

May 14, 2018

Chairman Blessing, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Clyde, members of the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee, I am Deputy Director George Speaks with the City of Columbus Department of Public Safety. The City of Columbus supports Substitute HB425 and would like to take this opportunity to thank Representative Antani and Representative Craig for sponsoring this very important legislation.

The City of Columbus began its' work on body cameras in 2015 with an extensive process including a national best practices search and an inclusive citywide committee committed to giving a voice to all sects of our city. Our committee consisted of law enforcement officials, faith leaders and local community leaders. Today, hundreds of our officers are wearing body cameras as just one way to bring additional transparency to our law enforcement work. In addition to our local experience, numerous studies from both Europe and the United States demonstrate that body cameras increase accountability and transparency on both sides of the camera- -the officer and the public.

We also know that body worn cameras capture much more than just crimes. They record some of the worst and most embarrassing days of people's lives.

Under current law, these videos are subject to widespread dissemination via traditional and social media channels. In fact, search for "Police Body Cameras" on YouTube and you will find hundreds of channels. Channels who are profiting from the voyeurism of catastrophe, the sordid, the horrible, and the highly embarrassing human events that are captured on law enforcement body cameras.

Allow me to approximate the magnitude of this privacy issue. In the City of Columbus, we currently deploy 1,072 body cameras and anticipate full deployment of 1,300 cameras this summer. Last month, the body cameras recorded 55,802 events.

With respect to cruiser cameras, we deploy approximately 296 equipped vehicles. Last month, the cruiser cameras recorded 32,084 events.

The legislation sponsored by the Honorable Representative Antani and the Honorable Representative Craig includes provisions for protecting privacy and keeping people from being victimized again and again.

This balanced legislation is a solid, common sense approach to help law enforcement and the public achieve a higher level of transparency and accountability without sacrificing the personal privacy and integrity of the public.



On behalf of the City of Columbus, I applaud the Honorable Representative Antan and the Honorable Representative Craig for their diligent work in putting forth this bi-partisan supported bill.

In closing, it is our hope that your committee will favorability report out Substitute HB425 to your House colleagues and we look forward to working with your Senate colleague to see this legislation through passage.

Thank you for your time and if you have any questions, I now stand ready to answer them.

