

# **SB 0001 Public Safety face coverings for law enforcement**

Uploaded by: Abbie Ellicott

Position: FAV

# **SB 0001 Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings—SUPPORT**

Judicial Proceedings Committee, hearing January 22, 2026 at 1:00 pm

## **SUPPORT SB0001**

Dear Chairperson Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher and Senators on the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

I am a resident of Severna Park Maryland (District 31) and I am urging you to give a favorable vote on SB 0001 which would prohibit face coverings on law enforcement officers.

I am deeply concerned about the increased use of masks and face coverings on law enforcement officers, including ICE agents and Customs and Border Protection officers. The use of face coverings on law enforcement officers leads to heightened fear and anxiety for our citizens causing unnecessary and harmful trauma and escalating the risk of danger. It also erodes the public's trust in law enforcement. Legitimate law enforcement officers who are performing their job duties appropriately and lawfully should not have to disguise their identities. Law enforcement officers need to be identifiable in case there is an incident involving a citizen that requires investigation.

Please give a favorable vote to SB0001 and help to stop the dangerous practice of law enforcement concealing their identities via face coverings.

Sincerely,

Abbie Ellicott  
Severna Park, MD 21146

# **SB1 Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Alexandra Margorin

Position: FAV



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**Testimony of Jaime Contreras, 32BJ SEIU Executive Vice President  
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
Senate Bill No. 1 - Favorable  
January 22, 2026**

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

32BJ SEIU offers favorable testimony in support of **SB 1 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings.**

32BJ is the largest building service union in the country, representing over 185,000 members up and down the East Coast and over 3,700 members across Maryland. Our members are primarily immigrants and people of color, and make up the workforce of essential cleaners, door-people, airport workers, and other building service workers who keep our homes, workplaces, schools, and transportation hubs up and running.

With our dedicated members, we fight to build a just society where immigrants can live free of fear and are treated with dignity and respect. That is why we at 32BJ SEIU are deeply concerned with the presence of unidentified masked individuals who claim to be federal officers in our communities.

**SB 1** would ban the use of face coverings by any law enforcement officers or agents in Maryland, including federal, state, county or local law enforcement. The proposition that law enforcement officers should operate with reasonable transparency and accountability is a basic tenet of the rule of law. Every individual being detained should have the right to know who is detaining them, and under what authority.

Over the past year, increasingly reckless federal immigration policy has sown fear and distrust across our union's membership and damaged the broader social fabric that holds our state together. This fear is totally understandable, because not only have ICE agents wrongfully detained numerous U.S. citizens<sup>i</sup> and lawfully present noncitizens,<sup>ii</sup> there have also been multiple reports of criminals posing as ICE agents committing robberies, kidnappings, and sexual assaults across several states including Maryland.<sup>iii</sup> These incidents of officer impersonation are unsurprising given the frequency with which federal agents now don masks to conceal their identities during operations.<sup>iv</sup>

Due to the chaos created by this administration's approach to immigration enforcement, workers across Maryland are increasingly hesitant to show up for their jobs, employers are seeing disruption and uncertainty in their workplaces,

**Capital Area District**

Jaime Contreras, Capital Area District Director

**Washington, DC**

1025 Vermont Ave, NW, 7th Floor  
Washington DC 20005  
202.387.3211

**Baltimore**

20 S. Charles St. Suite 901  
Baltimore, MD 21201  
410.244.6299

**Virginia**

8618 Westwood Center Dr. Ste 308  
Vienna, VA 22182  
202.387.3211



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INTERNATIONAL UNION  
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and violations of labor and wage laws are going unaddressed because workers fear that speaking up could put themselves or their families at risk.

This climate of fear undermines basic workplace accountability. Retaliation—or the fear of it—is the primary reason workers do not report abuse. When immigration enforcement activity escalates, especially where it intersects with state or local law enforcement, unethical employers are effectively given cover to exploit vulnerable workers.<sup>v</sup> That exploitation does not stop with immigrant workers; it threatens safety and standards across entire sectors. Clear protections that separate immigration enforcement from workers' interactions with government are essential to ensuring that all workers can assert their rights without fear.

For these reasons, 32BJ SEIU urges the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to issue a **favorable report** on **SB 1**.

