

I am writing in strong support of SB709, legislation that seeks to prohibit masked intimidation and harassment in Maryland. In a time when public safety and civil discourse are increasingly under threat, this bill is a necessary step in ensuring that individuals cannot use anonymity as a shield to engage in harassment, threats, or acts of intimidation.

The right to free expression is fundamental to our democracy, but when individuals conceal their identities to intimidate others—whether in public spaces, at protests, or online—this right crosses into harmful territory. Historically, masked intimidation has been used by hate groups and bad actors to spread fear and suppress the voices of vulnerable communities. By prohibiting this behavior, SB709 helps to uphold Maryland’s commitment to safety, respect, and open dialogue.

This bill does not target peaceful demonstrators or those wearing masks for health or cultural reasons. Instead, it specifically addresses those who use masks to evade accountability while engaging in acts of intimidation and harassment. It provides law enforcement with the necessary tools to deter such behavior while ensuring that Maryland remains a place where all individuals can safely express themselves without fear of masked threats.

For these reasons, I urge a favorable vote on SB709.

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