



March 31, 2015

Todd Maxwell  
Bureau of Justice Assistance  
Office of Justice Programs  
U.S. Department of Justice  
Washington, DC 20531

[Todd.Maxwell@usdoj.gov](mailto:Todd.Maxwell@usdoj.gov)  
via Electronic Mail

Dear Mr. Maxwell,

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition charged by its diverse membership of more than 200 national organizations to promote and protect the civil and human rights of all persons in the United States, we are pleased to submit “relevant policies, resources . . . and other materials” for inclusion in the upcoming web-based Body Worn Camera Toolkit, as Denise O’Donnell requested in her letter of March 10. The Leadership Conference provides a powerful unified voice for the various constituencies of the coalition: persons of color, women, children, individuals with disabilities, gays and lesbians, older Americans, labor unions, major religious groups, civil libertarians, and human rights organizations.

The Leadership Conference believes the development of this toolkit is an important step in ensuring that our communities are safe and secure. There is a critical need to reform current police practices and develop comprehensive measures to improve law enforcement accountability<sup>1</sup>; provide clear directives for those entities receiving federal dollar; and provide defined goals for implementation of best practices and policies.

We are enclosing two documents that offer practical guidance to help agencies implement their body-worn camera programs in ways that are positive for civil rights:

**1) Proposed policies on body-worn cameras**, which The Leadership Conference earlier provided to the President’s Task Force on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing. Our recommendations highlight key points of consensus among the civil rights community, law enforcement executives, and scholars studying these cameras, including the importance of community input into the policymaking process; the need for policies governing body-worn cameras and key indicators about their use to be public, ideally online; and the vital importance of an incremental, pilot-first

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approach to this very promising but not fully proven technology.

- 2) **A Working Paper on body-worn cameras from the Data & Society Research Institute**, which provides an accessible and thorough overview of early field experiences with the cameras, as well as providing significant historical context for how these cameras relate to earlier innovations in policing technology.

We hope these materials are useful in the development of the toolkit and we would be more than happy to follow up with you or collaborate in any way you judge helpful. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Sakira Cook, Counsel, at [cook@civilrights.org](mailto:cook@civilrights.org) or 202-263-2894.

Sincerely,



Wade Henderson  
President & CEO



Nancy Zirkin  
Executive Vice President

Enclosures

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<sup>i</sup> COPS Office, *Listening Session: Technology and Social Media*, <http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/Default.asp?Item=2768> (last visited Jan. 25, 2015).