



First Amendment Foundation

Protecting Your Right to Know for 30 Years!

21 April 2015

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

DAVE WILSON, CHAIRMAN

Senior Editor/Administration

The Miami Herald

BOB SHAW, VICE CHAIRMAN

Retired Editor

MIKE VASILINDA, SECRETARY

& TREASURER

President

Capitol News Service

JON KANEY, GENERAL COUNSEL

Kaney & Olivari

DAN AUTREY

Publisher & President

Tampa Bay Newspapers

DICK BATCHELOR

Founder and President

Dick Batchelor Management Group,
Inc.

BRIAN CROWLEY

Principal

Immediacy Public Relations

MIKE DEESON

Senior Reporter

WTSP-TV

FRANK DENTON

Editor

Florida Times-Union

CAROL JEAN LOCICERO

Thomas & LoCicero

SAMUEL MORLEY

General Counsel

Florida Press Association

TIM NICKENS

Editor of Editorials

Tampa Bay Times

ROSEMARY O'HARA

Editorial Page Editor

SunSentinel

PATSY PALMER

D'Alemberte & Palmer, PLLC

PATRICK RICE

Editor

Daytona Beach News-Journal

DEAN RIDINGS

President & CEO

Intersect Media Solutions

APRIL SALTER

President & Chief Operating Officer

Salter Mitchell

PETE WEITZEL

Director Emeritus

The Honorable Shevrin D. Jones
The Florida House of Representatives
1401 The Capitol
402 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Re: CS/HB 57 Law Enforcement Body Cameras

Dear Representative Jones:

We are writing to express our support of HB 57, for its practical and sensible approach to implementing procedures for the use of police body cameras.

House Bill 57 accommodates those law enforcement agencies that already equip their officers with body cameras and have working procedures in place. In addition, the bill allows police departments to develop their own specific procedures in ways consistent with the needs of the department and the community it serves. More importantly, allowing departments this leeway is preferable to the statewide approach advocated by SB 248, which would impose overbroad public record exemptions contrary to the public purpose for which such cameras are used.

A heavy-handed mandate, like SB 248, will only disrupt the current procedures of some law enforcement agencies, and prevent meaningful progress in the future. HB 57 provides general guidelines for police body camera use, and is the necessary first step before enacting comprehensive legislation that grossly restricts the public's right of access.

The intent behind law enforcement body cameras is to provide accountability while enabling transparency, and the Foundation supports the passage of HB 57 because it furthers these goals.

Sincerely,

Barbara A. Petersen, President

cc: Steve Crisafulli, Speaker, Florida House of Representatives