

Sheila Officer
6400 Scottsville
Wichita, KS 67219
316-371-0013
scofficer@prodigy.net

Support of Senate Bill 18- Body Cam Bill

"Police & Citizens Protection Act"

Cameras alone cannot fix the twin problems of **police accountability and the excessive use of force!**

The fact that police already have "dash cams" which serves as additional eye witnesses still presents uncertain documentation and questions of evidence and integrity. Remember Rodney King? VIDEO of police brutality at its' worse, shown to the world, yet ineffective for a conviction. **BUT**, Body Worn Cams (BWCs) has its advantages, and is being used in law enforcement departments across the country!

My name is Sheila Officer. I am an active registered voter of Kansas, mother of one son and 8 grandsons. I am also the Chair of the Racial Profiling Citizens Advisory Board of Wichita.

I support SENATE BILL 18 and ask you to support and pass the Police & Citizens Protection Act.

While there is no clear cut answer or tool to assure black and brown mothers that their sons will not be victims of excessive force or engage in a fatal encounter with law enforcement; the implementation of BWCs will help lessen that probability and inject some sense of oversight and control of officer's behavior.

The failure of police departments to effectively address officer's misconduct has resulted in the loss of lives, low level of citizen's trust and confidence in law enforcement, and in some cases, have led to costly payments at taxpayer's expense!

I firmly believe that BWCs has several benefits and **SHOULD** be implemented in all law enforcement departments in Kansas. Some benefits of BWCs are:

- 1) Visual documentation of officer's and citizen's activities.
- 2) Reinforcement of policies which will increase officer's professionalism.
- 3) Video can be used for officer's training.
- 4) Reduce Use of Force incidents
- 5) Help promote supervisor's accountability.

Sheila Officer
6400 Scottsville
Wichita, KS 67219
316-371-0013
scofficer@prodigy.net

- 6) BWCs may provide an extra boost to the low level of trust between citizens and the police.

While it is not part of the reality for White America, it is a daily reality for Black and Brown America that we are the victims of excessive force and unconstitutional policing.

From black and brown neighborhoods in Missouri, to Ohio, New York, California, to Kansas, excessive force, police brutality and police unaccountability rings loud and clear. Just within the last five years, the Wichita Police Department has fatally shot and killed several members of our community. Would body cams have helped these individuals? Would the police have used other options instead of shooting first? Especially, if they knew they were on active video? We will never know since BWCs were not used.

The U.S. Department of Justice recently presented a report of three cities studied after implementation of the BWCs. These cities are Mesa, Arizona, Rialto, California, and Phoenix, Arizona. Studies showed that departments experienced lower citizens' complaints and use of force events by 59% and 87.5 % respectively .The report entitled "Police Officers Body Worn Cameras- Assessing the Evidence.

This presents proof that BWCs does have an effect on officer's conduct. This is NOT a quick fix. But, with the help of legislators passing laws that govern BWCs and the implementation of STRONG, enforceable, department policies it can be a GREAT start.

I thank you for your time and attention and **I personally thank our Representatives for seeing the need, standing for justice and humanity and taking the action needed to protect the civil liberties of all!**

Should you have any questions concerning this correspondence, please feel free to contact me.

Respectfully,

Sheila Officer-

Racial Profiling Citizens Advisory Board Chair

1/27/2015