

TRENNA L. MANNERS
DEPUTY STATE'S ATTORNEY

DAVID W. RYDEN
DEPUTY STATE'S ATTORNEY



AARON M. BURKINDINE
CHIEF OF OPERATIONS

CAYLIN M. RYDEN
CHIEF OF ADMINISTRATION

ALISON M. HEALEY
STATE'S ATTORNEY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: July 12, 2023

Re: Harford County State's Attorney Establishes Body Worn Camera Unit

In 2021, legislation was passed through the Maryland Police Accountability Act, requiring all law enforcement officers in the State to wear and use Body Worn Camera devices to record their interactions while on duty. This legislation was designed to ensure accurate depictions of police encounters. The law was an unfunded mandate and placed an immense burden on the State's Attorney's Offices throughout Maryland. In just 2022 alone, the Office of the State's Attorney for Harford County received nearly 12,000 hours of body worn camera footage. The footage from these body worn camera devices is evidence in all criminal and traffic cases, with the law requiring that the State's Attorney's Office watch and shield the footage to protect the privacy of the citizens being recorded. Failure to shield the footage prior to sending it to defense counsel through a requirement known as discovery, is a violation of the law and puts citizens and law enforcement officers at risk.

Prior to January 3, 2023, when Alison M. Healey was sworn in as Harford County State's Attorney, the Office of the State's Attorney for Harford County was not in compliance with the laws pertaining to Body Worn Camera footage, as unviewed, unshielded footage was regularly being disseminated. Over the last several months, Ms. Healey and her team have worked diligently to make immediate policy changes to ensure compliance with the law and the protection of our citizens' privacy rights. Her team has worked countless hours viewing and shielding Body Worn Camera footage, often on nights and weekends, in addition to their already full-time assigned duties. Nearly every other county across the State had developed Body Worn Camera Units in their State's Attorney's Offices prior to 2023. It was clear that continuing to shoulder this immense burden without additional staff was unsustainable.

Ms. Healey made it an immediate priority to form Harford County's first Body Worn Camera Unit and on July 5, 2023, the unit, consisting of six body worn camera technicians and one unit supervisor, reported for duty. Each of the six technicians will view, shield and send all of the body worn camera footage in criminal and traffic cases, viewing a minimum of 2000 minutes per week. The unit will ensure that everyone's privacy rights are protected and that Harford County remains in compliance with the law. With additional law enforcement officers joining law enforcement agencies each year, it is expected that the amount of footage will only continue to grow.

Ms. Healey thanks her entire staff for their commitment and diligence over the last six months and stated that "it could not be more apparent how committed each and every one of our employees is to our mission, and the last six months has truly shown me how fortunate Harford County is to have such a dedicated team pursuing justice for all our citizens." Ms. Healey also welcomes the new members of the Body Worn Camera Unit and looks forward to continuing to grow and shape the unit for the benefit of everyone that calls Harford County home.

OFFICE OF THE STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR HARFORD COUNTY

410-638-3500 | FAX 410-838-2023 | WWW.HARFORDCOUNTYSTATESATTORNEY.ORG

20 W. COURTLAND STREET, BEL AIR, MARYLAND 21014