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## **Lights, (Body) Camera, Action!: Reviewing Empirical Research on Body-Worn Cameras**

Richard Glynn

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**Lights, (Body) Camera, Action!:**  
**Reviewing Empirical Research on Body-Worn Cameras**

Richard Glynn

CRM:6810: Capstone Seminar

Professor Stacie St.Louis

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**Abstract:**

There has been an ongoing uproar for police accountability in America throughout history. Tensions between citizens and police have worsened over the last few years. Many citizens have pushed to reform the police through the use of body-worn cameras. Departments began to implement body-worn cameras on their officers to document their day to day encounters. After discussing the policing profession and steps to become a police officer, this paper examines empirical research that shows the different impacts body-worn cameras have made. Studies suggest there are significant benefits to using body cameras, including less complaints against officers and less cases of use of force.

**Part One: Career Aspiration**

Recently I applied for a position with the Carlisle Police Department in Carlisle, Massachusetts. The Carlisle Police Department is a relatively small department with currently only 10 full time officers. The department is led by Chief John C. Fisher. Chief Fisher is accompanied by 1 lieutenant, 3 sergeants, 4 patrol officers, and 1 detective. The mission statement listed on their website states that, “The mission of the Carlisle Police Department is to work with the community to eliminate crime, and improve the quality of life in the Town of Carlisle. The Carlisle Police Department strives to provide fair and courteous services designed to promote public safety, protect individual rights and be responsive to the needs of the community in a manner that stresses the highest values of excellence, dignity and professionalism.” (Carlisle Police Department, 2022). The mission statement shows that members of the department are required to police without any biases and do so in the most professional manner possible. The mission statement also shows the department will work with

members of the community to help them in any aspect possible to better the public's day to day life.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

There are many duties an officer is responsible for. Police Officers must respond to 9-1-1 calls, patrol areas, conduct investigations, gather evidence, and issue citations (Job Descriptions, 2016). There are several programs listed on the department's website that officers partake in. One program is the Child Passenger Safety Program. These officers inspect and install children's seats to ensure their safety at all times. Another program is the Restorative Justice Program. This is an effective alternative to deal with incidents in the community. They work with offenders so that they understand the impact their act had on the community and accept responsibility for those actions. Another program listed on the website is the RUOK (Are you okay?) Program. This program is a reassurance program where a phone call is made every day at a designated time. If the call is not answered, an officer will respond to make sure that person is okay. This can be a lifesaving program for someone who doesn't have daily interactions with anyone else. The last program listed is the Traffic/Safety Program. This program helps address motor vehicle and pedestrian safety issues. This is accomplished by law enforcement and educating the public on general law enforcement and safety issues. In the town of Carlisle, firearm licensing is handled by one of the Sergeants. They do a thorough background check on community members seeking their gun license to make sure they are fit to have their license. They use data from the Massachusetts State Police and Massachusetts Department of Mental Health. The department also has listed information on their website to help prevent crime against senior citizens and to help prevent sexual assault/rape. (Town of Carlisle, 2022).

## **Hiring Process**

The minimum qualifications for the position of police officer in the town of Carlisle are also listed on the Indeed website. In order to be eligible for this position, candidates must be a United States citizen and must be at least 21 years of age. Candidates must either have completed a Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, have a full time certification as a Massachusetts police officer, or have military service with an honorable discharge.

The hiring process for the position I applied for was listed on Indeed but towns use different websites including, "The Police App." . In order to apply I had to update my resume and cover letter and upload them to the Indeed app. The first step in the hiring process is a physical abilities test. It is important for all participants to prepare themselves to be in the best physical shape possible for this part of the process. This test consists of four different physical activities. Failure to complete any of the four activities will result in disqualification for the applicant. The first is a timed 1.5-mile run. The age and gender of each participant impacts the minimum passing score. For a male 21-29, the run must be finished in 12:53. For a male 31-39, it must be finished in 13:24. For a male, 40-49 it must be finished in 14:07. The next event is sit ups. For male participants 21-29, they must complete 37 sit-ups in under a minute. Participants aged 31-39 must complete 33 sit-ups and participants 40-49 must complete 28 sit-ups. The next event is push-ups. Male participants 21-29 must complete 27 push-ups in under a minute. Male participants 31-39 must complete 21 push-ups and male participants 40-49 must complete 16 push-ups. The final part of the test is a 300 meter run which is essentially one lap around the track. This is also timed and must be completed in under 59 seconds for participants 21-39 and completed in 72 seconds for participants 40-49. The physical abilities test minimum requirements vary by town/department but are very similar qualifications. If a participant

completes all four of the events they then move on to the next part of the process. Typically, half of the participants fail the first part of the process because they do not show up in good enough physical condition.

