

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 Kathleen Clair and I am a resident of Columbia, Maryland. I submit this testimony in my personal capacity only. I am writing in support of **SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**.

I grew up in Columbia, Maryland and now am raising my two children here. I also lived in Montgomery County, Maryland for 14 years. Immigrants and their family members are our neighbors, our friends, our children's classmates and confidants. The same people who have graciously opened their homes and hearts to my family are now in danger. The spaces in which my children have shared laughter and celebrated birthdays are now among the targets for roving gangs of armed federal agents who shove, shoot, and grab first, and ask questions later.

But not only are federal immigration authorities engaged in overly broad and abusive sweeps in which they are brazenly violating the law and common decency, they are doing so while hiding their identities. This environment of anonymity and impunity discourages accountability and restraint. If one were designing a system to encourage abusive tactics, it would involve anonymity for the men with guns and handcuffs.

I have also been horrified by the—sadly entirely predictable—news reports of people impersonating immigration agents to threaten, rob, kidnap, and sexually assault victims, a danger of which the FBI itself has now had to warn people. A society in which the government's policies and practices require people to submit to the will of any group of masked men with guns who begin ordering them around is not a free society.

It is important for public safety that ICE and other federal 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.

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.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Clair