

HB0351_RichardKaplowitz_FAV

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Richard Keith Kaplowitz

Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON HB#0351- POSITION: FAVORABLE
Public Safety - Federal Agents - Digital Unmasking

TO: Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis, and members of the Judiciary Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#/0351, **Public Safety - Federal Agents - Digital Unmasking**

The conclusion of the Guardian Newspaper is that *The alarming rise of US officers hiding behind masks: 'A police state'*¹

Reported by [Sam Levin](#) in Los Angeles - Mike German, an ex-FBI agent, said immigration agents hiding their identities 'highlights the illegitimacy of actions'

Some [wear](#) balaclavas. Some [wear](#) neck gators, sunglasses and hats. Some wear masks and [casual clothes](#). Across the country, armed federal immigration officers have increasingly hidden their identities while [carrying out immigration raids](#), arresting [protesters](#) and [roughing up](#) prominent Democratic critics. It's a trend that has sparked alarm among civil rights and law enforcement experts alike.

Mike German, a former [FBI](#) agent, said officers' widespread use of masks was unprecedented in US law enforcement and a sign of a rapidly eroding democracy. "Masking symbolizes the drift of law enforcement away from democratic controls," he said.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has insisted masks are necessary to protect officers' privacy, arguing, [without providing evidence](#), that there has been an uptick in violence against agents. But, German argued, the long term consequences could be severe. The practice could erode trust in the US law enforcement agencies: "When it's hard to tell who a masked individual is working for, it's hard to accept that that is a legitimate use of authority," he noted. And, he said, when real agents use masks more frequently, it becomes easier for [imposters](#) to operate.

German – who previously [worked undercover](#) in white supremacist and militia groups and is now a fellow at the Brennan Center for Justice, a non-profit – spoke to the Guardian about the dangers of officer masking, why he thinks officers are concealing themselves and how far the US has deviated from democratic norms.

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/jun/25/immigration-officers-wearing-masks>

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There are too many videos online showing misconduct by alleged law enforcement wearing masks while violating civil and constitutional rights. These are crimes being committed that should be prosecuted.

This bill authorizes the Office of the Attorney General or a State's Attorney, upon receipt of a complaint of federal agent misconduct, to direct the Maryland State Police to gather and securely retain certain identifying digital data about a certain federal agent or federal agents; and authorizing a certain complainant to obtain certain identifying digital data only pursuant to a court order issued in a certain case.

Adding the certainty of prosecution with possible conviction may, it is hoped, cause moderation in how federal law enforcement interacts with the public in Maryland.

I respectfully urge this committee to return an favorable report on HB#/0351.