

SENATE BILL 1

E4

(PRE-FILED)

6lr0842

CF HB 155

By: **Senators Augustine, Love, Beidle, Brooks, Feldman, Ferguson, Guzzone, Hettleman, Kagan, King, Kramer, Lam, Lewis Young, Muse, Rosapepe, Smith, Sydnor, and Zucker**

Requested: September 15, 2025

Introduced and read first time: January 14, 2026

Assigned to: Judicial Proceedings

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

Senate action: Adopted

Read second time: January 29, 2026

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission to
4 develop a certain ~~model~~ uniform policy prohibiting the use of a face covering by a law
5 enforcement officer in the course of duty; ~~requiring a law enforcement agency to~~
6 ~~adopt a policy consistent with the model policy developed by the Commission;~~
7 prohibiting a certain law enforcement officer from wearing a certain face covering
8 while in the performance of duty in the State, with a certain exception; establishing
9 certain procedural requirements applicable to violations of this Act; and generally
10 relating to law enforcement officers.

11 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

12 Article – Public Safety

13 Section 3–201(a) and (b)

14 Annotated Code of Maryland

15 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

16 BY adding to

17 Article – Public Safety

18 Section 3–207(p) and 3–535

19 Annotated Code of Maryland

20 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



1 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
2 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

3 **Article – Public Safety**

4 3–201.

5 (a) In this subtitle the following words have the meanings indicated.

6 (b) “Commission” means the Maryland Police Training and Standards
7 Commission.

8 3–207.

9 (P) (1) (I) IN THIS SUBSECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE
10 MEANINGS INDICATED.

11 (II) “FACE COVERING” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 3–535 OF
12 THIS TITLE.

13 (III) “LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY” HAS THE MEANING STATED
14 IN § 3–535 OF THIS TITLE.

15 (IV) “LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER” HAS THE MEANING STATED
16 IN § 3–535 OF THIS TITLE.

17 (2) (I) THE COMMISSION SHALL DEVELOP A ~~MODEL~~ UNIFORM
18 POLICY, TO BE USED BY EACH LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY, PROHIBITING THE USE
19 OF A FACE COVERING BY A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER IN THE COURSE OF DUTY
20 CONSISTENT WITH § 3–535 OF THIS TITLE.

21 (II) THE ~~MODEL~~ UNIFORM POLICY DEVELOPED UNDER THIS
22 SUBSECTION SHALL INCLUDE LANGUAGE AFFIRMING:

23 1. THE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY’S COMMITMENT TO
24 TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND PUBLIC TRUST;

25 2. THAT THE AUTHORIZED USE OF FACE COVERINGS
26 SHALL BE LIMITED TO SPECIFIC AND CLEARLY DEFINED CIRCUMSTANCES; AND

27 3. THAT GENERALIZED AND UNDIFFERENTIATED FEAR
28 AND APPREHENSION ABOUT LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER SAFETY IS NOT
29 SUFFICIENT TO JUSTIFY THE USE OF FACE COVERINGS.

(III) SUBJECT TO SUBPARAGRAPH (II) OF THIS PARAGRAPH, THE UNIFORM POLICY MAY ALLOW FOR USES OF FACE COVERINGS UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY TO PROTECT THE HEALTH OR SAFETY OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS WHILE PERFORMING PUBLIC SAFETY FUNCTIONS, INCLUDING THE USE OF FACE COVERINGS DURING INCLEMENT WEATHER.

(3) A LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS OPERATING IN THE STATE SHALL ADOPT A POLICY CONSISTENT WITH THE MODEL POLICY DEVELOPED BY THE COMMISSION UNDER PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION.

(3) A COUNTY, A MUNICIPALITY, OR A LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY OF THE STATE OR A POLITICAL SUBDIVISION OF THE STATE MAY NOT ADOPT A POLICY, OTHER THAN THE UNIFORM POLICY DEVELOPED BY THE COMMISSION, REGARDING THE USE OF FACE COVERINGS BY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS.

14 3-535.

15 (A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS
16 INDICATED.

20 (II) "FACE COVERING" INCLUDES A BALACLAVA, SKI MASK,
21 NECK GAITER, OR TACTICAL MASK.

(III) “FACE COVERING” DOES NOT INCLUDE:

1 5. A MOTORCYCLE HELMET WHEN WORN BY AN
2 INDIVIDUAL UTILIZING A MOTORCYCLE OR OTHER VEHICLE THAT REQUIRES A
3 HELMET FOR SAFE OPERATIONS;

4 6. EYEWEAR NECESSARY TO PROTECT AN INDIVIDUAL
5 FROM THE USE OF RETINAL WEAPONS AND LASERS;

6 7. A GARMENT WORN FOR RELIGIOUS PURPOSES;

7 8. PROTECTIVE GEAR WORN DURING TACTICAL
8 OPERATIONS FOR PURPOSES OF PHYSICAL SAFETY; OR

9 9. ANY OTHER ITEM WORN TO FOLLOW APPLICABLE
10 LAWS ON OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY OR REASONABLE WORKPLACE
11 ACCOMMODATIONS.

12 (3) "LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY" INCLUDES A LAW ENFORCEMENT
13 AGENCY OF:

14 (I) THE STATE;

15 (II) ANOTHER STATE;

16 (III) A POLITICAL SUBDIVISION OF THE STATE OR ANOTHER
17 STATE; OR

18 (IV) THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

19 (4) "LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER" MEANS A SWORN MEMBER OF A
20 LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY.

