

**ADRIAN BOAFO**  
*Legislative District 23*  
Prince George's County

ASSISTANT MAJORITY LEADER

Economic Matters Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates  
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**THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES**  
**ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401**

Chair Luke Clippinger  
Judiciary Committee  
House Office Building, Room 100  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

HB1081, the Unmask Hate Act, seeks to prohibit the use of masks, hoods, or other face coverings for the purpose of harassment, intimidation, or threats against individuals or communities. This legislation is a necessary and overdue step to ensure the safety and dignity of all Maryland residents, particularly those vulnerable to hate-based intimidation.

For over a century, groups like the Ku Klux Klan and other extremist organizations have used face coverings to hide their identities while terrorizing communities. While anti-masking laws have been on the books in various states and municipalities to curb such tactics, some have become inactive, repealed, or inadequately enforced. Today, we are witnessing a resurgence of masked intimidation—not only from white supremacist groups but also from individuals and groups who seek to harass and instill fear under the cover of anonymity.

Since October 7, there has been a significant rise in masked harassment and intimidation, particularly targeting Jewish communities. College campuses, places of worship, and public spaces have become arenas where bad actors exploit anonymity to threaten and intimidate others. We have also seen masked individuals engaging in destruction of property and disrupting educational institutions, fostering an atmosphere of fear that stifles free expression and public safety.

HB1081 is carefully crafted to ensure that Maryland remains a place where free speech and peaceful assembly are protected while drawing a clear line against acts of harassment and intimidation. This bill is narrowly tailored to target only those who deliberately hide their identities while engaging in threatening behavior. Importantly, it includes critical exceptions for individuals masking for religious, medical, professional, or weather-related reasons.

This bill does not infringe on the rights of peaceful protestors or individuals engaging in lawful activities. It simply ensures that those who intend to harass or threaten others are held accountable and do not abuse anonymity to escape justice. For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on this crucial legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adrian Boafo'.

Delegate Adrian Boafo