



CITY TAKOMA OF PARK MARYLAND

Support Senate Bill 1 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face

Coverings

Senate Judicial Proceedings, January 22, 2026

The City of Takoma Park supports and urges favorable consideration of this bill. Senate Bill 1 calls for the development and implementation of a state policy that prohibits law enforcement officers from local, state, or federal government agencies from wearing face coverings that conceal or obscure their identity. However, the bill also allows for carefully delineated exceptions necessary to enable law enforcement agents to do their jobs in specific circumstances.

The City of Takoma Park is a municipality of almost 18,000 people living within 2.4 square miles in Montgomery County, along the Washington, D.C. border. We are a highly diverse community and approximately a third of our residents were born outside of the U.S. Our city has worked diligently to build trust between our local police department and our immigrant community so that residents feel comfortable reporting crime and calling on our local police for help.

In the past year, the City of Takoma Park has experienced increased federal immigration enforcement activity. Federal immigration agents are often masked, not wearing any agency insignia or identification, and in unmarked cars. As a result, residents are unable to decipher between authorized federal immigration enforcement officers and a group of armed persons kidnapping community members. This lack of transparency threatens public safety and the well-being of all our residents. More importantly, it destroys residents' trust in local law enforcement.

SB 1 is a key step forward to ensure consistency in law enforcement activities across all levels of government. Marylanders should be able to expect that all law enforcement officers—federal, state, and local—are clearly identifiable and accountable when performing their duties.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, “injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” The use of tactics that unnecessarily conceal the identities of federal immigration officers during their duties constitutes an injustice. We support the prompt enactment of this bill into law, and swift action by the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission to develop the necessary implementing policy. Legitimate law enforcement should be able to operate in the open and have nothing to hide.

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