

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2015

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HOUSE BILL 537

Short Title: Protect Law Enforcement & Comm. Relationships. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Hanes, Alexander, Jeter, and Saine (Primary Sponsors).  
*For a complete list of Sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly Web Site.*

Referred to: Appropriations.

April 6, 2015

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO REQUIRE MOST LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS TO WEAR AND  
3 ACTIVATE BODY-WORN CAMERAS DURING CERTAIN INTERACTIONS WITH  
4 THE PUBLIC.

5 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

6 **SECTION 1.** Chapter 15A of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new  
7 Article to read:

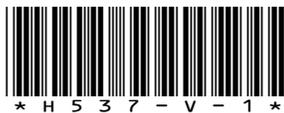
8 "Article 7.

9 "Body-Worn Cameras.

10 "**§ 15A-201. Definitions.**

11 The following definitions apply in this Article:

- 12 (1) Body-worn camera. – An operational video camera provided by a law  
13 enforcement agency and affixed to a law enforcement officer's uniform and  
14 positioned in a way that allows the video camera to capture interactions the  
15 law enforcement officer has with the public. The video camera shall include  
16 a microphone or other mechanism for allowing audio capture. This term  
17 does not include cameras privately owned and provided by a law  
18 enforcement officer.
- 19 (2) Recordable interaction. – An interaction between a law enforcement officer,  
20 in his or her official capacity, and a member or members of the public,  
21 including an inmate or inmates of a State correctional facility. This term  
22 includes traffic stops; arrests; searches; interrogations not covered under  
23 G.S. 15A-211; interviews with victims and witnesses; and pursuits.
- 24 (3) Law enforcement agency. – Any duly accredited State or local government  
25 agency possessing authority to enforce the criminal laws of the State. For  
26 purposes of this Article, this term does not include local law enforcement  
27 agencies located in a county with a population of less than 200,000, as  
28 determined by the most recent decennial federal census.
- 29 (4) Law enforcement officer. – Any employee of a law enforcement agency who  
30 (i) is actively serving in a position with primary duties and responsibilities  
31 for the prevention and detection of crime or the general enforcement of the  
32 criminal laws of the State, (ii) possesses the power of arrest by virtue of an  
33 oath administered under the authority of the State, and (iii) is primarily  
34 assigned to patrol duties. For purposes of this Article, this term also includes  
35 on-duty State correctional officers.



1           (5) Recording. – A visual and audio recording captured by a body-worn camera.

2 **"§ 15A-202. Body-worn cameras required for law enforcement officers.**

3           (a) Requirement. – Except as otherwise provided in subsection (b) of this section, a law  
4 enforcement officer shall wear and activate a body-worn camera during any recordable  
5 interaction.

6           (b) Exceptions. – A law enforcement officer shall not be required to activate a  
7 body-worn camera in any of the following places or situations:

8               (1) Interactions with confidential informants and undercover officers.

9               (2) During routine, nonlaw enforcement related activities, including when a law  
10 enforcement officer is engaged in a personal conversation, when a law  
11 enforcement officer is using a rest room or bathroom, or when a law  
12 enforcement officer is dressing or undressing in a locker room or dressing  
13 room.

14               (3) When a law enforcement officer is providing training or making a  
15 presentation to the public.

16           (c) Evidence. – If otherwise admissible, a recording captured by a body-worn camera  
17 pursuant to this section may be used as evidence in any relevant administrative, civil, or  
18 criminal proceeding.

19           (d) Retention. – A law enforcement agency shall retain an original, unredacted  
20 recording captured by a body-worn camera pursuant to this section for a reasonable period of  
21 time as determined by the law enforcement agency.

22           (e) Malfunction. – A law enforcement officer or law enforcement agency shall not be  
23 considered to have failed to comply under subsections (a) or (d) of this section if (i) the  
24 body-worn camera did not activate or record due to a malfunction and (ii) within 24 hours of  
25 learning that the body-worn camera did not activate or record due to a malfunction, the law  
26 enforcement officer, or a supervisor of the law enforcement officer, completes a written report  
27 detailing the nature of the malfunction. The report must be signed and dated by both the law  
28 enforcement officer and a supervisor of the law enforcement officer.

29           (f) Remedies for Noncompliance. – Failure to comply with subsections (a) or (d) of this  
30 section shall be admissible as evidence to support claims made by a defendant in a criminal  
31 action or a party opposing the law enforcement officer or law enforcement agency in a civil  
32 action.

33           (g) Training. – A law enforcement agency shall provide training to a law enforcement  
34 officer on how to operate a body-worn camera prior to the law enforcement officer wearing and  
35 activating a body-worn camera."

36           **SECTION 2.(a)** Grant Program. – Notwithstanding G.S. 143C-5-2, there is  
37 appropriated from the General Fund to the Governor's Crime Commission within the  
38 Department of Public Safety the sum of five million dollars (\$5,000,000) in nonrecurring funds  
39 for the 2015-2016 fiscal year and the sum of five million dollars (\$5,000,000) in nonrecurring  
40 funds for the 2016-2017 fiscal year to provide grants to the following law enforcement agencies  
41 in priority order:

42               (1) Law enforcement agencies subject to the requirement in Section 1 of this act  
43 for the purpose of purchasing body-worn cameras.

44               (2) Law enforcement agencies not subject to the requirement in Section 1 of this  
45 act for the purpose of purchasing body-worn cameras.

46               (3) Law enforcement agencies subject to the requirement in Section 1 of this act  
47 for the purpose of paying expenses related to the retention and storage of  
48 recordings captured by body-worn cameras.

49               (4) Law enforcement agencies not subject to the requirement in Section 1 of this  
50 act for the purpose of paying expenses related to the retention and storage of  
51 recordings captured by body-worn cameras.

1           **SECTION 2.(b)** Match Required. – A grant provided pursuant to this section shall  
2 be matched on the basis of one dollar (\$1.00) in grant funds for every five dollars (\$5.00) in  
3 nongrant funds. Matching funds shall not include other State funds. The Governor's Crime  
4 Commission shall not provide a grant under this section until the grantee provides evidence  
5 satisfactory to the Commission that the grantee has sufficient nongrant funds to match.

6           **SECTION 2.(c)** Maximum Amount. – A grant provided under this section shall not  
7 exceed one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000).

8           **SECTION 2.(d)** Guidelines. – The Governor's Crime Commission shall develop  
9 guidelines and procedures for the administration and distribution of grants under this section.

10          **SECTION 3.** Section 1 of this act becomes effective January 1, 2016, for members  
11 and officers of the State Highway Patrol and county law enforcement officers. Section 1 of this  
12 act becomes effective January 1, 2017, for the remaining law enforcement officers subject to  
13 this act. Section 2 of this act becomes effective July 1, 2015.