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Committee: Judicial Procedures

Testimony on SB0001- Public Safety Law Enforcement Officers Prohibition on Face Coverings

Organization: Individual

Person Submitting: Cynthia Pearson

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: 22 January 2026

Dear Chairman Augustine and members of the committee,

I am writing in favor of SB0001 (Public Safety Law Enforcement Officers Prohibition on Face Coverings). I believe that banning law enforcement face masks in all but certain situations -- as specified in this bill -- is not only important, but it is also feasible. Many people testifying in support of this legislation emphasize the need for a state law to ban masking by law enforcement officers. The arguments in favor of the need for this law are compelling. Allowing law enforcement officers to wear masks supports criminality, both directly and indirectly. Criminals can easily impersonate masked law enforcement officers, expanding their opportunities to commit crimes. People who encounter masked officers are unlikely to develop trusting relationships with law enforcement and may be less likely to report crimes or assist officers trying to solve crimes. These problems are strong arguments in favor of banning masks. Some opponents of banning masks claim that law enforcement officers need to cover their faces to protect themselves from people who might later harm them. I believe that claim is exaggerated. Unmasked law enforcement officers interact with criminals all the time, including some very dangerous ones. Yet they conscientiously do their jobs, arresting criminals and testifying in court. One of my favorite members of my extended family was a police officer who spent several years on the narcotics task force in his city. He arrested and testified against some really bad folks who were running very lucrative businesses making meth. His face was always uncovered. He's now retired after serving for more than twenty-five years. His experience and the experience of tens of thousands of other law enforcement officers who have worked without masks are important to consider. Except in certain situations, which this legislation allows for, law enforcement officers can safely work without masks and they should do so.

For all these reasons, I recommend a favorable report on SB0001.

Thank you,

Cynthia Pearson