The next step in the hiring process is a written exam. The written exam tests applicants on several groups of skills. This includes math that will test applicant's basic arithmetic skills. Using a multiple-choice style test, applicants will answer questions without a calculator that tests their knowledge of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division (Go Law Enforcement, 2022). The exam will also test applicants on their reading comprehension and their language skills. These questions measure the applicant's level of grammar and vocabulary (2022). Applicants will also be tested on their memorization and observation skills. Applicants study pictures and drawings and answer questions related to them from memory. The better you score on the written exam the higher your chances at being selected to continue through the hiring process.

If an applicant is considered to be a finalist for the open position, then they will be selected for an interview with members of the department. I had an interview in October with the Burlington Police Department, so I am familiar with this part of the hiring process as well. The interview lasts about 30-40 minutes and members of the department ask various different police related questions. Some questions are scenario based and others are personal opinions. One example of a question that I was asked was, "What would you do if you were at a co-workers party and witnessed their underaged kids consuming alcohol?" Another question that I was asked was, "Do you believe diversity in a workplace is important?" After the interview is over with all candidates they decide which applicant the department would like to hire. A thorough background check is administered as well. Applicants have to provide contacts of friends and

family for the department to contact for follow up interviews. The department will look at the applicants' complete history and decide if they are a good fit for their department. An officer will be assigned to interview friends and family members. Applicants will also have to complete a medical examination that checks up on their overall physical well being and also a psych evaluation that checks their mental well being.

Before becoming a certified police officer in the state of Massachusetts, applicants have to complete the police academy. This academy is a 20-week program that teaches student officers 21st century policing practices. The academy has an emphasis on four core principles. The principles are problem solving, procedural justice, ethical decision making, and fair/impartial policing. (Mass Gov, 2022). There are minimum requirements/qualifications for the academy as well and they are similar to police departments' hiring requirements. Student officers must be 21 years old, be sponsored by a municipal, environmental, or University of Massachusetts police department, and successfully complete both a physical ability test and medical examinations. The requirements for these exams are virtually the same as listed above. The tuition for the academy is \$3,000. Typically the department that sent you to the academy will sponsor you so the money does not come out of your pocket. The academy is 20 weeks long and they operate Monday through Friday. (Mass Gov, 2022).

### **Career Prospects**

According to a 2015 survey, the average police salary was \$61,270 (2016). The starting salary listed on Indeed for the Carlisle Police Department ranges from \$60,174-89,372 depending on education and years of experience. The Quinn Bill is a bill that passed that incentives level of education for police officers in Massachusetts. Officers with an Associate's Degree get a 10% raise in pay, officers with a Bachelor's Degree get a 20% raise in pay, and

officers with a Master's Degree get a 25% raise in pay (OSFA, 2022). On top of the salary offered, the department also offers several benefits as well. The benefits listed on the Indeed website say dental insurance, health insurance and paid time off are offered by the department (Indeed, 2022). Officers become eligible for promotion to sergeant after five years of service and completed an examination. (Smyth, 2021). Similarly, to be promoted to lieutenant, more years of experience is required as well as an examination and an interview. The promotion from there to captain depends on several different factors. Some departments require an advanced degree just to be eligible as well as years of experience and performance record. The position of Deputy Chief typically requires a leadership specific master's degree (Smyth, 2021).

