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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 0245, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings

2026-01-20

TO: Chair William C. Smith, Jr. & the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: ida kenna, Greater Baltimore Democratic Socialists of America,

Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee, my name is ida kenna, I live in Baltimore City, Maryland, and I am writing to support SB 0001, Prohibition on Face Coverings.

Community accountability is an essential component for trustworthy and safe policing. Allowing police to obscure their identity alarms people who encounter them and immediately destroys trust, because obviously officers hiding their faces are not willing to take responsibility for their actions. This behavior has become the standard for ICE and supporting DHS officers in their violent "immigration enforcement" that has often resulted in citizens as well as noncitizens getting brutalized, arrested, and even trafficked out of the country. We, the public, the safety of whom the state and the police are supposed to protect, must be able to seek accountability for law enforcement that break laws and abuse power in our presence.

Please let Maryland be a safer place for all of us than elsewhere in our country. Prohibiting masked law enforcement is one small step towards ensuring the people wearing those badges are discharging their duties faithfully. I urge you to support SB 0001 and help ensure that Maryland's law enforcement is being held to the highest standards of conduct.