



TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS COMMITTEE

SB0001: Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings

POSITION: Favorable

By: Linda T. Kohn, President

Date: January 22, 2026

The League of Women Voters supports a criminal justice system at the federal, state and local level that is just, effective, equitable, transparent, and that fosters public trust at all stages, including policing practices. As noted by the [Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights](#) of which the League is a member, government agents that conceal their identities not only erode trust but also instill fear, undermine due process, and strip citizens of their ability to hold power accountable.

The League also supports policing practices that promote safety for both law enforcement officers and the communities they serve. As noted in an August 2025 [report from the Center for American Progress](#), the presence of unidentifiable officers makes policing more challenging and dangerous, as both community members and fellow officers could easily mistake them for lawbreakers. Consequent misidentification may result in refusal to comply with well-intentioned directives on the one hand and avoidable “friendly fire” incidents on the other. Moreover, all law enforcement agents should be held to the same policing standards and be afforded the same protections in the line of duty. It is not clear that unmasked federal law enforcement agents are more likely to be subjected to “doxxing” (a practice where personal information is shared as a precursor to harassment) than their state and local counterparts.

In calling for the Maryland Police Standards and Training Commission to develop a policy affirming that all law enforcement agencies operating within the state of Maryland must commit to transparency, accountability and public trust; that the authorized use of face coverings be limited to specific and clearly defined circumstances, and that the generalized and undifferentiated apprehension about law enforcement safety is not sufficient to justify the use of face coverings, SB0001 adheres to principles espoused by the League.

The League of Women Voters of Maryland, representing nearly 2,000 citizens throughout Maryland, **strongly urges you to issue a favorable report.**