

Testimony on SB0001 - Favorable
SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement - Prohibition on Face Coverings
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Hearing date: January 22, 2026

From: Laura Atwood, Silver Spring, MD

Dear Chair Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing a **favorable** testimony in support of **SB0001 - Law Enforcement - Prohibition on Face Coverings**.

Federal agents didn't start covering their faces (even during Covid) until 2025. But now, current federal agents have terrible company, in U.S. history and in tyrannical regimes around the world, in concealing their identities in order to commit horrible acts with impunity.

(Even social media shows us that perceived anonymity does not bring out the best in people.)

Power unchecked is dangerous and destructive, as we are seeing; power must be accompanied by transparency and accountability.

Have you witnessed ICE abductions yet? My first time, several months ago, I was just randomly driving down East-West Highway west of downtown Silver Spring, on my way to bring a friend to a medical appointment, when I saw unmarked cars with flashing lights and a car with an Uber sticker. I joined other bystanders on the sidewalk and began to film the agents & contact rapid response organizations. I asked one agent if he could please show identification, and he did not but instead started to threaten me. He and some others were masked, with heavy weapons on display; I later showed a friend in Hungary (hardly a model democracy), who gasped and said, "This is not the United States!" But it is. (After about a half-hour, the agents were satisfied with the papers of the person they'd pulled over, and he was let go, mouthing "thank you" to bystanders--others have not been so fortunate.)

I have listened to so many affected community members (including high school students) share their stories with courage, moral clarity, and a valid sense of urgency. I expect the same qualities from legislators whose job is to serve the public.

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

Thank you for your time and consideration.