

TESTIMONY FOR SB0001

Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings

Bill Sponsor: Senator Augustine

Committee: Judicial Proceedings

Person Submitting: Monica Oconnor

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0001. I appeal to you as a Maryland resident, a citizen of this country and above all a human being longing for a country I can be proud of. I am terrified and angry that federal officers, whether they are Immigration Enforcement or other federal agencies, are coming into communities in force wearing military clothes, carrying weaponry that is not suitable for the jobs they are doing, with faces covered like paramilitary gestapos. This serves no one but the irresponsible administration that sent them out like this in the first place. In this atmosphere we are all Renee Good.

Face coverings make anyone who wears them and has a weapon feel invincible and that there will be no repercussions for any action they take, no matter how brutal, because they are anonymous. The face coverings terrify anyone who they come near and cause many people to run away out of fear. This gives the officer license to chase them down and inflict more harm.

Law Enforcement Officers used to approach people in a more open and less aggressive manner, so our streets did not seem like something out of a war zone. We have to get back to that. This bill, which we are overwhelmingly in favor of, is a first step. Unmask the people who feel that they are invincible and make them do their jobs without all the aggression. Other than people who have committed major crimes (murder, rape, burglary, etc.), most immigrants have only committed a civil crime (a crime on par with a traffic ticket) which does not warrant the level of a approach that is currently happening.

This bill will prohibit Law Enforcement Officers, whether they are state, local, or federal from hiding their faces with an exception for undercover officers. There are other exceptions for gas masks, masks to protect from viruses, etc. Officers covering their faces can be charged with a misdemeanor and, if convicted, face up to 2 years in jail and a penalty of \$2,000. They also waive any immunity to civil action.

I look to you, our elected officials to de-escalate the inhumane the violent tactics that are being used to terrify and intimidate the public. I hold you responsible for protecting the public by legislating a mask-of policy and request a FAVORABLE vote.