### **Personal Skills**

I think I have obtained skills and knowledge that make me a great candidate for the position of police officer. I know I can pass all the physical requirements because I have done them all before and passed with relative ease. I also know how to prepare myself for the written exam as well. I have a booklet with test prep questions to help me do as well as possible so that I can impress my future employers. I also believe my level of education could be what helps my resume the most. The majority of candidates most likely will not have their Master's Degree like I will and the information I've learned in college will help me throughout my entire career. Class material has prepared me with valuable information that I can use to help be the best officer I can possibly be. Similarly, the knowledge I have gained as a result of research conducted can be a valuable asset in assessing future developments in my future department.

### **Part 2: Current Developments and Policy Issues**



Throughout the history of this country, controversy has surrounded the police for a number of different reasons. Summer 2020 was a prime example of that when George Floyd was murdered by a Minneapolis Police Officer named Derek Chauvin. Protests in the immediate aftermath had a drastic impact on favorability towards the police (Reny, 2021). The protests increased unfavorability towards the police by 27% (Reny, 2021). There has been an ongoing uproar for police accountability even before this event took place. One in every 1000 black men in America can expect to be killed by police. A young black man is more likely to be killed by police than die from cancer (Cobbina-Dungy, 2021). Similar events to the George Floyd murder in the past have led us to the debate of police reform. Different political parties began to debate whether situations like this were examples of an individual bad apple or a rotten system as a whole. President Trump's National Security Advisor said, "I think 99.9 percent of our law enforcement officers are great Americans. There are some bad apples in there. And there are some bad cops that are racist. And there are cops that maybe don't have the right training. And there are some that are just bad cops. And they need to be rooted out, because there's a few bad apples that are giving law enforcement a terrible name." The argument here is that the system is not inherently racist or biased but instead there are a miniscule number of police officers that tarnish the reputation of everyone else (Viala-Gaudefroy, 2020).

With tension between the police and the community there have been several new issues and developments in the criminal justice field. One example of reform that has begun to be implemented is the use of body-worn cameras. Another issue in the field being discussed in the field is implicit biases in policing. Finally, with increased public scrutiny, there have been challenges in recruitment in the field. Body-worn cameras are being used by police departments around the world at an increasingly rapid pace (Lippert, 2016).

## **Implicit Bias**

Implicit bias in policing is problematic because it allows for group based stereotypes to be the reasoning behind decision making. In doing so, implicit bias can usually results in discriminatory outcomes (Spencer, 2016). It is assumed that when officers show implicit biases they are not trying to intentionally be discriminatory towards anyone. An example of implicit bias is shown when a police officer stops an African American man wearing a hoodie at night and begins questioning the individual. Implicit biases impact an officer's judgments and behaviors. This is amplified in situations where it is not readily apparent what another person is going to do (2016). In situations where a police officer is a highly stressful moment in time, cognitive resources are limited. Because of this, a person will use mental shortcuts to help process a situation. Officers are often put in situations where they do not know how an individual will act and respond accordingly. Stereotypes linking African Americans to aggression have shown to cause people to assume an African American is more likely to act aggressively than a White person (2016).

There are potential avenues that help fix implicit biases. Departments often partake in training programs that are aimed to help officers reduce unintentional biases. Intergroup contact is a suggestion that can help alleviate some of the problems. Intergroup contact can help change inaccurate perceptions of a group by social contact (2016). Stereotype negation training is also a tool used to help with implicit bias. Saying "no" to things consistent with stereotypes and "yes" to things inconsistent with stereotypes helps with reducing activation of stereotypes during tasks (2016). Common themes used by departments to help eliminate implicit biases include banning racial profiling, training officers, using data to enhance technology, and also reducing discretion (2016).

## **Challenges in Recruitment**

In recent years, there has been a lack of support and favorability towards police officers and departments as a whole. As a result of this, decreasing financial support has hurt departments ability to offer competitive salaries and benefits (Wilson, 2011). With public scrutiny and lack of resources available, the profession has become less admirable for someone looking to start a career. Half of agencies reported there were staffing issues because of a lack of qualified candidates. 25% of the workforce in the field are 55 or older because the number of qualified applicants looking to join the field do not match the number of people looking to retire (Wilson, 2011). It is also believed that generational differences have played a role in the lack of recruitment. The emphasis on maintaining a certain appearance, no beards or tattoos, could potentially deter someone from entering this profession (Wilson, 2011). Recently, the Civil Service list for municipalities in Massachusetts changed their eligibility list from one year to two years. Meaning, those who took the Civil Service Exam do not have to take it every year to remain on the eligibility list.

