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TO: The Honorable William C. Smith, Chair
Members, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
The Honorable Charles Sydnor

FROM: Richard A. Tabuteau

DATE: February 23, 2022

RE: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS** –Senate Bill 558 – *Public Safety - Law Enforcement - Body-Worn Cameras*

JusticeText, Inc. is a public-interest technology startup that improves criminal justice outcomes by strengthening the ability of lawyers to process high volumes of body camera footage, interrogation videos, jail calls, and other crucial discovery.

Senate Bill 558 requires the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, in coordination with the Department of Information Technology and the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission, to negotiate contracts to acquire body-worn cameras, equipment, and technology for all law enforcement agencies. Though the bill specifies body-worn cameras and a statewide uniform storage and access system for body-worn camera data, it does not specifically require video evidence management software. It specifically benefits law enforcement agencies, but excludes the Maryland Office of the Public Defender, which only exacerbates the current technology gap between the offices.

We urge the following amendments:

- Page 6, Line 35: Insert “and the Office of the Public Defender”
- Page 7, Line 7: Insert “video evidence management software”
- Page 7, Line 19: After the word “redact”, insert “transcribe, clip, tag”

There are 3.3 trillion hours of video which is captured everyday worldwide from surveillance cameras, body-worn cameras, witness interrogations, and more. Video evidence is involved in over 80 percent of criminal cases and is a powerful vehicle for accountability and transparency. Many public defenders say that they struggle to find time to review audio and video evidence. In other words, critical evidence that could be used to exonerate the wrongfully accused is not being used to its fullest extent. In some cases, it’s not being used at all.

Video evidence management software, such as JusticeText’s, provides automated transcripts, time-stamped note-taking, and easy video-clipping features. By leveling the technological playing field shared by prosecutors and public defenders, we can lower the rate of wrongful incarcerations. As such, JusticeText urges the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to give Senate Bill 558 a favorable report with the aforementioned amendments.

For more information call:

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