



## MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Senator Smith, Jr., Chair  
Senator Waldstreicher, Vice Chair  
Judicial Committee Members  
FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus  
DATE: 1/20/2026  
RE: SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers -  
Prohibition on Face Coverings

### **The MLLC supports SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of SB0001.

Within the past year, federal agents, primarily ICE agents, have worked with state and local law enforcement agencies across the country to carry out enforcement and removal operations. These operations have been subject to a great deal of scrutiny for various reasons, one being the intimidating and secretive nature of the facial coverings worn by ICE and local law enforcement agents during these operations. The practice has raised serious concerns about accountability and public trust, prompting legislative action in other states. California addressed this issue directly through its "No Secret Police Act," enacted in November 2025, which restricted the use of facial coverings by state law enforcement officers.<sup>1</sup> California's rationale for enacting this legislation was due to the impact these practices had on the public perception of officers, like instilling fear among members of the public.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the California Legislature stated that the reduced visibility of an officer's face could lead to more intense interactions with the public.<sup>3</sup> As illustrated on ICE's website, most of these enforcement operations are directed toward Latino communities.<sup>4</sup> Maryland's Latino communities also are particularly vulnerable in these situations.

This bill will prohibit the use of face coverings by law enforcement officers in the course of duty and requires law enforcement agencies with officers operating within Maryland to adopt a policy consistent with the policy developed under the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commissions.

Additionally, the bill establishes penalties for violating the prohibition, such as making it a misdemeanor and holding that a violator waives all immunity in civil action. This bill can help hold law enforcement officers accountable for violations made against the Latino community. Moreover, it is a valuable step toward ensuring the safety of the Maryland Latino community.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on SB0001.

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<sup>1</sup> [California SB-627 Law Enforcement: Masks](#)

<sup>2</sup> [California SB-627 \(1\)\(a-b\) Law Enforcement: Masks](#)

<sup>3</sup> [California SB-627 \(1\)\(c-d\) Law Enforcement: Masks](#)

<sup>4</sup> [ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations Statistics | ICE](#)