Changes in recruitment are inevitable if police departments want to fix the current problems in recruiting. Some potential solutions could first be to campaign for more funding for your specific department. With more funding comes higher salaries that could be appealing to a qualified candidate. Police departments may become more relaxed when it comes to things like allowing tattoos, piercings, or facial hair. This change in formality could potentially keep qualified candidates from choosing different professions. Easing tensions with the general public could potentially help recruiting issues as well. Finding new qualified candidates is important in the criminal justice system and we should make efforts to make the profession more appealing to people looking to join the workforce.

## **Implementing Body-Worn Cameras**

Body-Worn Cameras are spreading throughout the country as a means to improve police accountability and legitimacy (Lippert, 2016). Body-Worn Cameras aim to change how police work is conducted. These devices have the ability to gather information and preserve it for future analysis. The idea of recording police encounters started in the 1990's when departments started to implement dashboard cameras on police cruisers (Katz, 2014). Technology advanced to a point that allowed for cameras to be present on a patrol car's dashboard without changing the work a police officer was required to do.

Body-Worn Cameras have the potential to record misconduct, use of force, and other kinds of problematic behavior. They also have the potential to be used by an officer to disprove an allegation that has been reported against them. When an officer wears a Body-Worn Camera, it is placed on the officer's uniform. Typically, the camera is placed around the officer's shoulder area. The camera is frontward facing so that it can record events that take place in front of the officer (Katz, 2014). The camera can record day to day interactions with suspects and witnesses. While recording, officers can document statements, make observations, record interactions, and gather other types of evidence as well. These devices also have the potential to deter crime or corruption from occurring as well. Officers may be less likely to partake in any kind of misconduct because they know they are being watched by a recording system (Katz, 2014).

### **Specific Model Details**

There are several different kinds of body worn cameras used by police departments throughout the country. One example is the V300 Body-Worn Camera. This specific device is made by Motorola. This device has a clear LCD display that allows for easy viewing, while also

eliminating the fisheye effect that warps video footage (Motorola Solutions, 2021). The detachable battery included in this device allows officers to easily change batteries while on the go. The extra battery can be used when needed in an unexpectedly long shift or an extra shift. The V300 has the ability to go back in time and capture video from events after they happened even if the recording was not initiated by the officer. Footage can be uploaded to a cloud-based system at any time using a wireless network like LTE (Motorola Solutions, 2021).

The V300 is labeled as, “Rugged and Durable.” The device has been tested to survive through a public safety environment, while also being shockproof and waterproof. The V300 helps officers in a stressful situation when integrated by different outlets. When the device is radio integrated it starts recording when the radio enters emergency mode, when an officer presses the emergency button on the radio, or in a radio initiated “man down” event (Motorola Solutions, 2021). The device can also be integrated by vehicle as well. When integrated by a vehicle, the V300 will start to record in different situations. A few examples include, when a door is opened, a certain speed is exceeded, or the sirens have been activated (Motorola Solutions, 2021). The device can also be integrated with a smartphone. Using an Android, an officer can review videos and change camera settings at any time.

The device has several different key features included as well. Intelligent correlation to computer-aided dispatch and records management system data allows for a quicker review of cases because it alleviates the aspect of manually compiling evidence (Motorola Solutions, 2021). Another feature is the frame by frame analysis. An officer can control the speed of the video they are displaying and can move forward or backwards whenever they choose. The device allows the ability to share the content with the community, other agencies, and prosecutors whenever need be. The content can be shared using email. With privacy concerns, the device has

redaction abilities as well to protect an individual's personal information private (Motorola Solutions, 2021). The V300 is connected to an application called, "CommandCentral." This application helps officers organize and aggregate all of the department's video content in one place (2021). In this application, officers can save individual video preference settings including volume level, screen brightness, and field of view adjustment. When needed, Motorola offers on-site and online training to maximize efficiency. Also, technical support is provided to help resolve any issue an officer may encounter. The V300 is a continuously operational body-worn camera with 128GB of storage (Motorola Solutions, 2021).

