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Testimony on Senate Bill 473 and Assembly Bill 335

Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety

Thursday, October 28, 2021

Chairman Wanggarrd and members,

I'd like to thank you for holding a hearing on Senate Bill 473/Assembly Bill 335, which assists law enforcement agencies reduce cost and reduce barriers regarding body worn cameras.

Earlier this session, the report of the Speaker's Task Force Subcommittee on Law Enforcement Policies and Standards was released that summarized the activities and topics of consensus identified through multiple meetings and discussions. As co-chair of the subcommittee, I am incredibly proud of the bipartisan work we've done to have the hard conversations that will make a difference in the lives of people of color in Wisconsin. As we all know, these issues can be incredibly polarizing, yet we have succeeded in bringing the community and law enforcement voices to the table finding consensus where available and moving forward together.

One of the items that the subcommittee discussed was the importance of body cameras and the clarity they provide for both community members and law enforcement.

Our group heard testimony which highlighted law enforcement ability to effectively handle their jobs continues to depend on the public's perception of the legitimacy of the actions of officers. A number of recent civil disturbances across the country subsequent to instances of lethal use of force by officers highlight the ongoing challenges in maintaining the public's perception of law enforcement legitimacy. Body worn cameras have been viewed as one way to address these challenges and improve law enforcement practice more generally and increase transparency.

To achieve increased usage of these devices in our state, the bill would provide matching funds to an agency wishing to start a new body camera program or expand an existing program. In order to receive funds, an agency must commit to maintaining the equipment and providing digital video storage for at least three years following the grant award. The 50-50 matching funds would only be provided for expenses incurred in the first year of the program. Senate Bill 473/Assembly Bill 335 further requires a law enforcement agency that applies for and receives a grant to adopt a minimum activation policy that closely follows other law enforcement agencies across the state. Please note, this bill does not mandate officers to wear cameras, but instead increases availability through the funding mechanism.

Recently, the state Department of Justice (DOJ) conducted a survey on the use of body cameras by law enforcement agencies in Wisconsin that showed cost of cameras is a significant barrier to adoption. It was estimated the cost of cameras varies based on the requirements of a given department, and a conservative estimate puts the cost at \$1,200 per officer while data storage makes up approximately



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\$1,000 of this cost. The bill also directs the DOJ and Department of Administration to explore options for decreasing costs relating to data storage.

One of the goals of the task force was to seek out good ideas from other states and find ways to replicate their successes. Studies in Arizona and California showed that following additional implementation of body cameras, complaints as well as use of force incidents decreased significantly.

In closing, I want to thank my task force co-chair, Representative Stubbs, for her work developing these recommendations and members of the task force for their valued input. While there is more work to be done, this and the other task force bills before you today are a great step forward in addressing racial disparities in Wisconsin.



WISCONSIN STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Shelia Stubbs

77TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Thursday October 28, 2021

Senate Bill 473/Assembly Bill 335; Relating to: grants to law enforcement agencies for body cameras

Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety

Good morning Chairman Wanggaard and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 473, which would require the Department of Justice (DOJ) to award grants to agencies to purchase body cameras for patrol officers. Funding body cameras promotes transparency, and will help hold officers accountable for their actions.

Body cameras are a proven and effective way to view how law enforcement interacts with the public. We have seen body cameras expose officers that make critical errors, or maliciously abuse the power they hold. In addition, body camera footage can ensure that good officers are able to show their positive interactions with the public.

This legislation would ensure the DOJ is empowered to create meaningful and effective grant programs for agencies to fund their body camera initiatives. The application for such a program would need to show how the money is being spent, the number of cameras that will be bought, how much the agency will match to this grant, and the amount of time the agency would need to implement their policy.

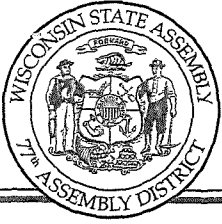
After 90 days of this grant program, the DOJ will consult with vendors to find cost saving measures for agencies that may apply for the program. In addition, the DOJ will need to find ways to lower the cost of data stored from these cameras. This common sense policy will promote the continued use of body cameras, and allow more departments to have increased access to this vital accountability measure.

