

From: [Sue Nelson](#)
To: [Equal Opportunities Commission](#)
Subject: body cameras won't help
Date: Saturday, March 6, 2021 1:18:42 PM

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Dear Equal Opportunities Commission,

I believe that the topic of body cameras will be on your agenda Thursday.

I am writing to point out that one of the most prominent organizations representing the Black Lives Matter movement has changed its position on body cameras. Campaign Zero had previously called for body cameras as part of its “comprehensive platform of research-based policy solutions to end police brutality in America”. Campaign Zero is also the organization responsible for the 8 Can’t Wait police reform agenda.

Campaign Zero has now come out against starting any new body camera programs. It states “ Due to a range of research studies finding no evidence that body cameras reduce police use of force, we caution cities *against* adopting new body camera programs.”

This is consistent with the position of the Movement for Black Lives. The Movement for Black Lives has always opposed body cameras, as part of its call to end surveillance on Black communities.

Michelle Alexander, author of *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, is correct. Here is a short talk she gave on this.

Michelle Alexander: Police Body Cameras Are Not a Solution.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gWqTyhKQIEk>

With body cameras, we've been sold a false bill of goods. We were told they'd reduce police use of force, produce accountability after police killings, improve police behavior, and increase trust. But none of that appears true. They're mostly a surveillance tool, mostly used to collect evidence against civilians, especially in overpoliced Black and Brown communities. That will just make things worse.

Thank you,

Sue Nelson

From: [Gregory Gelembiuk](#)
To: [All Alders](#); [PD PSRC](#); [Equal Opportunities Commission](#)
Cc: [Rhodes-Conway, Satya V.](#)
Subject: Further deficiencies in the BWC Committee report
Date: Monday, March 8, 2021 10:10:05 AM
Attachments: [BWC Committee Report Deficiencies .docx](#)

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Dear Alders and Committee Members,

I am writing once again, with further information on deficiencies (critical errors, omissions, etc.) in the BWC Committee report. Please see my attached letter.

One of the core tasks of the committee was review of the scientific research on BWCs. I was the only scientist on the committee. It seems that everyone loves a scientist, until they convey the science and it's something people don't want to hear. Too often, the response is then to attack the scientist and dismiss their input.

One major concern is that BWCs can increase surveillance and prosecution of low-level offenses, expanding overcriminalization of heavily policed BIPOC communities. I will add that, since the BWC Committee Chair continues to deny errors that I pointed out, in the report's interpretation of a key study on this topic, I submitted my analysis, along with the study and the BWC Committee report, to an uninvolved statistician/mathematician (Professor Brooke Orosz) to perform an independent review. Dr. Orosz fully corroborated my conclusions (i.e., the BWC Committee report makes invalid claims, understating the potential for BWCs to drive further overcriminalization).

Sincerely,

Dr. Gregory Gelembiuk

From: [Gregory Gelembiuk](#)
To: [PD PSRC](#); [Equal Opportunities Commission](#)
Subject: Additional independent review of BWC Committee report issue
Date: Wednesday, March 10, 2021 12:19:18 PM

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Dear Committee Members,

I had earlier raised examples of serious errors in the Bodycam Committee report, including misinterpretation of scientific research. Bodycam Committee Chair Keith Findley denied any errors, and, specifically regarding his misinterpretation of the results of a 2018 study by Groff, Ward, and Wartell, told the EOC and PSRC that my “complaints are completely invalid”. This is an important matter since it concerns the potential for BWCs to contribute to further criminalization of low-level offenses by Madison residents (particularly in vulnerable, overpoliced communities).

I thus arranged for two independent qualified professionals to review the issue. Both were recruited by freelance science writer Kavin Senapathy. One of these (as I noted earlier) was Statistician/Mathematician Professor Brooke Orosz, Ph.D. (Division Chair at Essex County College, Newark, NJ). The other was Data Scientist Avneesh Chandra (of Graphika Inc.), who provided an additional review that I just received today. Neither had any prior involvement with BWC-related issues and neither was someone I knew. Thus, they could provide fully independent, neutral review. Each was provided a copy of the relevant study (Groff, Ward, & Wartell, 2018), the Bodycam Committee report, and my statement about the issue.

Both fully corroborated what I have been saying – that the Bodycam Committee report misstates the scientific results. And it does so in important ways, that lead to erroneous conclusions on a critical matter (i.e., the potential of BWCs to exacerbate overcriminalization, and how readily that could be addressed).

