

Statewide Policy for Body-Worn Cameras for Law Enforcement

Proposed Legislation: The proposed legislation establishes uniform protocols for the use of body worn cameras by Mississippi law enforcement officers and standardizes access to footage.

The Problem: High-profile cases in which police officers are alleged to have used deadly force against unarmed victims have brought attention to the need for a record of what occurs between law enforcement officers and members of the public. Body cameras are an excellent way to increase transparency between the police and community in times where there are different accounts of what transpired. However, various law enforcement agencies across the state have different guidelines for gathering and releasing body camera footage, leading to confusion and frustration among the community at-large and the media. In addition, body cameras have the potential to invade privacy. Ensuring that body-worn cameras serve to protect the public without becoming another system for routine surveillance is essential to maintaining public confidence and integrity of law enforcement.

The Solution: While body-worn cameras are beneficial on both sides of the badge, a statewide policy is crucial to ensure effective use and proactively approach uniform guidelines for the men and women who protect communities throughout the great state of Mississippi.

Having uniformed guidelines in place before an emotionally-charged, high-profile event occurs will allow law enforcement, the public, and the media to know in advance how any recording from a body camera will be handled. Following pre-set procedures will avoid allegations that law enforcement officials are inappropriately withholding information and will increase public trust in law enforcement in a time of potential crisis. Additionally, procedures regarding the use of body cameras by law enforcement will allow members of the public to understand what their rights are regarding a recording in which they are a subject.

Main Points:

- Body cameras are a win-win for both the police and the community. This amendment does not require law enforcement agencies to purchase or use body-worn cameras.
- Body camera usage by law enforcement helps to bring greater transparency to their interactions with the public.
- Uniformed policy around body cams is necessary for effective usage.
- Body cameras can be used effectively as a tool of community policing, but only if we pass a law that balances police protection and citizen privacy, and promotes transparency and accountability.

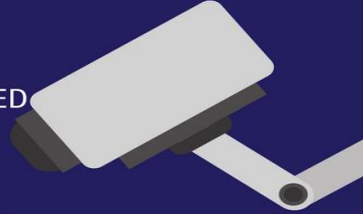
STRIKING THE RIGHT BALANCE

BODY-WORN CAMERA POLICIES IN MISSISSIPPI



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MISSISSIPPI LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES SURVEYED



65

BODY CAM POLICIES RECEIVED & ANALYZED



100% OF POLICIES PERMIT OFFICERS TO RECORD **WITHOUT** NOTICE.



40% OF POLICIES GIVE A SPECIAL RIGHT FOR OFFICERS TO VIEW FOOTAGE **BEFORE** COMPLETING THEIR REPORT.



3% OF POLICIES PROHIBIT USE OF BODY-WORN CAMERAS TO RECORD **FIRST AMENDMENT** PROTECTED ACTIVITIES.



3% OF POLICIES PROHIBIT LAW ENFORCEMENT FROM RECORDING APPARENT **VICTIMS**.

ACCOUNTABILITY

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POLICIES PROHIBIT OFFICERS FROM REVIEWING RECORDINGS BEFORE COMPLETING AN INCIDENT REPORT.

A STATEWIDE UNIFORMED POLICY FOR BODY-WORN CAMERAS IS NECESSARY FOR EFFECTIVE USAGE, POLICE PROTECTION, AND PRIVACY FOR ALL MISSISSIPPIANS.

TRANSPARENCY

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POLICIES EXPLICITLY PROVIDE THAT VIDEO FROM OFFICER-INVOLVED SHOOTINGS WILL BE RELEASED TO THE PUBLIC.

ACCESS

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POLICIES GIVE INDIVIDUALS OF RECORDINGS RIGHT TO REVIEW FOOTAGE.



ACLU
Mississippi

#BODYCAMSPOLICY