Body cameras are not the final solution to ending police brutality or holding our officers accountable. However, it is an important aspect of the solution that cannot be ignored. Investing in body camera grant programs will allow more agencies to see the actions of their officers from an objective standpoint.

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WISCONSIN STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Shelia Stubbs

77TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Thank you again to the members of the committee for reading my testimony today. I ask that you vote in favor of transparency and accountability in law enforcement. Body camera programs will bring more departments into the 21st century, and provide valuable insight into how our police interact with our communities.

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WISCONSIN PROFESSIONAL POLICE ASSOCIATION

Law Enforcement Employee Relations Division • Supervisory Officers Relations Division • Civilian Employees Relations Division

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 28, 2021

TO: SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & PUBLIC SAFETY

FROM: Jim Palmer, Executive Director
Wisconsin Professional Police Association *JLP*

RE: Support of 2021 Senate Bill 470 (pre-employment psychological testing)
Support of 2021 Senate Bill 471 (annual crisis intervention training)
Support of 2021 Senate Bill 472 (no-knock search warrant reporting)
Support of 2021 Senate Bill 473 (grants for body-worn cameras)
Support of 2021 Senate Bill 474 (school resource officer training & standards)
Support of 2021 Senate Bill 475 (crisis program enhancement grants)
Support of 2021 Senate Bill 476 (post-critical incident drug testing)
Support of 2021 Assembly Bill 329 (no-knock search warrant reporting)
Support of 2021 Assembly Bill 330 (school resource officer training & standards)
Support of 2021 Assembly Bill 331 (pre-employment psychological testing)
Support of 2021 Assembly Bill 332 (annual crisis intervention training)
Support of 2021 Assembly Bill 333 (crisis program enhancement grants)
Support of 2021 Assembly Bill 334 (post-critical incident drug testing)
Support of 2021 Assembly Bill 335 (grants for body-worn cameras)

Representing over 10,000 members from more than 300 local association affiliates, the Wisconsin Professional Police Association (WPPA) is the state's largest law enforcement group. Our mission is to protect and promote public safety, as well as the interests of the dedicated men and women that serve to provide it. In that vein, we offer this memorandum to express our ardent **SUPPORT** of the bills before the committee today.

Earlier this year, after several months of arduous but necessary public discussions on how to strengthen the relationship between the police and the communities they serve, the Speaker's Task Force on Racial Disparities issued an array of recommendations to establish new standards and training, enhance transparency and oversight, and facilitate more effective community engagement.

As a proud member of that body, I can tell you that the recommendations were the result of an authentic, consensus-building process that included lawmakers from both parties alongside activists and advocates for communities of color, faith-based organizations and law enforcement. The recommendations are a testament to what can be achieved when people work together for a common goal.

WISCONSIN PROFESSIONAL POLICE ASSOCIATION

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Several recommendations issued by the Task Force have already been enacted into law, such as measures to explicitly prohibit officers from using chokeholds, to collect data on law enforcement's use of force, and to establish new financial support for community policing efforts.

Most notably, Wisconsin adopted a uniform standard for law enforcement's use of force. This new law also requires officers that witness excessive force to report it and intervene if possible, and it establishes "whistleblower protections" for these officers to safeguard them from adverse employment action, such as discipline.

The bills before the committee today were also recommended by the Task Force, and the Assembly swiftly passed them back in June. They now wait for the State Senate to push them across the finish line. The WPPA supports these measures without exception, because we believe that they will promote law enforcement transparency and accountability, enhance the training and qualifications officers need to meet the demands of their profession, and provide local governments with more resources to better serve the public.

While the passage of these lingering bills will not mark the end of the police reform dialogue, no one should be surprised when the calls for change grow louder and more radical if the Senate finds itself unable to act. In order to best serve the interests of the public and the dedicated men and women that work to keep our communities safe, the time to act is now. For those reasons, we respectfully urge the distinguished members of this committee to advance these bills as soon as possible, so that we may continue to move the ball forward in a way that is both thoughtful and meaningful.

