



UNITED STATES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

June 9, 2020

The Honorable Harvey Peeler  
President  
South Carolina Senate  
213 Gressette Building  
Columbia, SC 29201

The Honorable James H. "Jay" Lucas  
Speaker  
South Carolina House of Representatives  
506 Blatt Building  
Columbia, SC 29201

Senator Peeler and Speaker Lucas,

In 2015, after the tragic shooting of Walter Scott, the legislative bodies you lead came together and crafted landmark legislation mandating the use of body cameras by all law enforcement in South Carolina. This was a bold and noble decision that set South Carolina apart from many other states at the time. However, although the passage of the legislation was a significant accomplishment, the implementation of this law has not been without difficulty.

As you know, the mandate imposed in the legislation was contingent upon the General Assembly fully funding the cost of the purchase and maintenance of the necessary equipment. Regrettably, this has not happened, and thus the mandate is not in place.

The universal use of body cameras by police officers will not solve all of our problems, but the data is quite clear that body camera use leads to better policing outcomes and certainly more trust from the community. Simply put, universal use of body cameras means safer officers and safer citizens.

I believe it is of the utmost importance that the mandate of the 2015 law be in full effect. This will only happen when the General Assembly fulfills its commitment and increases funding of body cameras to the proper level. We need trust between our law enforcement officers, the vast majority of which are highly-professional and wonderful public servants, and every community in our state. Universal use of body cameras will go a long way towards restoring trust by providing transparency. Knowing this, I would urge you both to make this a high priority for the General Assembly when it returns to session. Thank you for your attention to this most critical matter.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "William R. Timmons IV".

William R. Timmons, IV  
Member of Congress