### **Impact of Body-Worn Cameras**

The implementation of body-worn cameras has both positive and negative effects. I will begin by introducing some of the positive effects of these cameras. The first effect is rather obvious. The implementation of these devices allows for a new level of surveillance that can create a greater level of accountability. According to the Oxford Dictionary, accountability can be defined as, "required or expected to justify actions or decisions; responsible." Accountability is important in policing because it helps maintain legitimacy in the entire system. Without accountability, the general public will not see the system as fair and just. These body-worn cameras have been seen as a great solution to fix the accountability problem facing the world of policing. Many politicians, including the 44th President Barack Obama, have shown their support in the use of body-worn cameras as a means to increase accountability. He proposed a \$75 million budget to help fund 50,000 of these cameras (Otu, 2016).

Barak Ariel researched the benefits of body-worn cameras in his study of one of the largest police departments in America. His research tested the effects of body-worn cameras on a

number of different issues including use of force, complaints against officers, and arrests by the Denver Police Department. Throughout a six month period, one of the six districts was given body-worn cameras and the other five were not. Ariel was able to then compare data to see the impact these cameras had on the police. The results showed there was no significant difference in reports of use of force between the two different groups. There was however a significant difference in arrests made. The odds of an arrest were 18% higher in the districts that did not have cameras versus the district with the cameras. When looking at a specific subcategory of complaints, there is a significant difference between the control and treatment groups. Complaints against police officers were 35% higher in the districts that did not have the body cameras (Ariel, 2016). These findings are significant because they show how body cameras can impact a police force.

Another fascinating research article discussed the difference between a member of the public seeing a police shooting through video versus just reading their police report. (Culhane, 2018). Participants in this study read a brief description and then were given either a video, audio, or transcript of a recent police incident. In the scenario given, a white police officer arrived at a scene and ultimately shot a white male with a knife in their hand. The participants were then asked to give their opinions on whether or not the shooting was justified. Data collection showed that participants who were given video were more likely to deem the shooting justifiable compared to participants that only were given transcripts of the incident. Another important note made in the article was that when asked if the video footage was useful in their decision making process, 89% of participants agreed the video was helpful. Similarly, of the participants who were not given video, 88% said they believed the video would have helped in their decision making. Another interesting finding in this article is how many participants agreed

police officers should be wearing body cameras. Out of all the participants, only 1% said they do not believe they should be required to wear by all officers (Culhane, 2018).

Elizabeth Joh discusses how we can avoid unintentional malfunctions or accidental failures to record (2016). One suggestion to this problem is to not allow the officer themselves to turn on or off the recording device. Instead, the video is live streamed back to the department and someone there has discretion on what is to be recorded. Joh also questions the impact the devices have on the community as well.

### **Potential Drawbacks**

There needs to be a correct policy on when an officer is to record their interaction with the public and when they can turn the camera off. Privacy concerns should be considered in the implementation of these devices. Bud (2016) discusses whether or not the pros of the implementation of body-worn cameras outweigh the cons of losing public privacy. Joh (2016) suggests that if body cameras are used in a “stealth mode” then that could create an added level of mistrust with the police. This means it is important to let individuals know they are being recorded at any given moment. It is hard for officers to gain consent from members of the public. Potential training could help alleviate this obstacle. Proper training and policy are crucial in the implementation of these devices. The Fort Lauderdale Police Department has specific policy written on what to do when encountering a member of the general public. The officer can, at their discretion, inform the public that the camera has been activated. If a member of the public requests to not be recorded, an officer may deactivate the device after verbally recording the reasoning (Fort Lauderdale Police, 2020).



Privacy concerns are talked about often in debates against the implementation of these devices. Another suggestion is the limited discretion model. A limited discretion model gives officers some discretion by requiring recording of several specified law enforcement activities, while leaving some situations up to officer discretion (Fan, 2016). Most police agencies who have already implemented the devices require recording during traffic stops, arrests and active pursuits. (Fan, 2016). In recent years, more incidents are being required to record like transportation and use of force incidents. After tragic events like the death of George Floyd and Freddie Gray, you can see why there was a push for departments to begin to expand required recording incidents. One thing I found particularly interesting in the Fan article was that there was only a consensus on when not to record in one circumstance. Of the 42 public policies that Fan (2016) researched, the only place that was consistently in opinions on where not to record was in a bathroom. I personally believe that makes sense for obvious reasons. However, the fact that is the only place different departments come to a consensus can potentially be seen as troubling. Having a consensus on when to and when not to record would be a much better alternative. What is important to note is that many policies do not allow officers to record when there is a reasonable expectation of privacy. (Fan, 2016). This aims to help fix any privacy concerns the public may have.

