



## Legislation Text

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INTRODUCTORY\*

CITY OF BALTIMORE  
COUNCIL BILL        R  
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Mosby

### A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning  
**Allocating Federal Criminal Seizure Funds for Police Van and Body Cameras**  
FOR the purpose of calling on the Police Department and the Department of Finance to take steps to immediately direct federal criminal seizure funds, or other quickly available funds, towards accelerating the Baltimore City Police Department's deployment of cameras in all police vans and body cameras for all appropriate officers.

### Recitals

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

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

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

Unlike the proceeds of purely local criminal seizure actions, which are deposited in the City's general fund and must be allocated through the normal budget process, money and other assets seized in the course of a joint criminal investigation involving federal law enforcement agencies must be handled and allocated in accordance with federal guidelines. These guidelines allocate between

twenty and eighty percent of the proceeds from criminal asset seizures to the local partner, and require that the money be spent on law enforcement purposes.

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

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

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

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

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

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ccres/SeizeCamera/tw

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