

## FAVORABLE Testimony

### Senate Bill 1

#### **Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings**

Chairperson and esteemed members of the Committee,

In our capacity as residents of Maryland and foster parents of unaccompanied minors, we strongly urge you to **Support** Senate Bill 1.

The face coverings federal agents are using when carrying out enforcement actions run counter to that which we value in our society – freedom, trust, transparency, safety. **DHS personnel are intentionally carrying out their immigration enforcement in a manner that terrifies communities and minimizes transparency and accountability.** Maryland lawmakers must act to protect us from this terrorism and lawlessness as much as possible.

When targeted community members are faced with masked, armed men, breaking their car windows to drag them from their vehicles, or kidnapping them off the street, we *all* have a right to know who these officers are, and whether they are in fact federal officials rather than private citizens deciding to kidnap someone in broad daylight.

The complete lack of transparency is not only an attempt to evade accountability for abuses. It also erodes community faith in *all* law enforcement agencies, including Maryland state and local police agencies, who have spent decades working to build trust in our communities.

**SB 1 is drafted to responsibly permit law enforcement officers to use the protective gear they need to carry out their work safely, while banning the use of face coverings for the sole purpose of concealing agent identities and instilling fear in the communities our government is supposed to be *serving*.** To permit government officials to conceal their identities while murdering and kidnapping residents of our communities parallels the tactics of the Ku Klux Klan. This chilling fact cannot be ignored.

As you well know, the terror ICE has spread in our society is real, widespread, and well-justified. As temporary caregivers to a young child who was terrified that her mother had been taken every time she did answer the phone, we witnessed firsthand the stress and trauma that this lawlessness inflicts on not only the adults being targeted based on their ethnicity, but also their children.

We call on all Maryland lawmakers to **strongly support** this legislation that preserves the ability of law enforcement officers to protect their faces as needed to carry out legitimate functions but prohibits their use when its function is to allow government agents to terrorize our communities anonymously.

Signed,

Megan Good & Misti McKeeken