

Public Safety – Law Enforcement – Prohibition on Face Covering

January 22, 2026

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

My name is Paula Casagrande, and I live in and own a business in Havre de Grace, MD. I am writing in support of SB0001/HB0155, Public Safety – Law Enforcement – Prohibition on Face Covering.

If a masked man with a gun were to come up to me or my car I would think it was a criminal and have a flight or fight reaction. Next thing you know I am shot and labeled a domestic terrorist! I had always thought law enforcement was there to protect us, not to terrorize us. I am exhausted from being scared. I have nightmares all the time masked men coming to my home.

Before 2015, immigration agents rarely wore masks except when undercover or during certain targeted actions. Normalizing masks has endangered public safety. Multiple states have arrested people impersonating ICE agents for devious purposes. In some cases masked, plainclothes agents have been mistaken for criminals, creating fear, chaos, and confusion. Most importantly, masking has contributed to a feeling of impunity among certain agents, leading to increased aggression and violence on the part of those agents.

Seeing images of residents and workers being grabbed by masked, armed men, and taken away to unknown locations raises the image of authoritarian, secret police – so hard to believe here in America and in Maryland. Banning the use of masks by ICE and CBP agents will go a long way to alleviate fear and distrust among residents and will help restore faith that agents will be held accountable when their actions exceed their authority, becoming illegal and unconstitutional.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a **favorable report** on favorable report on SB0001/HB0155.

Thank you so much!

Paula Casagrande