

SB0001- Law Enforcement Officers: Prohibition on Face Coverings

Judicial Proceedings

January 22, 2026

Position: Favorable

Dear Honorable Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee

My name is Linda Green and I am a resident of Mount Rainier. I am a retired physician and member of Health Care Workers for Palestine and the International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines. Activities with these groups has informed my work in the American Public Health Association and in my community. I am speaking in favor of SB0001-Law Enforcement Officers: Prohibition on Face Coverings.

For the past several years masking has become a politicized issue even when it comes to protection from airborne illnesses such as COVID-19 and flu. Last year masking became an issue in legislative circles because residents seeking an end to the genocide in Gaza feared both medical disease and political persecution, doxxing and unfounded charges of anti-semitism. Careers, educational tracks and safety were all reasons that students and faculty masked during protests because they feared the power of the US government which was seeking to protect its interests in the middle east by any means necessary. Dissent over government policy was viewed as anti-semitic rather than a fight for justice and humanity. It is to the credit of the Judiciary Committee that you listened to the many students and organizations that discussed this topic last session.

This year the power of the US government has taken an even more ominous direction as it uses military personnel and an expanded homeland security force to attack immigrants working in the country. Racist profiling, random detentions and deportations and violent attacks on residents have led to protests once again. This time federal enforcers have worn masks and refused to identify themselves. They do this to intimidate residents as well as to protect their identity when snatching residents off the streets, out of medical and educational facilities and using gas and bullets to deter protestors armed with whistles. State power does not seem to be enough protection for them. The enforcers from ICE, Border Patrol, Park Police, Transit police, Secret Service and other agencies know that they are participating in fascism and seek to hide their identities. This secret police and gestapo- like army needs to be resisted and this bill is a small step towards pushing back. Certainly our state police forces are expected to identify themselves in encounters with civilians and we need to preempt any desire for state forces to adopt behaviour similar to that we are seeing now among federal forces.

The exceptions in this bill to a rule about not wearing face coverings certainly still allows police to carry out their missions as usual.

I urge the committee to issue a favorable report on SB0001. Thank you for your time and consideration of this important bill.