

January 20, 2026

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Distinguished Committee Members,

My name is Brandon Russell and I am a resident of St. Mary's County. I'm writing in support of Senate Bill 1 - Prohibition of Face Coverings for Law Enforcement Officers, and urge the committee to issue a **favorable report** on this legislation.

The clearly unconstitutional acts of Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents across the United States have instilled distrust and fear of law enforcement in our communities. Fear is driven by masked abductions of supposed criminals by ICE agents, an action in which local law enforcement agencies could potentially be involved if they have agreements with ICE.

Law enforcement officers wield significant authority on behalf of the public, and that authority must come with clear accountability. Banning face coverings for law enforcement ensures transparency, reinforces public trust, and allows officers to be readily identified when exercising police powers. This policy protects both community members and officers by promoting professionalism, lawful conduct, and confidence in the integrity of policing.

Importantly, the law also includes provisions where masks or other face coverings are allowed under certain circumstances. Marylanders can be sure of no impact to constitutional law enforcement activities keeping them safe.

Again, I urge the committee to issue a **favorable report** on this legislation.

Thank you,

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