### **Opinions of Police Officers**

Many police officers have voiced concerns of body worn cameras. Barak Ariel gathered responses from 119 police officers via a survey aimed at better understanding their view point on these cameras. There are several quotes in this research that I found interesting. One officer responded with the following, “Armchair quarterbacks will dissect every word and every action

said and done in milliseconds. Frame by Frame the officer will be criticized for acting, re acting or not acting at all. The Youtube community, however, will have a grand 'ol time bashing police officers who are working hard to protect the civilian public they are sworn to protect. Cops are human after all. What's next, cameras in the cockpit because we want to make sure the pilot doesn't have a human moment. We put our lives in the hands of pilots and doctors and I don't see doctors or pilots wearing BWV's, and if they did, I would be a little disturbed about it.” (Ariel, 2016, p. 748). This officer clearly does not believe in the use of body worn cameras and seems to think they hinder police work as a whole. Another officer was quoted saying, “I fear that the use of this technology shows an increase in the trend of lack of trust in police officers both by the public and by those in management. My word and the fact that I already hold myself to a higher standard no longer matter.” (Ariel, 2016, p.748). I do think this is an interesting point but the whole point of body worn cameras is to regain the trust that has been lost. Based on the responses listed throughout this article it seems as though officers are reluctant to change. Another concern that was talked about was increased liability issues. “I would like to be able to review the footage of my interactions as many times as necessary for me without fear of being asked to articulate why I did it.” And another officer wrote: “The current policy that has been written by this department gives the Internal Affairs Bureau the ability to make arbitrary discretion .... This seems like a useless policy unless the goal of the department is to trap officers in false statements due to differences of perception.” (Ariel, 2016, p. 748). With opinions like these, it may be difficult to convince departments to implement these cameras. There are many officers who are reluctant to this change and do not believe they should have to change the way they police their respective community.

There are a few more drawbacks that were found in a study that researched body worn cameras in the Phoenix Police Department. “Our surveys of the officers indicated that there was resistance among officers toward wearing the BWC’s. While in general the technology was found to be comfortable and easy to use, officers were dissatisfied with a number of technological features related to the cameras. For example, officers reported that it took a long time to download data, that it lengthened the amount of time it took them to complete reports, and reported being concerned that the video might be used against them.” (Katz, 2014, p.12). Similarly, when police officers were to submit videos to the courts, it took a lengthy amount of time for prosecutors to review the files. Researchers in this study however found the benefits of the cameras outweighed the cons. As is consistent with other studies, complaints against police decline significantly. The researchers also found that even if a complaint was filed against an officer who was wearing a camera, the complaint was far less likely to be sustained when compared to officers who didn’t have a camera. Body worn cameras also had a drastic impact on domestic violence cases in this study. “Last, we examined the impact of body worn cameras on domestic violence case processing. Analysis of the data indicated that following the implementation of body cameras, cases were significantly more likely to be initiated, result in charges filed, and result in a guilty plea or guilty verdict. The analysis also determined that cases were completed faster following the implementation of body cameras” (Katz, 2014, p. 13). These findings are significant and are definitely important to note in the debate of the use of body worn cameras.

