

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 Tracie Ulmes and I am a resident of Harford County and employee of Harford County Public Schools. I am writing in support of SB0245, Public Safety – Law Enforcement – Prohibition on Face Covering.

As a parent of school-aged children and a substitute teacher working in the public schools, the idea of masked agents coming into one of our school buildings horrifies me. I hate that students and other members of our community can be scooped up from their public lives in the first place; however, agents being able to hide their identity and avoid accountability is terrifying. We have seen examples of agents acting in bad faith and even violently; if they can hide behind a mask, many will feel even more empowered to terrorize our communities.

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, plain-clothes 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 SB0245.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Tracie Ulmes

Joppa, MD