

COUNTY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND
Legislative Session 2017, Legislative Day No.

Resolution No. 90-17

Councilmembers Crandell & Kach

By the County Council, October 2, 2017

A RESOLUTION of the Baltimore County Council requesting the General Assembly of Maryland to consider the adoption of guidelines to govern the right of public access to body-worn camera video records.

WHEREAS, Baltimore County has adopted a program to equip Baltimore County Police Department officers with body-worn cameras and has adopted a body-worn camera use policy for its officers; and

WHEREAS, the purposes of this important law enforcement tool are to improve public safety, enhance transparency, accountability and trust, reduce complaints against officers, and make prosecutors more efficient and effective; and

WHEREAS, body-camera video is a public record, subject to release under the Maryland Public Information Act, absent any mandated redaction or exception outlined in the Act; and

WHEREAS, the greatest proponent of the movement toward the use of body-worn cameras on the street has been the desire for transparency, which goes hand-in-hand with the accountability of police departments; and

WHEREAS, while transparency is of utmost importance, there are situations and locations in which the expectation of privacy must be protected and a careful balance struck between public

transparency, as it relates to policing practices, and the safeguarding of personal privacy protections for victims and innocent third parties; and

WHEREAS, the County Council believes that some minimal statewide guidance should be provided for all law enforcement agencies in order to balance these important public interests; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, by the County Council of Baltimore County, Maryland, that the Maryland General Assembly is requested to consider the adoption of statewide legislation that will carefully regulate the manner and circumstances under which public access to body-camera video is allowed without trampling upon the overarching goal of transparency in police/community relations.