<sup>i</sup> Nicole Foy, *We Found That More Than 170 U.S. Citizens Have Been Held by Immigration Agents. They've Been Kicked, Dragged and Detained for Days*, ProPublica, October 16, 2025, <https://www.propublica.org/article/immigration-dhs-american-citizens-arrested-detained-against-will>

<sup>ii</sup> Heidi Altman, *ICE is detaining indiscriminately. And releasing almost no one*, National Immigration Law Center, October 21, 2025. <https://www.nilc.org/articles/ice-is-detaining-indiscriminately-and-releasing-almost-no-one/>

<sup>iii</sup> Dell Cameron & Caroline Haskins, *FBI Warns of Criminals Posing as ICE, Urges Agents to ID Themselves*, Wired, November 4, 2025, <https://www.wired.com/story/fbi-warns-of-criminals-posing-as-ice-urges-agents-to-id-themselves/>; Troy Pope & Rafael Sanchez-Cruz, *Police: Man posing as ICE agent sexually assaults woman under threat of deportation in Prince George's County*, WUSA9, June 16, 2023, <https://www.wusa9.com/article/news/crime/fake-ice-agent-sexually-assaults-woman/65-4889aaf6-3b80-45e5-b073-53e36608a98a>; Nuala Mernin, *ICE Raids Are Breeding Dangerous Imitators and Social Division*, Harvard Political Review, December 28, 2025, <https://theharvardpoliticalreview.com/ice-raids-imitators/>.

<sup>iv</sup> Allie Preston, *Masked and Unidentifiable: The Risks of Federal Law Enforcement Operating Without Identification*, Center for American Progress, August 28, 2025, <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/masked-and-unidentifiable-the-risks-of-federal-law-enforcement-operating-without-identification/>

<sup>v</sup> Daniel Costa, *Immigration enforcement and the workplace*, Economic Policy Institute, April 15, 2025, <https://www.epi.org/publication/immigration-enforcement-and-the-workplace/>

## Capital Area District

Jaime Contreras, Capital Area District Director

## Washington, DC

1025 Vermont Ave, NW, 7th Floor  
Washington DC 20005  
202.387.3211

## Baltimore

20 S. Charles St. Suite 901  
Baltimore, MD 21201  
410.244.6299

## Virginia

8618 Westwood Center Dr. Ste 308  
Vienna, VA 22182  
202.387.3211

# **SB 1\_FAV\_AdvanceMaryland.pdf**

Uploaded by: Alice Wilkerson

Position: FAV



Testimony on Senate Bill 1 – Favorable  
SB 1 – Transparency and Accountability in Law Enforcement  
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

January 22, 2026

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

Advance Maryland supports the passage of SB 1, legislation that would prohibit law enforcement officers from wearing face coverings while performing their official duties, with limited and appropriate exceptions. SB 1 is about transparency, accountability, and public trust—foundational principles for effective and constitutional policing. At a time when public confidence in law enforcement is fragile, Maryland must ensure that those exercising state power do so openly and are clearly identifiable to the public they serve.

Allowing law enforcement officers to conceal their identities while carrying out arrests, searches, or other enforcement actions undermines accountability and creates fear in communities. When residents cannot see an officer's face or identify who is exercising authority over them, it becomes far more difficult to report misconduct, seek redress, or trust that actions are lawful. Anonymous enforcement erodes due process and weakens the legitimacy of law enforcement institutions.

These concerns are especially acute in the context of immigration enforcement. Across the country, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has increasingly relied on masked officers during arrests and raids—often conducted in neighborhoods, homes, and public spaces. These operations are frequently sudden, intimidating, and traumatic, particularly for children and families. The use of face coverings by armed officers carrying out civil immigration enforcement has fueled fear, confusion, and misinformation, while making it functionally impossible to distinguish legitimate law enforcement from impersonators or vigilantes.

Masked officers escalate encounters, creating a climate of fear that discourages people from reporting crimes, cooperating as witnesses, or seeking help in emergencies. This does not enhance public safety—it undermines it.

SB 1 helps ensure that Maryland does not normalize secretive or militarized policing practices that are inconsistent with democratic accountability. By requiring officers to be identifiable while performing their duties, this bill protects civil liberties, supports community trust, and reinforces the principle that government power must be exercised transparently.

Importantly, SB 1 does not prevent law enforcement from protecting officer safety in appropriate circumstances. Rather, it draws a necessary line between legitimate safety considerations and unnecessary anonymity that shields misconduct and intimidates the public.

Maryland has long been a leader in advancing sensible, values-driven public safety policies. SB 1 continues that tradition by affirming that transparency is not a threat to safety—it is essential to it.

For these reasons, Advance Maryland respectfully urges the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 1.

# **FAVORABLE SB0001\_Alon Grice.pdf**

Uploaded by: Alison Grice

Position: FAV

Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable

**SB0001 - 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,

My name is **Alison Grice** and I am a resident of **Wicomico County, Maryland**. I am writing in support of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings.

