges a favorable vote on SB583. Thank you for your time and consideration of the information contained in this letter. The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights looks forward to the continued opportunity to work with you to improve and promote civil rights in Maryland.