ZEKE COHEN
Council President

BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21202

January 22. 2026

Honorable Chair Smith and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings committee,

I write to you in support of **Senate Bill 1 Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings.** This legislation is timely and responsive to the concerns held by many residents of Baltimore City.

Recent waves of federal immigration law enforcement are characterized by a pervasive lack of accountability: unmarked cars roll into neighborhoods, carrying masked, armed, and anonymous agents. Increasingly, these federal agents are given carte blanche to violate established law-enforcement norms and flout due process. The past several months alone, there have been notable increases in mass racial profiling; refusal of agents to identify themselves to the public; disappearing of the documented and undocumented alike; and--tragically—the normalized use of lethal force.

Here in Baltimore City, we are determined to afford a good quality of life to our residents. Thanks to the collaboration of many local and state leaders (including but not limited to Mayor Scott, Commissioner Worley, State's Attorney Bates, and Director Mavronis), Baltimore ended 2025 with fewer than half the homicides we experienced just two years prior. However, public safety is more than a declining murder rate—it requires trust in those enforcing the law to be accountable.

There is good, winning work happening in our city, but it will pale against a backdrop in which federal agents continue to be permitted to snatch residents from our streets without so much as needing to identify themselves.

I urge the committee to vote favorably on this bill. Please contact my office with any further questions.

CC: Shamoyia Gardiner, Deputy Chief of Staff and Legislative Director