



Testimony of Chief Joseph Curreri

SB 359

An Act Concerning the Use of Body-Worn Recording Equipment by Law Enforcement

Public Safety & Security Committee

March 8, 2016

Good morning Senator Larson, Representative Dargan, Senator Guglielmo, Representative Zupkus and distinguished members of the Public Safety and Security Committee. My name is Joseph Curreri, and I am the Chief of Police at UConn Health in Farmington.

I want to thank you for raising Senate Bill 359, *An Act Concerning the Use of Body-Worn Recording Equipment by Law Enforcement*, and for the opportunity to speak with you today about the bill. UConn Health is **in support of** this bill.

As you know, last year in the June Special Session, Public Act 15-4, *An Act Concerning Excessive Force*, was passed. Among other things, this Act requires State Police officers and University police forces to purchase and wear body-worn recording equipment while interacting with the public (municipal police forces are only subject to this requirement if they choose to apply for and receive a state grant to reimburse them for the cost of the recording equipment). This new requirement goes into effect this upcoming July 1.

The Act specifically outlines a number of situations when officers are prohibited from using the equipment to intentionally record. One such situation is "if an officer is wearing such equipment in a hospital or other medical facility setting" (except when only recording the suspect to a crime), or in situations where a person is undergoing a medical or psychological evaluation, procedure or treatment.

When this law passed last summer, both the Chief of Police in Storrs and I immediately began reviewing the requirements of the bill and working on our implementation plans. As we began to develop our policies and procedures, we on the UConn Health campus had numerous questions about the intent of the law as it applied to UConn Health, and where and how we would use the body cameras.

UConn Health is a non-residential campus that consists of a hospital, numerous outpatient medical office and facilities, labs and educational space. Patients, students, physicians and other clinicians, health professionals and researchers seamlessly interact throughout the campus. Since the UConn Health police force primarily operates in this medical facility environment, I believe that our cameras would need to be de-activated most of the time. I also have concerns that that the rules regarding when our officers would need to activate and deactivate the equipment would be complex and hard to follow, and would result in violations of the law; situations when our officers would be recording when they should not be.

As a result of these concerns, we respectfully submit that it does not make sense operationally or fiscally to require UConn Health to purchase body cameras and be subject to the new recording requirements.

While not enormous, complying with this new requirement would have a fiscal impact on UConn Health. We expect to spend \$25,000 to purchase the equipment, and an additional \$30,000 per year to store the recordings pursuant to the law. We'll also have additional costs for maintenance of the equipment and costs associated with searching recordings for FOIA and other requests.

Before I conclude, we want to emphasize that Senate Bill 359 creates a very narrow exception to the law. UConn is in full support of the new police body camera law; we truly believe that it will increase transparency and accountability. In fact UConn began piloting the body cameras in February with 6 officers on the Storrs campus and 1 at the Law School, and we are getting ready for full roll out across all campuses when the law goes into effect July 1. We are just seeking a limited exemption for the police at UConn Health because their primary patrol is in the medical facilities. I believe that UConn Health is the only police force in the State subject to this situation.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify, and I am happy to respond to any questions.