

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD
Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 84TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

April 8, 2015

TO: Honorable Allen Fletcher, Chair, House Committee on Emerging Issues In Texas Law Enforcement, Select

FROM: Ursula Parks, Director, Legislative Budget Board

IN RE: HB474 by Reynolds (Relating to requiring certain law enforcement officers to wear body worn cameras.), **As Introduced**

Based on the unavailability of data, the costs of equipping all the approximately 54,000 eligible law enforcement officers with body cameras and providing law enforcement agencies with associated data storage capacity cannot be determined. However, it is presumed the statewide costs in providing funding for body cameras and data storage capacity would likely be significant.

This bill would amend the Government Code to require all law enforcement agencies to equip their commissioned law enforcement officers with body cameras, if those police officers regularly stop or detain motor vehicles or respond to calls for assistance from the public. According to the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE), there are 76,157 licensed law enforcement officers in Texas. Although it is difficult to determine how many of these 76,157 law enforcement officers meet the standard of the bill (i.e., are engaged in patrolling or directly assisting the public), TCOLE has estimated approximately 54,000, or about 71 percent, might meet this standard.

In the event a law enforcement agency is not able to equip all its officers with worn body cameras due to financial hardship, the bill would require the law enforcement agency to submit a report to the Department of Public Safety declaring financial hardship and providing the number of worn body cameras currently in use by the agency, as well as the number of additional worn body cameras required to comply with the bill.

Currently, due to the unavailability of data, the cost of funding body cameras and associated data storage requirements among those law enforcement agencies that currently have not implemented any transition to using body cameras is unknown. Also unknown is the degree to which local and state law enforcement agencies are already in the process of implementing a shift toward fielding their law enforcement officers with body cameras. In addition, among those law enforcement agencies who are currently equipping their law enforcement officers with body cameras, it is unknown what sort of equipment is being used, and what sort of data storage arrangements have been negotiated with providers, or the costs of such products.

Based on the unavailability of data, the cost to equip all the approximately 54,000 eligible law enforcement officers with body cameras and associated data storage cannot be determined. However, it is presumed the statewide costs would likely be significant.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2015.

Local Government Impact

The bill would require a law enforcement agency to equip their commissioned law enforcement officers with body cameras, if those police officers regularly stop or detain motor vehicles or respond to calls for assistance from the public. According to the Texas Municipal League (TML), the cities of San Antonio, Houston, Lubbock, Denton, Sugar land, El Paso, Corpus Christi, Forth Worth, Tyler, New Boston, Diboll, and Ganado reported that they have some body worn cameras in use.

Currently, local police departments fund body worn cameras through a variety of sources, including grants from the county's District Attorney's office, the city's general fund, and police seizure accounts. Currently, Houston, Lubbock, El Paso, Corpus Christi fund body worn cameras, either in whole or in part, by using grants or loans from the county's District Attorney's office.

Cost for cameras can vary greatly. A body worn camera can vary from \$200 to \$7,000, depending on the quality of the camera, network capabilities, data storage, quantity purchased, and maintenance agreement. According to TML, the City of Houston purchased 100 body worn cameras for approximately \$1,300 per device and estimates a total cost of \$6,649,648 to outfit the full department. The City of Lubbock purchased 70 body worn cameras for approximately \$59,000, not including data storage. The City of Denton reported that costs for 80 body worn cameras, including hardware, software, data storage, and maintenance, was \$98,905 for the first year and \$76,080 for the second and third year. The City of Corpus Christi currently has 78 body worn cameras at a cost of \$899 per unit, not including data storage. The department would require additional cameras to fully outfit its 250 uniformed officers. The City of Tyler has fully equipped all uniformed officers with 160 body cameras at cost of \$399 per unit. The department currently stores data using existing resources, however, the department anticipates needing an additional \$30,000 worth of storage.

According to the Texas Association of Counties (TAC), Tom Green County Sheriff's Office estimates a cost of \$45,000 to outfit its 65 officers; data storage would cost approximately \$20,000. The Randall County Sheriff's department anticipates \$18,000 for 30 body worn cameras; \$52,000 for hardware, software, and startup costs; \$12,000 for training costs; and \$1,000 for policy development and implementation for a total cost of \$2,766.66 per deputy. Harris County estimates a cost of \$3.3 million to outfit the department. Bexar County estimates \$1,073,600 in start-up costs for cameras, warranties, and shipping, and between \$323,280 and \$1,290,960 per year for data storage depending on usage. Additionally, Bexar County anticipates replacing the cameras every three years to maintain the warranty.

TAC anticipates a significant impact to counties due to ancillary costs not covered under the grant. Officers would have to properly tag, store, review, and edit the videos for court presentations, expunction orders, and release under the Public Information Act. Thus, departments may incur significant training or hiring costs. There may also be cost to local courts and attorneys as each video would need to be reviewed and courts would require the technical ability to review and play video.

Source Agencies: 405 Department of Public Safety

LBB Staff: UP, ESi, AI, JAW, KJo, KVe