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State House Showdown on Police Accountability, Thursday, 10am

Public Safety Committee holding hearings on proposed police bodycams mandate

Cambridge, MA, February 2, 2016: Since August 2014, videos of police abuses have shocked the conscience of the nation, giving rise to the “Black Lives Matter” movement. During 2015, over 1,100 Americans were shot by police. Even here in Massachusetts, police shoot residents at a rate *sixteen times* that of Germany’s. Something needs to change.

We devised a bill, filed by Sen. Jamie Eldridge and Rep. Denise Provost and sponsored by Sen. William Brownsberger, Senate Chair of the Judiciary Committee, that would be the second state law in the nation to mandate police body cameras (after South Carolina). It would also establish, for the first time, a blue-ribbon state commission to gather and review police data from pedestrian stops, traffic stops, body-worn cameras and mass surveillance technologies, to ensure that the new fashion of “data-driven policing” is being conducted fairly and constitutionally.

The Massachusetts legislature’s Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security has just announced a public hearing on police accountability bills, including ours, in room B-1 at the State House, starting at 10am. We’re putting a panel together to speak on why the bill is needed, including Shelia Scott of the Boston Police Camera Action Team and Sam Tracy of the Cambridge Human Rights Commission. Given the importance of this issue to your readers, we hope that you’ll be able to cover the hearing.

Resources:

Our bodycams mandate bill: <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/189/Senate/S1257>

Hearing announcement:

<https://malegislature.gov/Events/EventDetail?eventId=2363&eventDataSource=Hearings>

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