

Bill Title: Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings - SB1
Position: SUPPORT (FAV)
To: Judicial Proceedings Committee
Date: January 22, 2026

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

Quaker Voice of Maryland (QVM) is a faith-based advocacy group that advocates for policies that are just, compassionate, equitable, and respectful of the inherent worth of every person and the Earth upon which we live. Quakers across Maryland shared with us their increasing concern for stronger immigrant protections. QVM sees SB1 as an urgent priority in response to the unconstitutional and inhumane actions taken by our federal government to implement mass deportation policies.

The Department of Homeland Security Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is operating as a paramilitary force, using draconian operational practices that threaten the lives, dignity and human rights of the people they claim to protect. Removing face coverings from law enforcement officers can prevent potential abuse and protect the public from potential threats. Allowing ICE agents to be unidentifiable can lead to misunderstandings and potential danger for both agents and bystanders.

Ensuring ICE agents are identifiable upholds the right to due process and helps prevent wrongful detention, since face coverings can deter immigrants from seeking legal assistance or reporting violations as they may fear for their safety. Unmasking agents allows them to be held accountable for their actions and ensures transparency in immigration enforcement. Requiring that law enforcement agents are identifiable will reduce fear in immigrant communities and enhance trust in law enforcement officers.

Impersonation of federal, state, and local law enforcement is on the rise around the country. Masking makes legitimate law enforcement more difficult when people cannot distinguish between legitimate enforcement and criminal activity. A ban on masks makes it simple and clear to all what is legitimate police activity and what is not. In Maryland, law enforcement officers are required by law to clearly identify themselves.

The Quaker experience of the Divine affects what we do in our personal lives, what we believe and how we work for changes in the wider world. We embrace the knowledge that all persons are children of the Divine and brothers and sisters of one another. **Our spiritual and social testimonies, including those of peace, community, integrity, and equality, lead us to submit this testimony for SB1.** Please protect the lives, dignity and human rights of all people, and the integrity and effectiveness of local law enforcement, by issuing a **FAVORABLE** report for SB1. Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.

Sincerely,

Erinn Camp Mansour, *Working Group Member, on behalf of Quaker Voice of Maryland*
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