



Testimony - HB 351, Public Safety - Federal Agents - Digital Unmasking
Favorable
House Judiciary Committee
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Honorable Chairwoman Bartlett & Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

SEIU Local 500 represents thousands of public sector and higher education workers across Maryland. Our members believe deeply in the rule of law, constitutional protections, and the fundamental principle that no one—especially law enforcement officers acting under color of authority—is above accountability.

HB 351 addresses a growing and dangerous accountability gap. Across the country and here in Maryland, federal agents and contractors have increasingly operated without clear identification, often using unmarked vehicles, obscured badges, or anonymity that makes it nearly impossible for victims of misconduct to seek justice. This erosion of transparency undermines public trust, civil liberties, and workplace safety.

This bill takes a measured and responsible step to restore balance.

HB 351 authorizes the Attorney General or a State's Attorney, upon receipt of a credible complaint of serious federal agent misconduct—including excessive force, unlawful detention, assault, or civil rights violations—to direct the Maryland State Police to preserve identifying digital data related to the agents involved. Importantly, the bill does not provide open access to this information. Disclosure is permitted only by court order and only in the context of a civil rights case or criminal proceeding. These safeguards ensure due process while preventing evidence from being lost, destroyed, or concealed.

For SEIU Local 500 members—many of whom work in schools, universities, and public institutions—this legislation is about safety and constitutional integrity. Workers and community members should not be subjected to force or detention by unidentified federal actors with no meaningful path to accountability. When misconduct occurs, the state must have the ability to preserve evidence so that justice is possible.

HB 351 also sends an important message: Maryland will not normalize secret policing or tolerate civil rights violations carried out under the cover of anonymity. Accountability is not anti-law-enforcement; it is pro-democracy.

For these reasons, SEIU Local 500 respectfully urges the Committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 351.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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