

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 15-0233R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmembers Mosby, Henry, Middleton, Costello, Scott, Kraft, Stokes,
President Young, Councilmembers Welch, Reisinger, Spector, Branch, Clarke, Curran,
Holton

Introduced and read first time: June 1, 2015

Assigned to: Public Safety Committee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Police Department, Department of Finance

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Allocating Federal Criminal Seizure Funds for Police Van and Body Cameras**

3 FOR the purpose of calling on the Police Department and the Department of Finance to take steps
4 to immediately direct federal criminal seizure funds, or other quickly available funds,
5 towards accelerating the Baltimore City Police Department's deployment of cameras in all
6 police vans and body cameras for all appropriate officers.

7 **Recitals**

8 Recent events have driven home the importance of equipping as many Baltimore City police
9 officers and vans with cameras as quickly as possible. Yet, limited available funding for
10 cameras, training in their use, and the support infrastructure needed to allow them to be effective,
11 continues to be a barrier to full deployment of cameras for the police force.

12 Some funding for a body camera program is expected to be allocated locally in the near
13 future, and federal competitive grant programs may provide additional support at some point
14 down the road, but the City has not yet provided a plan to fund a full and immediate deployment
15 of a body camera program.

16 Federal criminal seizure money from joint actions between local and federal law enforcement
17 agencies could represent an important, and immediately available, source of funding to accelerate
18 the roll-out of body cameras and van cameras for the Police Department.

19 Unlike the proceeds of purely local criminal seizure actions, which are deposited in the City's
20 general fund and must be allocated through the normal budget process, money and other assets
21 seized in the course of a joint criminal investigation involving federal law enforcement agencies
22 must be handled and allocated in accordance with federal guidelines. These guidelines allocate
23 between twenty and eighty percent of the proceeds from criminal asset seizures to the local
24 partner, and require that the money be spent on law enforcement purposes.

25 Over the last 3 years, federal seizures resulting from joint investigations have been valued at
26 between \$6.6 million and \$8.4 million each year. This represents millions of unbudgeted dollars
27 that the City must use on law enforcement programs.

EXPLANATION: Underlining indicates matter added by amendment.
~~Strike out~~ indicates matter deleted by amendment.

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1 It would be difficult to envision many more important uses for extra law enforcement funding
2 right now than the rapid deployment of body and van cameras. This federal criminal seizure
3 money should be used to supplement other funds for Baltimore's police camera program and
4 move it forward as rapidly as possible with a priority being placed on immediately fully
5 equipping officers in higher crime areas with cameras.

6 Alternately, if the federal criminal seizure funds are inadequate to the task of immediately
7 deploying significant numbers of police cameras, all other funding options, including use of the
8 City's rainy day fund, should be explored. It is vitally important to stabilize police-community
9 relations as quickly as possible by getting these cameras onto the street to reassure all parties that
10 police actions are being fully and accurately recorded. All possible sources of funding for this
11 effort need to be on the table.

12 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the
13 Council calls on the Police Department and the Department of Finance to take steps to
14 immediately direct federal criminal seizure funds, or other quickly available funds, towards
15 accelerating the Baltimore City Police Department's deployment of cameras in all police vans
16 and body cameras for all appropriate officers.

17 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
18 Police Commissioner, the Finance Director, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City
19 Council.