

#UnMaskHate

An Act to Create a New Maryland Law on Masked Harassment



Senate Sponsors: Senators Jeff Waldstreicher and Michael A. Jackson

House Sponsors: Delegates Adrian Boafu, Karen Simpson, Ryan Spiegel, Karen Toles, and Joe Vogel

Bill number: SB709 Introduced on January 31, 2025

Bill number: HB1081 Introduced on February 5, 2025

About the Issue

- Bad actors across the ideological spectrum are intentionally harassing, intimidating, and threatening others while deliberately wearing masks to place others in reasonable fear for their physical safety.
- For over a century, anti-masked harassment laws have been in place across the country to counter such tactics, including those historically used by the Ku Klux Klan during its reign of terror.
- Over the past several years, masked individuals in Maryland and across the country have once again used masks and face coverings to intentionally conceal their identities while engaging in hateful acts of harassment, destruction, and violence.
- It is crucial that we implement new anti-masked harassment laws to protect vulnerable communities from these tactics of intimidation fueled by bias and hate.

About SB 709 and HB 1081

- Marylanders are seeing a resurgence in masked harassment and intimidation.
- This bill seeks to hold individuals and groups, who are intentionally and purposefully concealing their identity with a mask or other device and with the intent to place another person in reasonable fear for their physical safety, accountable for the consequences of their conduct.
- This bill contains explicit carveouts for individuals who are wearing masks for health or safety reasons, or for the purpose of religious expression.
- The bill ensures that masked harassment is explicitly addressed under Maryland law by creating a new criminal statute.

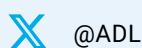
About #UnMaskHate

- #UnMaskHate is a coalition of diverse stakeholders led by ADL, in partnership with the Greater Washington Urban League and the Greater Baltimore Urban League, united in a common purpose to curb the rising tide of masked harassment and intimidation in our communities.
- We know that this issue affects every single Marylander, especially minorities and marginalized groups. It is long overdue for our state to prioritize public safety and ensure that our laws adequately protect individuals of all races, ethnicities, faiths and creeds from this tactic of hate.

For more information or to get involved, please contact Washington-DC@adl.org

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