Thank you.



To: Members, Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety
From: Badger State Sheriffs' Association
Wisconsin Sheriffs and Deputy Sheriffs Association
Date: October 28, 2021
RE: **Testimony in support of**
SB 470/AB 331, SB 471/AB 332, SB 472/AB 329, SB 473/AB 335, SB 474/AB
330, SB 475/AB 333, SB 476/AB 334

Chairman Wanggaard, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Nate Dreckman, and I am the Grant County Sheriff as well as the President of the Badger State Sheriffs' Association. Joining me today is Dodge County Sheriff, Dale Schmidt, who also serves as the 1st Vice President and Legislative Chair. Together with the Wisconsin Sheriffs and Deputy Sheriffs Association, our organizations represent all of Wisconsin's 72 Sheriffs and over 1,000 deputies and jail officers.

I had the opportunity to be appointed to the Task Force and on behalf of the county law enforcement community, we are grateful to Representatives Steineke and Stubbs for the opportunity to listen, contribute and find consensus on numerous critical policy items impacting law enforcement and the citizens we serve and protect. Our organizations are committed to finding and supporting policies that increase training, utilize best practices, and promote public safety transparency for all Wisconsin residents.

I want to highlight a few of the bills that the Speaker's Task Force has put forward with our support:

- SB 472/AB 329 (no-knock warrants): SB 427/AB 329 requires the Department of Justice to collect information about the use of no-knock warrants and unannounced entries by law enforcement in Wisconsin. This information, which will be reported annually, will help policymakers better understand how no-knock warrants are used in Wisconsin and if any changes need to be made to that process.
- SB 470/AB 331 – (psychological evaluation): Law enforcement is a difficult job that is not only physically taxing, but emotionally and psychologically challenging as well. SB 470/AB 331 will help ensure that law enforcement officers are of stable mental health when they are hired by requiring prospective officers to have a psychological evaluation. According to DOJ, nearly two-thirds of Wisconsin law enforcement agencies already require a psychological evaluation as a condition of employment. The Legislature has considered this policy in the past; a similar bill in 2009 had widespread legislative support but died at the end of session. This bill, as amended by the Assembly, follows best practice and streamlines paperwork.

- SB 473/AB 335 (body camera grants): While some law enforcement agencies in Wisconsin use body cameras, others are unable to afford them. Body cameras can help protect both citizens and law enforcement officers by documenting critical situations. SB 473/AB 335 will help more law enforcement agencies acquire body cameras by creating a grant program administered by DOJ. The bill requires agencies that receive a DOJ body camera grant to use and maintain the camera technology, ensuring that the grants are not wasted.

I also want to highlight two more bills from that package that deal with crisis management, an important and highly sensitive aspect of our jobs. Law enforcement officers are almost always the first to respond to urgent events where an individual is reported to be a danger to themselves or others. Our officers work hard to deal with these situations appropriately, but sometimes they result in tragic outcomes. Two bills from the package will help improve the outcome of crisis situations:

- SB 471/AB 332 (crisis training): Wisconsin law enforcement officers are required to complete 24 hours of recertification training every year. SB 471/AB 332 will make crisis management training a required part of that training. This will help law enforcement respond more effectively to crisis situations and will help officers stay up to date on best practices for dealing with individuals in crisis.
- SB 475/AB 333 (crisis program grants): SB 475/AB 333 expands an already-existing grant program that assists local governments in developing certified mental health crisis teams consisting of both trained law enforcement officers and crisis professionals. These teams will be able to respond more effectively to crisis situations involving mental health than law enforcement can do on its own.

Wisconsin's county law enforcement also supports SB 474/AB 330, which will provide specific standards and training for law enforcement officers working in schools, and SB 476/AB 334, which will ensure that officers involved in critical incidents are not compromised using alcohol or illegal drugs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and I am happy to answer any questions you might have.