The only reason ICE agents or any other law enforcement would wear a face covering is if they needed to hide their identity. The only reason they would hide their identity is if they were not performing their duties legally and did not want to be caught doing so. No other law enforcement has been allowed (certainly not required) to wear a face covering, for the same reasons. Why would ICE agents be treated as an exception? The only explanation would be that the administration wants them to feel comfortable performing illegal activities without being caught. There is NO justification for this as being part of their “uniform” and face coverings should absolutely be prohibited.

It is important for public safety that ICE officers can be identified. Without visible identification and uniform standards, fear and public distrust in law enforcement increases. Furthermore, community members are more likely to intervene if they watch someone being attacked or kidnapped by a masked, unmarked group. There's no way to know if someone is simply impersonating an ICE officer.

Our county sheriff values transparency and the community has benefited from this. We should not be allowing armed individuals with masks to intimidate and frighten communities with impunity.

I urge you to vote in favor of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings for transparency and safety.

Thank you for your time and consideration

# **FAVORABLE SB0001\_Amy LaGrange.pdf**

Uploaded by: AMY LAGRANGE

Position: FAV

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

My name is Amy LaGrange and I am a resident of Calvert County, **Maryland**. I am writing in support of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings

The use of face coverings to intimidate my friends and neighbors is unacceptable. My friends have reported ill health impacts from fear and intimidation.

It is important for public safety that ICE officers can be identified. Without visible identification and uniform standards, fear and public distrust in law enforcement increases. Furthermore, community members are more likely to intervene if they watch someone being attacked or kidnapped by a masked, unmarked group. There's no way to know if someone is simply impersonating an ICE officer.

Our county sheriff values transparency and the community has benefited from this. We should not be allowing armed individuals with masks to intimidate and frighten communities with impunity.

I urge you to vote in favor of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings for transparency and safety.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Amy LaGrange

# **Anders Julin SB0001 Favorable Written Testimony.pd**

Uploaded by: Anders Julin

Position: FAV

## Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable

**SB0001 - 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,

My name is Anders Julin, and I am a resident of Catonsville, Maryland. I am writing in support of **SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**.

I am in support of the bill for two main reasons: The first is that if officers are allowed to use face coverings, then it degrades the connection a community has with its law enforcement. A safe neighborhood, and state as a whole, relies on the mutual trust between law enforcement and the citizens they are sworn to protect. These officers are usually members of the community they serve, and sometimes respected leaders who people look up to. If they are allowed to cover their faces while carrying out enforcement activities, then that leader becomes just another faceless cog in a uniform. Human empathy and understanding comes from being able to effectively see and communicate with the other person, and facial expression is a large part of that. If the community does not feel a connection with the people in uniforms carrying guns around them, it leads to a more disjointed and uneasy existence. Confrontations immediately become more hostile, deescalation becomes harder, and it provides no benefits.

The second reason is that allowing officers to conceal their faces adds a barrier to necessary accountability. Officers hold citizens accountable by enforcing the laws when they are broken, and citizens should be able to hold officers accountable when their actions clearly violate the responsibility they hold as protectors. If officers are allowed to hide their identities, even just partially by covering their faces, it is an indicator they are afraid of being held accountable. It signals to the community they know what they are doing, or could potentially do, is something frowned upon or just flat out wrong. This has been especially obvious with ICE action across the country as they hide behind their masks to carry out enforcement often well outside their authority or even allowable by state and federal law. I don't put the safety of me, my family, and my community in the hands of masked thugs. I put that safety in the hands of law enforcement officers who can be praised for their heroics, and have to answer for their wrongs.

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

Thank you for your time and consideration.



Anders Julin

# **SB 0001 - Prohibition on Face Coverings 2026.pdf**

Uploaded by: Andrew Lewis

Position: FAV

Andrew Lewis

685 Winding Stream Way, Odenton MD, 21113

District 21

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 0001, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers -  
Prohibition on Face Coverings

1/14/2026

TO: Chair William C. Smith, Jr. & the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Andrew Lewis

Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee, my name is Andrew Lewis, I live in Odenton, Maryland, and I am writing to support SB 0001, Prohibition on Face Coverings.

Accountability is the cornerstone of any form of society. Any place where two or more people meet, be it for commerce; camaraderie, or politics, history shapes these interactions. If I cannot look back and recall how much a grocer charges me for an apple, how can I pay them? If my doctor does not sign my prescription, how will I get my needed medication from a pharmacy?

