

SB0001 Prohibition on Face Coverings Written Testimony

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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 0155, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers -
Prohibition on Face Coverings

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TO: Chair J. Sandy Bartlett & Members of the House Judiciary Committee
FROM: Laura Stayman

Members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Laura Stayman, I live in Garrett Park, Maryland, and I am writing to support SB 0001, Prohibition on Face Coverings.

I support this bill because I believe accountability is essential to legitimate law enforcement, and visibility plays a real role in that. Not only do face coverings remove personal accountability for law enforcement, but psychological research has shown that anonymity allows for de-individuation, lowering inhibitions to socially unacceptable behavior. This is already widely known in anonymous online environments where people take much more extreme viewpoints than they might voice in real life and engage in stalking and cyberbullying behavior, knowing that their actions can't be traced back to their person.

On a human level, masks can also create fear—when people cannot see who is behind the badge, fear of the unknown can quickly become fear of law enforcement itself. Requiring uncovered faces affirms transparency, reinforces professionalism, and helps ensure that authority is exercised in a way that is both responsible and worthy of public trust.

I urge you to support SB 0001 and help ensure that Maryland's law enforcement is being held to the highest standards of conduct.

Thank you.