

Suffolk County Passes Police Reforms, Including Widespread Use Of Body Cameras For Over Half Of 2,400-Member Force

By [Jennifer McLogan](#) December 1, 2021 at 6:27 pm Filed Under: [Jennifer McLogan](#), [Local TV](#), [Long Island](#), [Police Reform](#), [Suffolk County](#), [Suffolk County Police](#)

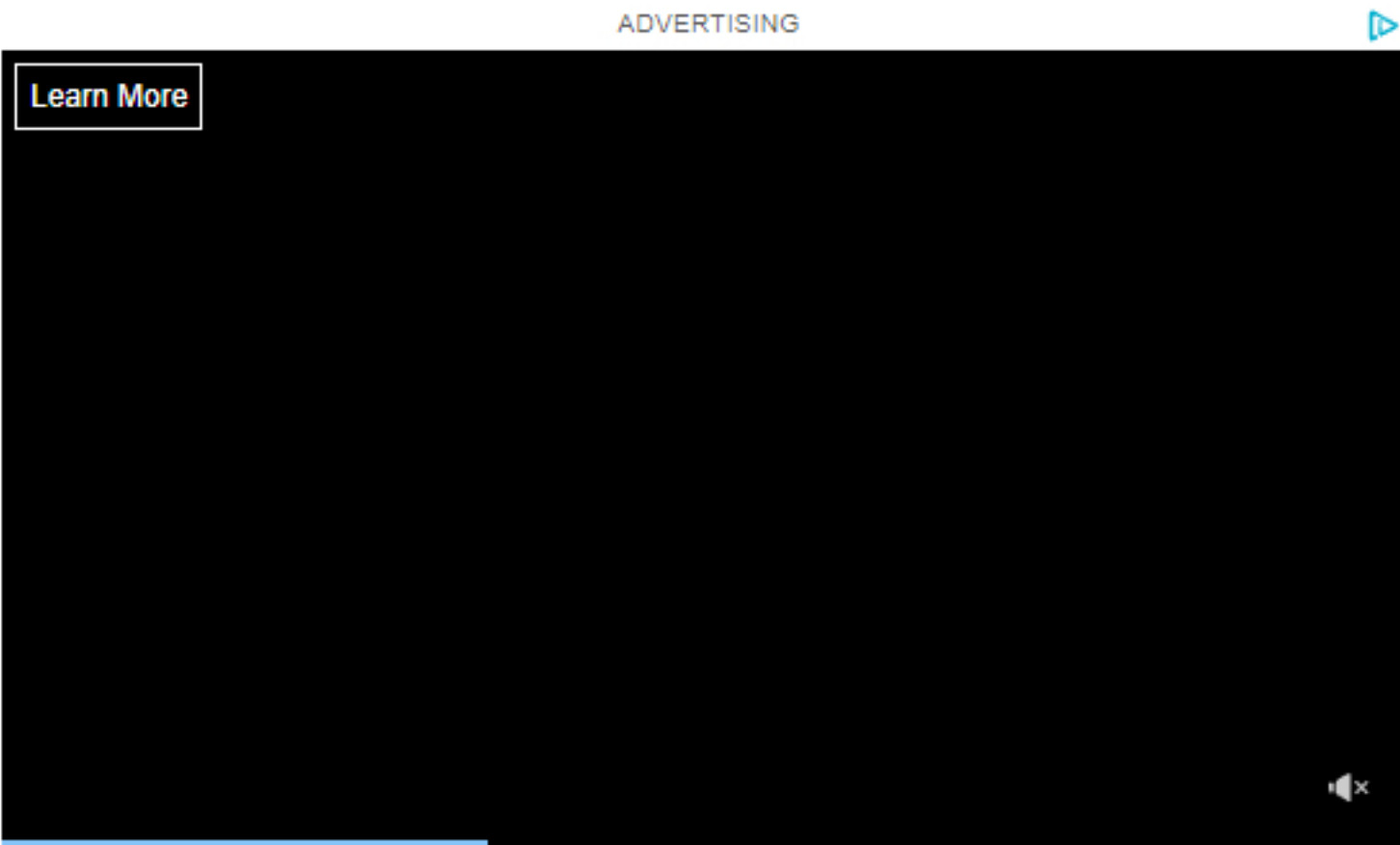


RIVERHEAD, N.Y. (CBSNewYork) — Change is coming to the [Suffolk County Police Department](#).

The [police reform](#) plan spurred by the Black Lives Matter movement and the murder of George Floyd was ordered by the state. It took [Suffolk County](#) eight long months of back-and-forth with its police unions and community members to finally get it passed.

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“This was not an easy process,” Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone said.



The task force eventually embraced the widespread use of police body cameras beginning next year for, so far, about half of its 2,400-member force.

“We will now be deploying body cameras for 1,600 officers. Each officer wearing a body camera will receive a \$3,000 stipend,” Bellone said.

Sixteen hundred union members will be paid \$3,000 a year to wear the body cams, amounting to nearly \$5 million annually.

The agreement will also boost police training in mental health crises and create more civilian oversight of cops.

Will body cameras help reform a department that has struggled to recruit minorities and one that is criticized for corruption and abuse?

Noel DiGerolamo is president of the Suffolk County Police Benevolent Association.

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“Now you’ll get the officer’s perspective of what they are seeing, since the camera is the officer’s, and you’ll see what they are being confronted with,” he said.

Some activists argued reforms needed to go further.

“These are baby steps ... Suffolk County has a statistical history that shows that there are racial disparities at every level, from hiring all the way to car stops,” civil rights activist Fred Brewington said.

Legislator Sam Gonzalez now thinks the plans can work.

“As many know that I was, early on, a no vote when this reform came out,” he said. “But we’ve been communicating very much with all our Latino and African-American community.”

“I definitely trust the police with the body camera on,” one person said.

“Body camera can help. They don’t have to turn them off,” another person said.

“We have to have faith and hope,” another person said.


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The county will spend \$24 million on the body cam program.

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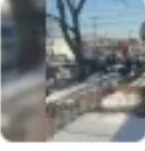

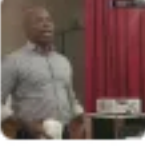





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