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In Aftermath of Video Depicting Excessive Police Force, Public Defender Calls for the Implementation of Body Worn Cameras by Ocean City Police

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[In a letter to Ocean City Mayor Rick Meehan and Chief of Police Ross C. Buzzuro](#), District Public Defender Chasity Simpson calls for the immediate implementation of a body-worn camera (BWC) policy by the Ocean City Police Department.

Last week, officers violently arrested four teenagers for vaping on the boardwalk. Since then, video of their arrests have sparked outrage, including footage of an eighteen-year-old being tased while holding his hands up and a nineteen-year-old being kned in the side while restrained by the police. In her letter, Simpson stressed that police use of excessive force is common on the Eastern Shore.

“The video of Ocean City police tasing, kneeling, and restraining Black youth for purportedly violating a smoking ordinance is disturbing, but sadly not isolated. My office regularly represents individuals who are stopped for a minor violation that escalates due to police conduct. What is unique about this interaction is that a private citizen was brave enough to record the mistreatment and to publicize the video.” Simpson wrote. “Oversight and accountability of police conduct should not require recordings by private citizens.”

The Maryland Legislature recently passed Senate Bill 71, which will require all Maryland law enforcement entities to mandate body worn cameras and implement a policy regarding their use by July 2025. In her letter, Simpson noted that Ocean City should adopt this measure more urgently. In addition to holding police accountable for cases of excessive violence, Simpson argued that BWCs could improve police relations with community members and tourists that were damaged by the recent viral videos.

“Now is the time for decisive action, not just to address what happened last week, but to bring our police department up to the quality and standards of national best practices,” Simpson wrote. “Body worn cameras have become standard-issue equipment in law enforcement agencies across Maryland and the country. BWCs serve a valuable role, not just in promoting transparency and accountability, but in recording evidence, promoting professionalism, and documenting officer performance and interactions with the public.”

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