

Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable
SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

January 22, 2026

Dear Honorable Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Samantha Hodge-Williams, and I am a resident of Garrett County, Maryland. I am writing in support of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings

It is important for our public safety that ICE officers can be identified. Without visible identification and uniform standards, fear and public distrust in law enforcement increases. Furthermore, community members are more likely to intervene if they watch someone being attacked or kidnapped by a masked, unmarked group. There's no way to know if someone is simply impersonating an ICE officer.

Our county sheriff values transparency and the community has benefited from this. Every day, law enforcement officers wear uniforms and bodycams to fulfill duties serving communities with hiding their faces or identity. Unidentified ICE officers who typically do not notify local law enforcement of their whereabouts, are more likely to cause tragic friendly fire incidents, where one officer accidentally shoots another. We should not be allowing armed individuals with masks to be held to a different standard and rules than local officers, intimidating and frightening communities with impunity.

I urge you to vote in favor of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings for transparency and safety.

Thank you for your time and consideration.