

My name is David Tupper and I offer testimony in support of SB0001 (HB0155), Prohibition on Face Covering, the proposed ban on face masks for law enforcement officers, especially ICE.

While I live in Garrett County, I also have family in Prince George's county. Last fall my daughter witnessed a **masked** ICE officer brutally tackling a man at a Queens Chapel Road intersection in Hyattsville while she was riding a bike with her five-year-old son on the way to his school. In a frightening moment, the officer dropped his gun, scrambled for it, then pointed it toward a witness who was filming the incident, which was also frightfully near where my daughter and grandson were waiting to cross the road. My grandson was confused and frightened and asked his mother to explain what was happening. She could not. The careless and negligent actions of this officer could have accidentally turned deadly, and with his face and other identifying information completely hidden, would there have been accountability for his actions?

The physical actions of ICE officers engaging in violent arrests and dangerous encounters with bystanders are bad enough. But covering their faces and refusing to show any other identification makes it even worse. Our local and state law enforcement officers do not wear masks. Our US troops do not wear masks, even when fighting overseas in war. Why should any branch of law enforcement be allowed to cover their faces, especially when there is evidence of careless and brutal encounters with community members?

I am also very concerned that we have no way of knowing if someone is impersonating an ICE officer. There are many bad actors who can easily get camouflage clothing, put on a mask and terrorize communities. ICE is proving to have a lack of adequate training, is often behaving unprofessionally, and often reacting with violence at the slightest provocation. People of ill intent could easily join in on the brutality. With no identifying information or facial recognition, there is a horrifying possibility that there will be violent agitators impersonating law enforcement.

I would like our representatives in the US congress to ban face coverings for law enforcement, but since that is not likely, at minimum I would like to live in a state where such practices are banned.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote in support of SB00001.

Sincerely,

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