

February 24, 2025

The Honorable Chair Senator William C. Smith, Jr.
Chairman, Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: OPPOSITION of Senate Bill 0709
(Criminal Law - Masked Intimidation - Prohibition (Unmask Hate Act)) - UNFAVORABLE

Dear Chair Smith and Judicial Proceedings Committee Members,

Hi, my name is JP, I am a MD resident and I am writing to urge you to vote unfavorably on House Bill 1081/Senate Bill 0709. Carve-outs for medical mask use are not enough to protect disabled people from the dangerous consequences of this bill. Anti-mask laws will only increase mask stigma, increasing harassment and discrimination against mask-wearers.

Banning masks could disproportionately affect vulnerable populations who rely on masks for health and safety reasons, such as individuals with weakened immune systems or those protecting themselves from airborne illnesses. It may also increase harassment and discrimination against mask-wearers by reinforcing stigmas and limited personal choice. Furthermore, mask bans could discourage public health practices during outbreaks, making communities more susceptible to the spread of infectious diseases. Allowing individuals to wear masks without fear of penalty supports public health, personal freedom, and community well-being.

For these reasons and more I ask that the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee give SB0706 an unfavorable report.