

HB0429 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Agencies - Body-Worn Cameras
Testimony in **Support**

To: Chair Clippinger and members of the Judiciary Committee
From: Arielle Juberg

My name is Arielle Juberg. I am a resident of Baltimore County in District 8. I belong to Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) in Baltimore. SURJ is also working in collaboration with the Campaign for Justice, Safety, and Jobs. I am testifying in **support** of HB0429, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Agencies - Body-Worn Cameras.

This bill would require all law enforcement officers who carry a firearm to also wear a body camera, even if they are in plain clothes and not in uniform.

HB0429 matters to me because government services, including first responders, must provide some transparency to the public. Transparency in government means we have open meetings, opportunities for public comment, and chances to study proposed budgets. However, transparency is lacking in our public safety sphere, despite the fact that some first responders, such as police officers, carry lethal weapons.

Montgomery County resident Kwamena Ocran was only 24 years old when he was shot 8 times by Gaithersburg police officers, including twice in the back. Law enforcement officers stated that they had seen a muzzle flash before they shot Kwamena, but they were unable to find shell casings from any guns but those of the officers. They also failed to swab Kwamena's hands for gunshot residue analysis. As a result, there is no evidence that Kwamena shot at the officers before they killed him (source: [The Guardian, 10/11/21](#)). Thus, there is little information about what happened immediately before Kwamena was killed. In cases like this, the availability of body camera evidence is necessary to understand what happened in this lethal encounter.

Law enforcement officers have a responsibility to the communities they serve to uphold the law, but they also have an even more important duty to protect individuals within the community. In order to meet those responsibilities, there are certain limited circumstances in which law enforcement officers are allowed to use force. When law enforcement officers kill a member of the community, the public deserves the transparency provided by body cameras to confirm that officers' actions were within the law. This will enable law enforcement to maintain a relationship with community members.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of HB0429**. Thank you for your time, consideration, and service.

Arielle Juberg
3411 Upton Road
Baltimore, MD 21234