

January 28th, 2021

Members of the Joint Budget Committee
Legislative Service Building, 3rd Floor
200 East 14th Ave
Denver, CO 80203

Re: Increase Body-Worn Camera Grant Funding

Dear Members of the Joint Budget Committee:

We are writing to urge your support of the \$3 million request from the Department of Public Safety to increase funding for body-worn cameras. Colorado's local governments and law enforcement agencies support the use of body-worn cameras, but a clear path to funding is necessary. In addition to the cost of purchasing body cameras, funding is needed for storage and staff support to review and redact footage of minors, victims, nudity, etc.

The purchase of body-worn cameras and their associated data collection equipment requires an upfront, first-year investment that can range from \$60,000-\$2.5 Million¹. Arapahoe County, for example, estimates it will cost \$2.5 million to comply with Senate Bill 217's body-worn camera requirement.² In a recent survey of Colorado chiefs and sheriffs, 56 percent of respondents said they did not have sufficient funding to comply with SB 217's body-worn camera requirements. Law enforcement agencies believe in the use of body-worn cameras. The only thing that has prevented them from having them is the fiscal constraints on their respective cities and counties. This new requirement comes at a time when state, county, and cities budgets have taken a hit due to COVID. Some have suggested that grants could be used to pay for this unfunded state mandate. Given the importance of body-worn cameras and the role they play in improving policing outcomes, it would be irresponsible to rely on grants for the systemic changes Colorado is spearheading.

Passing this important funding is consistent with past state actions and Colorado law.

Colorado Revised Statutes and the Taxpayers Bill of Rights (TABOR) prohibit unfunded mandates, which provide:

¹ CCI and CML are still working to collect data that captures the statewide range, but this amount is based off current data collected from 21 counties and 34 cities.

²<https://sentinelcolorado.com/orecent-headlines/arapahoe-county-to-spend-2-5-million-to-comply-with-new-police-reform-bill/>

C.R.S. 29-1-304.5(1) No new state mandate or an increase in the level of service for an existing state mandate beyond the existing level of service required by law shall be mandated by the general assembly or any state agency on any local government unless the state provides additional moneys to reimburse such local government for the costs of such new state mandate or such increased level of service. See also Colo. Const. Art. X, Section 20(9).

These policy statements against unfunded mandates are designed to prevent onerous, uncontrollable expenditure increases on local governments and finite tax payer dollars. We urge the Joint Budget Committee to pass this necessary funding to help Colorado's local governments and law enforcement in complying with SB 20-217.

Thank you for your consideration,

Colorado Counties Inc.

Colorado Municipal League

Colorado Fraternal Order of Police

Colorado Police Protective Association

County Sheriffs of Colorado

Colorado Association of Chiefs of Police

Colorado District Attorneys' Council