

## ABA Task Force on Law Enforcement Body Camera to establish best practices, address individual liberties

As claims of police misconduct make headlines nationwide, the American Bar Association [Criminal Justice Section](#) announced Friday at the ABA Annual Meeting the formation of a Task Force on Law Enforcement Body Camera, which will analyze the use of body cameras by law enforcement professionals.

"Growing tensions between police and the public has resulted in a crisis of confidence in the actions of law enforcement officers and has raised the question of how to restore public appreciation for the difficult work of those who keep us safe and to ensure accountability for the actions of those entrusted with that solemn responsibility," said Section Co-chair James Felman.

The task force will undertake a comprehensive legal study, to identify best policies and practices for the deployment and use of law enforcement body cameras and assess their impact on the criminal justice system as well as individual liberties.

"Equipping law enforcement officers with body worn cameras will allow greater appreciation and respect for appropriate law enforcement actions and afford greater accountability where actions have not been appropriate," said Section Co-chair Cynthia Orr. "But, technology has its limits. Body worn cameras are not a cure-all solution, and there are significant questions about the best practices for their use."

The task force will address First Amendment rights issues and equipment manipulation concerns, as well as protective orders disputes. The group's report will suggest procedures for data retention and destruction; considerations to determine who should wear body cameras; and make broad recommendations on continuous versus rules-based monitoring.

"We have assembled an extraordinary group to study and discuss the issues. We will be led by the combined talents of law enforcement leaders from Texas and Florida, and our reporter is Professor Steven Saltzburg of George Washington University School of Law, a veteran of our section who has devoted his career to the thoughtful and balanced consideration of new and cutting edge issues in the criminal law," said Orr.

The task force is comprised of members drawn from ABA entities, law enforcement, government, state prosecutors' offices, public and private criminal practice, academia, civil liberties groups and other legal arenas. Susan Pamerleau, sheriff of Bexar County in Texas, and Anthony Holloway, chief of police for the city of St. Petersburg, Fla., will serve as co-chairpersons of the task force.

"The diversity and expertise of our task force will allow us to continue the work of other organizations on this critical topic, and hopefully arrive at a consensus on the best practices for the use of this important technology," said Felman.

Other entities leading the task force are the [Section of Individual Rights and Responsibilities](#), [Section of Litigation](#) and [Section of Science and Technology Law](#).

"As the unified voice of criminal justice, the Criminal Justice Section of the ABA is the natural forum for a complete airing of these important and timely issues," said Felman.

The task force aims to present a preliminary set of findings and recommendations to the ABA House of Delegates — the association's policymaking body — in August at the 2016 ABA Annual Meeting in San Francisco.

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