

SB0001_RichardKaplowitz_FAV
01/22/2026

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TESTIMONY ON SB#0001 - POSITION: FAVORABLE
Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings

TO: Chair Smith, Jr., Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of/ SB#/0001, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings

This bill will protect Maryland residents from multiple issues that arise when law enforcement or persons falsely claiming that status conduct themselves while masked. The bill accomplishes this by requiring the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission to develop a model policy prohibiting the use of a face covering in the performance of duty; requiring a law enforcement agency to adopt a policy consistent with the model policy developed by the Commission; and prohibiting a certain law enforcement officer from wearing a certain face covering while in the performance of duty in the State, except when actively engaged in an undercover operation.

As reported by the Center for American Progress

This is the new, frightening image of U.S. immigration enforcement under President Donald Trump: violence, covered faces, and unknown agency affiliations. These images signal a troubling move “away from [democratic controls](#),” where officers are visible and accountable to the communities they serve, and toward [militarization](#) that serves to instill fear and stifle dissent. ¹

In a column in Maryland Matters on August 6, 2025 Karl Bickel, who retired from the Department of Justice, noted

The wearing of masks by ICE agents has had a chilling effect on communities where agents have conducted raids, particularly when naturalized and native-born citizens have been caught up in their net. The intentional fear that is generated by ICE agents is damaging to local law enforcement. It erodes the police/community trust necessary for state and local law enforcement to effectively do its job. ²

PBS reported on how wearing masks creates opportunities for imposters to conduct crimes. ³ This bill provides a solution to the problems created when law enforcement is masked.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB0001.

¹ <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/masked-and-unidentifiable-the-risks-of-federal-law-enforcement-operating-without-identification/>

² <https://marylandmatters.org/2025/08/06/getting-in-front-of-the-police-masking-controversy/>

³ <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/rise-of-ice-agents-wearing-masks-creates-opportunity-for-imposters-to-conduct-crimes>