### **Battling With Defunding Police Efforts**

Another wrinkle that could hurt the implementation of body worn cameras throughout the country is the push from some political figures and other members of the community to defund the police. “The call to defund police is an international, activist response to excessive, long-standing racialized violence by police against Black people, especially in the USA. On the face of it, the idea is to take funding from police, and invest it in community initiatives that build safety.” (Fleetwood, 2022, p.1). There are several arguments given by those who believe the police should be defunded. First, the entire system of policing is rooted in the history of slavery. History has shown a level of violence against Blacks that is deemed unreformable. (Fleetwood, 2022). Prior to the George Floyd murder, the Minneapolis Police Department took part in a number of police reformaties including racial bias training. The arguement is that even with these reform efforts, events like the George Floyd murders still occur. The argument presented is that it is not only just about defunding the police. Instead of funding the police, the money is instead allocated to other resources that would better keep communities safe. A few ideas listed in the Fleetwood article are better housing for members of the community, universal quality healthcare, community-based mental health support, income support, higher living wage, education, and advanced programming for youth individuals. The idea for this argument is that investing money into a community will be more beneficial in reducing crime than the police (Fleetwood, 2022). The third argument presented is police intervention in some situations is not warranted and could be dealt with in other ways. Some scenarios could be dealt with social workers, community work, probation, education, and/or community support teams. (Fleetwood, 2022). “It is well known that the vast majority of calls by the public to police – both in the USA and the UK – are not crime-related but stem from the fact that the police are available and capable of rapid response, and that other agencies have been progressively defunded” (Fleetwood, 2022, p. 4).

With increased media coverage of police killings, the push to defund the police will continue. “The deaths of Andrew Brown, Ma’kia Bryant, Daunte Wright, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Rashard Brooks, and many others during 2020 and 2021 added to a long list of persons killed by police in the United States under circumstances that raise serious questions about the role of police in civil society. The prolonged and widespread protests that followed several of these killings have required that the nation look anew at the function of ‘law enforcement’ and how police policies, strategies, and behaviors support or thwart that goal and to what end.” (Cobbina-Dungy, 2021, p. 2).

Negative publicity surrounding the police made them less motivated to do their job because they did not feel they were legitimate authority figures (Culhane, 2018). This is consistent with the theory regarding the Ferguson Effect. The Ferguson Effect is the belief that officers are reluctant to engage in encounters with the public for fear that they will be the next officer who goes viral for all the wrong reasons (Nix, 2018). The Ferguson Effect has a direct correlation with increased crime rates. The Ferguson Effect shows that officers have been impacted mentally by the public scrutiny (Nix, 2018).

The push to defund the police will only hurt the implementation of body worn cameras because as stated before, body worn cameras are costly. “The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), through the SMART Policing Initiative (SPI), awarded the Phoenix Police Department \$500,000 to purchase, deploy and evaluate police body worn cameras. The design and implementation of the project included the purchase of 56 BWC systems and deploying them in the Maryvale Precinct.” (Katz, 2014, p. 3). In order to implement these cameras all over the country it will cost hundreds of millions of dollars to do. The movement to defund the police will be another roadblock in the way of this movement to have more cameras on police officers.

There are plenty of arguments to counter the idea of defunding the police. Adequate funding is a necessity to maintain order in a community. There are many consequences to defunding the police. “Policy makers should resist this urge. Adequate funding is necessary for high-quality policing. By defunding police departments, communities would likely impair the ability of the police department to control crime. Defunding would hurt police accountability efforts by leaving fewer resources to train, oversee, or discipline officers. With fewer resources, police departments may seek additional revenue through potential harmful means such as excessive ticketing or civil asset forfeitures. And defunding agencies may ultimately lower officers salaries, thereby limiting recruitment of qualified personnel.” (Rushin, 2020, p. 327). I can personally speak to this point. When I applied and eventually tested with the Carlisle Police Department, only 5 individuals passed needed requirements to continue after the first day. This just goes to show that there is a lack of recruitment options as it is and with a push to defund the police, there will be a continued decline in qualified candidates.

### **Conclusion**

After graduation, I will be working in law enforcement in the near future. I understand there is a problem with relations between the general public and police. There are polarizing arguments that support the police and other arguments that look to defund the police. I believe that it is important that we as a country agree to continue to fund the police. It is however important to acknowledge when police make mistakes and it is important that police officers are held accountable for their actions. Distrust in the police is problematic and police officers should be doing everything they can to regain trust with members of their communities. After much research, I believe that implementing body worn cameras will net a positive impact on the

communities that utilize them because of the statistics listed throughout this paper. The implementation of body worn cameras will be a great step in improving accountability and easing tensions with the police and public.

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