



Legislation Text

File #: Res 1237-2020, **Version:** *

Res. No. 1237

Resolution calling on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, S6793/A8943, which would require MTA police officers to wear body-worn cameras

By The Public Advocate (Mr. Williams) and Council Member Louis

Whereas, In June 2019, Governor Andrew Cuomo announced a plan to hire 500 additional MTA police officers to patrol New York City's subway system; and

Whereas, In December 2019, the MTA board approved Governor Cuomo's plan, allocating an estimated \$250 million over four years to expand the MTA's police force by 64 percent to purportedly combat crime, fare evasion, and the system's homelessness population; and

Whereas, The increase in police presence in the subway system for the last several months has generated community outrage as it has resulted in controversial incidents, including police officers arresting two churro sellers on a subway platform, pointing their firearms inside a crowded subway car, punching teenagers in the face, and holding up an L train to remove a man seen dozing off on a bench; and

Whereas, The New York Police Department (NYPD) has equipped all uniformed patrol officers with body-worn cameras to record their interactions with community residents; and

Whereas, Because MTA police are not considered members of the NYPD, they are exempt from wearing body-worn cameras; and

Whereas, Research from Arizona State University shows officers with body-worn cameras have fewer complaints lodged against them; and

Whereas, A study conducted with Rialto Police Department in California shows decreases in civilian complaints lodged against officers wearing body-worn camera and decreases in use-of-force incidents by the

police; and

Whereas, S6793 introduced by State Senator Jessica Ramos, and companion bill A8943 introduced by Assemblymember Karines Reyes, would require MTA police to wear body-worn cameras and directs the chief of the MTA Police Department to establish rules and regulations pertaining to body-worn cameras; and

Whereas, The use of body-worn cameras would increase transparency and accountability, which can help improve law enforcement legitimacy at a time when communities lack trust and confidence in law enforcement; and

Whereas, The use of body-worn cameras also offer the opportunity to improve training as law enforcement officials can assess police activities and behaviors captured by body-worn cameras; and now, therefore be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, S6793/A8943, which would require MTA police officers to wear body-worn cameras

LS12753
12/30/19
KMD