



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB0001

Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings

January 22, 2026

FAVORABLE

TO: Chair Senator William C. Smith, Jr, Vice Chair, Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, all members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Lynn R. Mortoro, member of the Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network. (MEPPN)

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair, Senator Waldstreicher and all members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

The Episcopal Church urges our members, as people of faith and people of conscience, pledge to challenge and question any unjust immigration law, policy, or practice that is inconsistent with our biblical mandate to “not wrong or oppress a resident alien” (Exodus 22:21)

The idea that certain members of our law enforcement community are able to work in these vulnerable immigrant communities with no identification of any kind, including no name badges, but especially wearing face masks leads to suspicion and fear. No one is certain who to trust, what they are supposed to do and what their rights, according to our Constitution really are.

These actions are damaging to our communities that they are supposed to be protecting.

It must stop, beginning with the removal of facial masks. Stop the hiding.

The 287(g) program has a documented history of racial profiling, discrimination, and wrongful detention. It diverts local law enforcement away from their primary role of protecting public safety and erodes trust between law enforcement and immigrant communities. When trust is broken, community safety suffers.

The Diocese of Maryland requests a FAVORABLE report