



Testimony on SB 1 - Favorable
SB 1 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

January 22, 2026

Dear Honorable Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee,

Silver Spring Justice Coalition offers **favorable** testimony in support of **SB-1 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**.

The Silver Spring Justice Coalition is an organization of community members, faith groups, and civil and human rights organizations from throughout Montgomery County that works to reduce the presence of police in our communities; eliminate violence and harm by police; establish transparency and accountability; and redirect public funds toward community needs.

This bill is about upholding Maryland's values—fairness, dignity, and justice for all. This bill affirms that our state should not be in the business of terrorizing families and individuals, undermining public trust, and allowing state, local, and federal law enforcement to hide behind masks. Instead, Maryland should remain focussed on community safety by prohibiting law enforcement officials from using masks solely to hide their identity.

Our immigrant community is under siege by federal government actions. Places in Montgomery County that used to bustle are empty and quiet because immigrants (and some who might be perceived as immigrants) are afraid to venture out for fear of a chance encounter with federal officials or local law enforcement. Immigrants are having food delivered by local mutual aid groups, getting others to take their children to school (or keeping them home), setting up Standby Guardianship for their children in case the parents are detained or deported, and even afraid to answer their phones or open their door to anyone they do not know.

Allowing law enforcement to hide behind face masks, simply increases the terror of law enforcement encounters and distrust of engaging with law enforcement. Such distrust leads immigrants to not report crimes or serve as witnesses, which makes all of us less safe.

Thus it is vital that the State promote the safety of all and minimize the risks immigrants face by prohibiting law enforcement from using masks to hide behind.

As part of the Maryland Immigrant Justice Table, along with CASA, we support a clean bill which will increase safety for all of us by prohibiting law enforcement at all levels from using masks to hide their identity. This is what will bring Maryland closer to our values.

For these reasons, the **Silver Spring Justice Coalition** adamantly urges the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to issue a **favorable report** on **SB 1**.

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