The ability to look back, and identify who, did what, and when, is central to our ability to have any mutual understanding. How then, can we expect our State to function without accountability in its law enforcement? A population of citizens, empowered by the State to make choices not only of life and death, but of freedom and detainment, must be held accountable. While it is true that members of Law enforcement do require certain protections to make their jobs possible, too many protections make our watchmen unwatchable. Those whom the state empowers to use force should be held more accountable for their actions, not less.

Masks create anonymity, turning the very people we should be looking to for safety and comfort into faceless danger. It turns them from human beings to faceless arms of an already distant government. Masking of law enforcement builds a wall of mistrust between

officers and the communities they are sent to protect. Witnesses do not come forward, crimes are not reported, officers are not warned of danger, when the average citizen does not feel safe speaking with members of law enforcement agencies.

Please let Maryland be a safer place for all of us than elsewhere in our country. Prohibiting masked law enforcement is one small step towards ensuring the people wearing those badges are discharging their duties faithfully. I urge you to support SB 0001 and help ensure that Maryland's law enforcement is being held to the highest standards of conduct.

Thank you,

Andrew Lewis

**Bill\_SB001\_Andrew Miller - FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Andrew Miller

Position: FAV

Date of Hearing: Thursday 1/22/26

Name: Andrew J. Miller

Address: Baltimore, MD 21209

**TESTIMONY ON SB001 - POSITION: FAVORABLE**

**Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings**

**TO:** Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

**FROM:** Andrew J. Miller

**My name is Andrew Miller. I am a resident of District 11B. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB001, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings**

I am a Past President of Chizuk Amuno Congregation, a large Conservative synagogue in Pikesville, and I am also Chair of the Synagogue Social Justice Roundtable which includes representatives from 12 partner communities and organizations in Baltimore County, Baltimore City and Howard County.

Our sacred texts command us to love the stranger, as we ourselves were once strangers in the land of Egypt. Many of our families came to the United States to escape persecution. For me and for others in my community, protection of immigrants is therefore a sacred obligation. We have worked over the last 9 years, together with immigrant support organizations, to protect the rights of those who arrived in our country to take refuge from oppressive conditions elsewhere in the world. All of us who are not Native Americans are immigrants or the descendants of immigrants. Immigrants are our neighbors and friends, yet now they are being racially profiled and subjected to cruel treatment by federal agents with little regard for whether they have broken any law.

ICE's terror tactics are not focused on public safety. The use of face coverings is emblematic of everything that is wrong with the practice of the current Federal administration in what it calls enforcement of immigration law but is in fact open violation of federal law, constitutional rights, and due process. All law enforcement officers in our state are required to wear badges and carry identifying information in the normal course of their work, which is one means of ensuring accountability in impartial enforcement of the law. Public Safety § 2-109 requires that when an officer stops someone (for example, a traffic stop or similar encounter), the officer must **display proper identification** and provide their **name and agency-issued identification number** unless there are **exigent circumstances**. Immigration enforcement agents who hide their identities with face coverings and by other means are behaving as a secret police force whose intention is not to protect the public and enforce the law but rather to instill fear and compel compliance even with orders that are illegal. They target not only the people for whom they have detention orders, but also other members of the public

whom they encounter. We have seen them break laws with impunity, secure in the belief that they cannot be identified and held accountable.

The choice before us is clear. Our state must insist on the same level of accountability that we expect from those who enforce the law as employees of state and local government agencies.

**Therefore I respectfully ask this committee to return a favorable report on SB001.**

**Copy of SB1 .pdf**

Uploaded by: ANNA RUBIN

Position: FAV

**SB0001-FAV**

Dr. Anna Rubin

Columbia MD 21045

**Testimony on Senate Bill – 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 Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is Anna Rubin and I live in Columbia, Maryland - D13. I am writing in support of **SB0001**—Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings

I am the chair of Columbia Jewish Congregation's Social Justice Committee. I am very concerned about ICE's illegal and violent abductions and detentions of my friends and neighbors. Their rogue behavior is abetted by masking and lack of identification, all things our police are not allowed to do. SB0001 requires the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission to develop a statewide model policy prohibiting law enforcement officers from wearing face coverings while performing their duties, except when actively engaged in an undercover operation. This legislation promotes transparency, accountability, and trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

My Jewish values insist that each human is made in the divine image and deserves respect. My American values insist on transparency and accountability.