21 (B) THIS SECTION DOES NOT APPLY TO A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER
22 ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN AN UNDERCOVER OPERATION.

23 (C) A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER MAY NOT WEAR A FACE COVERING
24 WHILE IN THE PERFORMANCE OF DUTY IN THE STATE, EXCEPT AS AUTHORIZED IN ~~A~~
25 ~~POLICY ADOPTED UNDER § 3-207(p)(3) OF THIS TITLE THE UNIFORM POLICY~~
26 ~~ADOPTED BY THE MARYLAND POLICE TRAINING AND STANDARDS COMMISSION~~
27 ~~UNDER § 3-207 OF THIS TITLE.~~

28 (D) (1) A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER WHO VIOLATES THIS SECTION:

1 (II) IS GUILTY OF A ~~MISDEMEANOR CIVIL OFFENSE~~ AND ON
2 CONVICTION IS SUBJECT TO ~~IMPRISONMENT NOT EXCEEDING 2 YEARS OR A FINE~~
3 ~~NOT EXCEEDING \$2,000 OR BOTH; AND~~

4 (iii) ~~WAIVES ALL IMMUNITY IN A CIVIL ACTION BASED ON THE~~
5 ~~VIOLATION \$1,500.~~

(2) A VIOLATION OF THIS SECTION CONSTITUTES POLICE MISCONDUCT FOR PURPOSES OF SUBTITLE 1 OF THIS TITLE.

8 **(E) (1) A POLICE OFFICER MAY ISSUE A CITATION TO A LAW**
9 **ENFORCEMENT OFFICER WHO THE POLICE OFFICER HAS PROBABLE CAUSE TO**
10 **BELIEVE IS COMMITTING OR HAS COMMITTED A VIOLATION OF THIS SECTION.**

12 (I) **IS NOT A CRIMINAL CONVICTION FOR ANY PURPOSE; AND**

17 (I) THE NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE LAW ENFORCEMENT
18 **OFFICER CHARGED;**

22 **(IV) THE FINE THAT MAY BE IMPOSED;**

25 **(vi) A NOTICE THAT STATES THAT THE DISTRICT COURT SHALL**
26 **PROMPTLY SEND THE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER A SUMMONS TO APPEAR FOR**
27 **TRIAL.**

(II) THE CHIEF JUDGE OF THE DISTRICT COURT SHALL ESTABLISH A SCHEDULE FOR THE PREPAYMENT OF A FINE FOR A VIOLATION OF THIS SECTION.

(5) (I) THE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY OF THE POLICE OFFICER WHO ISSUED THE CITATION SHALL FORWARD TO THE DISTRICT COURT HAVING VENUE A COPY OF THE CITATION AND A REQUEST FOR TRIAL.

(II) THE DISTRICT COURT SHALL PROMPTLY SCHEDULE THE CASE FOR TRIAL AND SUMMON THE DEFENDANT TO APPEAR.

(6) IN ANY PROCEEDING FOR A CIVIL OFFENSE UNDER THIS SECTION:

1. GUILTY OF A CIVIL OFFENSE; OR

2. NOT GUILTY OF A CIVIL OFFENSE.

28 (7) WHEN A DEFENDANT HAS BEEN FOUND GUILTY OF A CIVIL
29 OFFENSE UNDER THIS SECTION AND A FINE HAS BEEN IMPOSED BY THE COURT, THE
30 COURT MAY DIRECT THAT THE PAYMENT OF THE FINE BE SUSPENDED OR DEFERRED
31 UNDER CONDITIONS THAT THE COURT MAY ESTABLISH.

1 (8) THE DEFENDANT MAY BE LIABLE FOR THE COSTS OF THE
2 PROCEEDINGS IN THE DISTRICT COURT AND FOR PAYMENT TO THE CRIMINAL
3 INJURIES COMPENSATION FUND.

4 (9) (I) A DEFENDANT WHO HAS BEEN FOUND GUILTY OF A CIVIL
5 OFFENSE UNDER THIS SECTION HAS THE SAME RIGHT TO APPEAL OR TO FILE A
6 MOTION FOR A NEW TRIAL OR A MOTION FOR A REVISION OF A JUDGMENT PROVIDED
7 BY LAW IN THE TRIAL OF A CRIMINAL CASE.

8 (II) A MOTION SHALL BE MADE IN THE SAME MANNER AS
9 PROVIDED IN THE TRIAL OF CRIMINAL CASES, AND THE COURT, IN RULING ON THE
10 MOTION, HAS THE SAME AUTHORITY PROVIDED IN THE TRIAL OF CRIMINAL CASES.

11 (10) THE STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR A COUNTY MAY PROSECUTE A CIVIL
12 OFFENSE UNDER THIS SECTION IN THE SAME MANNER AS PROSECUTION OF A
13 VIOLATION OF THE CRIMINAL LAWS OF THE STATE.

14 (11) IN A CIVIL OFFENSE CASE UNDER THIS SECTION, THE STATE'S
15 ATTORNEY MAY:

16 (I) ENTER A NOLLE PROSEQUI IN OR PLACE THE CASE ON THE
17 STET DOCKET; AND

18 (II) EXERCISE AUTHORITY IN THE SAME MANNER AS
19 PRESCRIBED BY LAW FOR VIOLATION OF THE CRIMINAL LAWS OF THE STATE.

20 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
21 October 1, 2026.

Approved:

Governor.

President of the Senate.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.