

**Proponent of HB 277**

Good morning Chairman Lang, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking member Leland and members of the Criminal Justice Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on HB 277.

My name is Angela Davis. As a social worker, I have over 25 years of experience in the Criminal Justice field working as a case manager, mental health therapist, and shift manager in various correctional settings. I've worked at county jails in New Jersey and at a correctional facility contracted with Federal Bureau of Prisons in Philadelphia. I've also authored two books, one of which highlights the damage caused when the existing police force in my hometown of Camden, NJ was cut in half and replaced with young, inexperienced officers. My book also detailed the missteps of many of these new recruits. I am familiar with men and women who risk their lives on a daily basis and are tasked with enforcing the law. I am also quite familiar with those accused of breaking the law. I am a proponent of HB 277.

Requiring video recording of police interrogations is necessary and it makes sense. We've already seen the results of having body cams, dash cams and doorbell cams. These devices have provided an invaluable, unbiased service to both the police and the community. As an objective observer, the camera doesn't discriminate. It catches wrong doing by whomever chooses to engage in it. Honest officers who follow protocol have absolutely nothing to fear. In fact, video recordings will protect them from dishonest suspects who attempt to undermine their investigation by falsely accusing them. I've seen this quite often in my work in the criminal justice field. It will also save the taxpayers money by avoiding frivolous lawsuits.

Conversely, I've seen some officers deviate from normal procedure, or worse yet, abuse their power. In May of this year, within 24 hours of meeting with Columbus Internal Affairs about my complaint against two officers I was subjected to an unprecedented mental health visit even though I have no mental health history. Within a week deputies came to our home in an unmarked vehicle and interrogated my 16 year old daughter as to my whereabouts. There was no adult present nor warrant. Our house was searched. They walked through with flashlights, even searching our trash. My written request for the bodycam footage was denied as was my request for the names of three of the four officers who searched our home illegally. There have been a number of questionable actions since then. Because of so many years working with law enforcement in the criminal justice field, I am still convinced these are the actions of a wayward few. Most police officers honor the oath that they took as well as the badge they wear. I know what good policing looks like. I also know that good officers will benefit from this law as will the community at large.

Thank you,  
  
Angela Davis

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