Here is the review that Statistician/Mathematician Dr. Orosz sent me:

I read the long working paper. What jumps out at me is that prosecutors only viewed the footage before deciding whether or not to file in a small percentage of cases, apparently because it would take too much time and the prosecutor's office doesn't have adequate staffing to support such an increase in workload.

More importantly, nothing here is at all blinded or randomized. According to the focus group work, prosecutors made the decision about whether or not to view the footage themselves, based on whether they thought it was relevant to their decision. This does NOT show that prosecutors reviewing the footage reduces the probability of charges being filed, and overall, filing rates WERE higher among the group of crimes that had footage available.

That, as I interpret the study, is a key thing. There's no evidence that requiring prosecutors to view all footage would work, because nothing like that was tested here. Prosecutors chose not to view most of the time because they thought it was unlikely to change their minds. What if they're right?

Table 23 shows that there is a strong relationship between charges being filed and the availability of the camera footage, and that trying to control for covariates makes it look stronger, not weaker. In fact, in the adjusted model, filing rates were significantly higher even for crimes where the footage was watched.

So yeah, there is definitely evidence that body cameras increase filings. I agree with what you said.

Here is the review by Data Scientist Avneesh Chandra:

1. In my reading, Findley claims that the apparent increase in prosecutions related to BWCs can be eliminated by having prosecutors view BWC footage prior to filing. This seems consistent with your read.
2. In my reading, Groff et al seem to indicate that there is an observed decrease in prosecution rates when BWC footage is viewed versus when it is not viewed. However, given the small percentage of cases where footage *is* viewed, this observed decrease is **not statistically significant**. This seems consistent with your interpretation of the report.
3. Continuing on the above point, my read is that even if that difference *were* statistically significant, it **would not eliminate** the apparent increase in prosecutions, because the increase even when footage is viewed remains ~100% of, or twice as much as, when there is no BWC footage at all. This point is what is inconsistent with the following statement, which claims that a policy by which prosecutors would be required to view the footage would entirely eliminate the apparent increase in prosecutions associated with BWCs:

“Interestingly, the researchers also found that, while prosecution rates went up when BWC footage existed, that BWC footage had that effect only when prosecutors failed to review the footage prior to charging...”

I will add that I myself am a scientist (at UW-Madison) with a great deal of background in statistical analysis. Statistical modeling and interpretation of statistical analysis is much of what I do professionally. One colleague asked why my own statements were insufficient – since I was well-credentialed and had the requisite background. I told them that the information I was providing was being dismissed, and thus I needed independent reviewers (corroborating what I was saying), to be taken seriously.

The underlying problem on the Bodycam Committee appeared to be one of motivated numeracy – a type of motivated reasoning where people “use their quantitative-reasoning capacity selectively to conform their interpretation of the data to the result most consistent with their political outlooks”. Studies suggest that professional judgement imparted by professional training and experience in a field (e.g., the field of science or statistics) imparts resistance to such motivated reasoning. Unfortunately, I was the only scientist on the Bodycam Committee.

Sincerely,

Dr. Gregory Gelembiuk

From: [Kim Jorgensen](#)
To: [PD PSRC](#); [Equal Opportunities Commission](#)
Subject: BWC for MPD
Date: Monday, March 8, 2021 6:25:02 PM

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Committee Members,

Both of your committees meet this week and Body Worn Cameras for our Madison Police Dept is an agenda item for each of your respective committees.

I am writing to clarify that as a member of the BWC feasibility review committee, all of us on this committee spent many hours reading and discussing the agreed upon scientific literature, general information, and listened carefully to in person presentations. You will recognize that in reading the final documentation presented to you. Each BWC committee member was picked for a reason - because each of us has relevant professional and in many cases personal context and experience to be sensitive and informed to this topic.

It was not without detailed consideration of multiple areas - pro's, con's, positives, negatives, risks and benefits that we worked as a team to produce the documentation given to you. I think that too will be obvious as you read our final report with a draft policy, a policy with suggestions that make the difference in the safety or dangerousness of a BWC.

BW Cameras are a tool. As with any tool they can be used well, or poorly. What makes the difference is in the rules, the policy, procedure, training, etc of the cameras and the officers using them. Not every risk can be prevented, but again, as with most tools, we can make their use and benefit worth the risk.

All of us that stayed on the BWC will certainly respect and support your final decisions on this topic. I just want to clarify that the information we presented is of a quality that is valid, legitimate, and done with the proper understanding of the importance of the topic.

Thank you for your work on this and all the topics you must address for Madison.

Kim Jorgensen, LCSW, AODA Specialty, ICS