



"Support for SB 5732"

Proposed Motion: *The Associated Students of WWU officially endorse and support SB 5732, a bill proposed by Senator Jayapal which would mandate Washington state police officers wear body cameras. We are taking this stance to increase police accountability and transparency and start putting an end to the excessive force all too often used by police in our state. This stance will help support the many Western students who have been quite vocal and involved in acknowledging and ending police brutality and violence in our state and our country. It will also help forward our advocacy and lobbying efforts by allowing our resources to go towards lobbying on this issue.*

Sponsor: Heather Heffelmire/ AS Legislative Liaison

Persons of Contact: Heather Heffelmire

Guest Speaker: Heather Heffelmire

Date: 2/9/14

Attached Document

See Attached Bill

Background & Context

Many students on Western's campus, including members of the Black Student Union (BSD), the Ethnic Student Center (ESC), and employees of our Associated Students (AS) have been very active and vocal on issues surrounding police brutality, racial profiling, and the epidemic of Black and Brown youth being dehumanized in society. Western students have been supportive of efforts to speak out and push-back against instances police violence.

On Jan. 30th, SB5732 was read for the first time. This bill, sponsored by Senator Jayapal, the only woman of color in our State Senate, would mandate that Washington state police officers wear body cameras in order to increase accountability for the actions of police and bring transparency to their processes. The bill has been referred to the Senate Law and Justice committee and is waiting a hearing.

This bill should be supported and officially endorsed by our AS as it lines up with the demands of many of our students and student groups and would further the conversation around police brutality and violence in our state.

Summary of Proposal

I am asking that we officially endorse SB 5732 as it would promote more accountability and transparency around the actions of police in our state. Police brutality of Black and Brown individuals is an epidemic in our country and Washington is not unique in this. For example, in 2011 the Department of Justice accused the Seattle Police Department of engaging in a "pattern of excessive force."

SB 5732 begins to address this issue by mandating that Washington police wear body cameras. This is in line with a national push for more police accountability and an end to police violence. It is important to acknowledge that body cameras are not a "cure all" for police brutality and will not end the racist institution of policing, however, this bill is a start and begins to address the problem.

Some potential problems which might occur by officially endorsing this bill is being seen as "partisan." However, I don't think justice is a partisan issue. There is right and there is wrong. I think it's important we side with our students and demand more police accountability by endorsing SB 5732.

Fiscal Impact

There is no fiscal impact with this bill. It requires no funding, only an endorsement.

Rationale

The rationale behind this proposal is that it's right in line with the actions and demands of our students evidenced by the several vigils, rallies, and demonstrations held in honor of those slain by police and speaking about against police violence. It also gives us the ability to officially lobby in support of SB 5732, a bill which starts to address this issue. Finally, it allows us to support Senator Jayapal, who is an activist and advocate for students of various identities.