

Bill Number: SB 583
Scott D. Shellenberger, State's Attorney for Baltimore County
Opposed

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF SCOTT SHELLENBERGER,
STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR BALTIMORE COUNTY,
IN OPPOSITION TO SENATE BILL 583
BODY WORN CAMERAS – CAPABILITIES

I write in opposition to Senate Bill 583 requiring that body cameras record two minutes of audio and video prior to the record button being activated.

Baltimore County currently has a Body Worn Camera (BWC) program. Approximately 1,400 BWC are on the streets in Baltimore County. The BWC currently records 30 seconds of video only prior to the record button being pushed. My office has 15 full time Evidence Technicians preparing these videos for discovery filings and courtroom display. We barely are able to keep up with the current workload.

Adding 90 seconds of more video and two minutes of more recorded audio will include a lot of information and recordings which are not related to a case. My office is responsible for reviewing all of it and to make sure that personal information of an individual is not disseminated to a criminal Defendant which could endanger that person or their right to privacy.

Adding 90 seconds to the videos will require extra staff for my office. In 2020, the Baltimore County Police Department uploaded 552,619 videos/photos from body cameras. Adding 90 seconds to 552,619 videos from the BWC will greatly increase storage and require my staff to review more footage to shield personal and sensitive information.

While I candidly admit my office does not view all 552,619 videos, we do handle over 40,000 cases per year almost all coming with videos. Often there are more than one BWC at the scene so adding 90 more seconds will require additional work. Even if there is only 1 BWC at each of my cases that would be 3,600,000 seconds added to our workload. That is 60,000 minutes or 1,000 hours. I cannot handle this with my current funding and staff.

This is an unfunded mandate. I urge an unfavorable report.