



SB001: Law Enforcement Officers: Prohibition on Face Coverings

Judicial Proceedings

January 22, 2026

Position: Favorable

Honorable Chair Smith and Committee Members,

Peace Action Montgomery has nearly 1,500 members and is a chapter entity under national Peace Action, the largest grassroots organization dedicated to eliminating the threat of weapons of mass destruction and promoting U.S foreign policy that is based on peaceful support for human rights and democracy, and cooperation with the world community.

I work in international contexts where the line between legitimate state authority and unaccountable or rogue forces is very clear. One common warning sign of abusive policing around the world is officers hiding their identities during routine enforcement, crowd control, or public demonstrations. In many countries, masked security forces are not seen as protecting public safety; they are seen as acting without accountability. Democratic societies deliberately reject those practices.

When law enforcement officers act on behalf of the state, they carry significant power, including the power to detain, arrest, and use force. That power is legitimate only when it is exercised openly and within clear legal limits. When officers conceal their faces, it becomes harder for the public to know who is acting, harder to report misconduct, and harder to maintain trust. This blurring of identity weakens the relationship between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

Senate Bill 1 addresses this problem in a practical and balanced way. It makes clear that generalized fear is not a sufficient reason for officers to hide their identities, while still allowing face coverings when they are truly necessary—for medical reasons, environmental hazards, undercover work, or specific safety-related operations. This clarity helps prevent unnecessary escalation and confusion during public interactions.

Most importantly, the bill reinforces a basic principle: in a democracy, those who enforce the law must themselves be visible and accountable under the law. This is not an anti-police measure. It is a pro-rule of law measure that protects both the public and law enforcement officers by setting clear, professional standards.

I urge Judicial Proceedings to issue a favorable report.

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