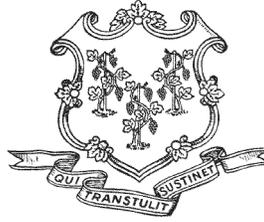


SENATOR MARTIN M. LOONEY
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

Eleventh District
New Haven, Hamden & North Haven



State of Connecticut
SENATE

State Capitol
Hartford, Connecticut 06106-1591
132 Fort Hale Road
New Haven, Connecticut 06512
Home: 203-468-8829
Capitol: 860-240-8600
Toll-free: 1-800-842-1420
www.SenatorLooney.cga.ct.gov

February 17, 2015

Good morning Senator Larson, Representative Dargan, and members of the Public Safety and Security Committee. I am here to testify in support of Senate Bill 770, AN ACT CREATING A PILOT PROGRAM FOR POLICE BODY CAMERAS.

Over the past half year, wearable video cameras have been introduced in various police departments around the nation, including in municipalities here in Connecticut. Many cities are in the process of implementing pilot programs to study the use of these cameras by police officers. Large cities, like Los Angeles with its 7,000 police officers, New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Washington, D.C. currently have pilot programs to test different models and are developing standards for their usage. Some of these programs involve testing cameras on a section of the police force, or testing different models on different officers.

There is some evidence that implementation of body cameras can be beneficial both to the police officers wearing them and to the citizens whom they serve. For example, it has been reported that a body camera pilot program study in 2012 in Rialto, CA, which has a population of about 100,000, showed that the number of complaints filed against officers was reduced by 88% and the use of force by law enforcement fell by almost 60% in the first year of implementation. In Connecticut, the city of East Haven has been using police body cameras since June 2014. A December 2014 post on the East Haven Police Department's Facebook page, speaks to the success of the program thus far:

“Body cameras enhance the Department’s effectiveness and support officer safety, and have been demonstrated to be of value in the prosecution of both traffic violations and criminal offenses, as well as officer performance evaluations and as an effective training resource.”

The implementation of body cameras here in Connecticut has not been limited to East Haven. Several other municipalities, including Milford, Westport, Branford and Hamden, have already begun using the technology. Several other municipalities are in the process of actively considering such implementation.

Hartford, a city with about 450 police officers, is in the midst of deciding whether or not to issue body cameras. Last week, Hartford's city council debated the issue and forwarded a resolution to the quality of life and public safety committee. Both Hartford's mayor and police chief have voiced support for the use of body cameras and the department has already purchased about 40 cameras. In New Haven, Police Chief Dean Esserman says that cameras would benefit citizens and police officers. New Haven is currently preparing to implement the technology.

President Obama recently announced an initiative to provide \$75 million in federal funds for the purchase of 50,000 wearable cameras to be distributed to various police departments across the country.

It does not appear that a single best technology for police-worn body cameras has been established thus far, nor are there uniform standards either across the country or in Connecticut for their usage. There are different styles and sizes of cameras – with some being worn on a shirt

collar, on the front of a uniform, or even mounted on to eyeglass frames. Some models have audio capabilities, while others do not. The models vary greatly in price – from \$300 to over \$1,000. There are also additional costs and administrative protocols to consider, such as storage of footage, maintenance, and the redacting of footage when necessary. Some other protocols that need to be considered involve when and where the cameras should be activated and how to balance privacy interests of citizens with the need for documentation.

While each municipality in Connecticut is free to move forward as they wish with regard to police body cameras, it seems apparent that a pilot program or at the very least guidance from either the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection or the Police Officer Standards and Training Council would be beneficial to municipalities and their police departments going forward.

Senate Bill 770 proposes a pilot program in 3 municipalities – one small, one medium, and one large. Such a pilot would include a comparison of different technologies and would be used to recommend statewide protocols for administration and usage going forward. In the alternative, another way to approach this issue is to require DESPP or POST to develop recommended standards and protocols.

I urge you to support Senate Bill 770.