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LEADING LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSOCIATION IN CALIFORNIA STRONGLY SUPPORTS BODY CAMERAS

Peace Officers Research Association of California Backs Responsible Implementation and Use of Body Cameras

Sacramento, CA: PORAC leadership, representing 67,000 public safety members and over 915 associations in California, will testify at a hearing of the California State Assembly Public Safety Committee tomorrow that will be weighing the benefits of law enforcement wearing body cameras to the potential disadvantages.

“I want to be clear that we support the use of body cameras being implemented and used responsibly,” said Michael Durant, President of PORAC. “Body worn cameras are not a complete answer, but they will enhance transparency and hopefully protect both the citizens we serve and the officers who serve them.”

PORAC will testify that the implementation includes local enforcement policies unique to the community (rural versus urban; big city versus small town), as well as statewide legislation.

PORAC believes that each department or agency that implements the use of body cameras should develop a policy relating to use of body cameras. The impacts of the policy should be part of the meet and confer process with the affected employees and at a minimum should include:

- The duration, time, place and circumstance when cameras shall be worn and operational;
- How and when the videos are downloaded;
- Procedures for public access to recordings;
- Personnel assigned and who shall wear and have access to recordings;
- The use of privately owned body-worn cameras while on duty;
- Documentation of the existence of the video
- Notification of subjects being recorded;
- When and how date shall be downloaded;
- Training on the proper use of body-worn cameras;
- Maintaining records and data on the efficacy of body-worn cameras;
- Use of videos for personnel purposes;

Legislation at the state level should include the following:

- **Public Safety Officer Access to Recordings:**
 - Amendment to the Public Safety Officers Procedural Bill of Rights (POBOR) allowing any public safety officer the absolute right to have access to relevant recordings prior



to giving a statement, writing a report, is the subject of any questioning or providing testimony;

- Amend POBOR to provide a public safety officer proper notice prior to the release of any recording of or by that officer.
- **Right to Privacy and Safety:**
 - Amendments to the California Public Records Act to include “audio and video recordings” as additional information which is not to be disclosed due to an on-going law enforcement investigation;
 - Add “privacy” – in addition to safety – as an additional basis for non-disclosure;
 - Entirely preclude the disclosure of video recordings depicting the death or serious injury of any person.

“Every person with whom our peace officers come in contact matters to us,” Durant said. “We get into law enforcement because we want safe streets and our neighbors to understand that we are here to help. There are issues of individual privacy, the cost of cameras, storage of the videos and the limits of what a camera captures that need to be part of the discussion. Ultimately, however, cameras are a step we need to take.”

The Peace Officers Research Association of California (PORAC) was incorporated in 1953 as a professional federation of local, state and federal law enforcement agencies. Today, PORAC represents over 67,000 public safety members and over 915 associations, making it the largest law enforcement organization in California and the largest statewide association in the nation.

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