I see the fear in the faces of community members. I know that many people are afraid to go out to their jobs, to take their kids to school, to go to medical appointments and shop for necessities. I know that many people are afraid to go to the police for legitimate crime reporting because of their fear of being picked up. This degrades public safety for us all. I want the police to be easily identified so I can trust them and know they are clearly accountable. Public trust of the police makes us all safer.

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

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Dr. Anna Rubin

# **Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee Testimony.pd**

Uploaded by: Anne Manuel

Position: FAV

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 0001**  
**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee Testimony**

My name is Anne Manuel. I've lived in Silver Spring for forty years. I am among a group of neighbors who last year formed North Woodside Civil Resistance out of concern for the threat to our democracy posed by the actions of the Trump administration.

We are at a truly alarming moment in our country. There's been a lot of talk about what to call this administration's actions – authoritarianism, neo-royalism – even fascism no longer seems a great stretch. Whatever the label, the elements are clear: unbridled military aggression, suppression of dissent, scapegoating of vulnerable groups, and celebration of violence.

A War Department pamphlet produced for U.S. Army personnel in WWII is troublingly relevant today. According to "Fascism!", produced in March 1945, the first technique fascists would use to gain power in the U.S. would be to break down national unity by a "well-planned 'hate campaign' against minority races, religions, and other groups." It's hard not to see this now, as masked, unaccountable thugs viciously attack our immigrant neighbors, all while slandering them as violent criminals and "the worst of the worst." Videos of brutal apprehensions are posted on governmental social media accounts, as if for entertainment.

Of course there are limits to what any individual state can do to restrain the actions of the federal government, no matter how lawless. However if we stand up for our Maryland values, for **American** values, we can throw sand in the gears of the repressive machine and inspire other states to do the same.

Marylanders are taking a stand every day in the streets, parks, and highway overpasses all over the state, even as the Trump administration makes clear that peaceful protesters are also their targets. This body needs to demonstrate some of that same courage.

Unaccountable law enforcement is the essence of a police state. At a bare minimum, this body should insist that those empowered to detain individuals in our state publicly identify themselves. There is no room for masked gunmen doing the government's bidding in a democracy.

SB 1 properly demands that law enforcement *not* wear masks. I would argue the bill should go further, and require that all security forces operating in the state *clearly identify themselves by name, number, and agency*. There is simply no room for a secret police in a democracy.

In addition to the troubling lack of accountability that masked officers represent, they also constitute a grave danger to public security. Criminal impersonation of law enforcement officers is a rising trend, as we became acutely aware last year with the murder of a Minnesota lawmaker and her husband and the shooting of another and his wife by an individual dressed as a police officer.

Public safety is best served when individuals can more quickly and clearly verify officers' identity, not the other way around. Maryland law must make clear that masked, unidentified individuals with guns are operating outside the law. I believe that SB 00001 is a step in the right direction toward achieving these goals. Thank you for your consideration.

# **Testimony for SB 0001 - Prohibition on Face Coveri**

Uploaded by: Ariana Giles

Position: FAV

Ariana Giles  
312 Chessington Dr., Odenton, MD 21113  
District 33A

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 0001, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers -  
Prohibition on Face Coverings

Testimony submitted on 20 January 2026

TO: Chair William C. Smith, Jr. & the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
FROM: Ariana Giles

Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee, my name is Ariana, I live in Odenton, Maryland, and I am writing to support SB 0001, Prohibition on Face Coverings.

The face coverings used by law enforcement, such as ICE officers, serve only to protect their identities so that they can act in cruel, unethical, and sometimes questionably legal ways. Masked law enforcement cannot represent the people if we cannot identify them. The sole purpose is to invoke fear. Instilling terror in the population does not build any trust with the community; it destroys it. Passing SB 0001 to prohibit face coverings in law enforcement officers would make me and my neighbors feel safer by providing better accountability. As reports of ICE activity in Maryland increase, I'm scared we'll soon see similarly violent stories to those we've heard from other states. This bill is timely and critically necessary.

Please let Maryland be a safer place for all of us than elsewhere in our country. Prohibiting masked law enforcement is one small step towards ensuring the people wearing those badges are discharging their duties faithfully. I urge you to support SB 0001 and help ensure that Maryland's law enforcement is being held to the highest standards of conduct.

# **SB1\_ArielleJuberg\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Arielle Juberg

Position: FAV

Dear **Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,**

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of individuals working to move white folks as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. We are working in collaboration with CASA. I am a resident of District 8. **I am testifying in support of SB1 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings.**

I assume that law enforcement officers who serve our communities will openly identify themselves as such when doing their jobs. Law enforcement agencies have policies requiring officers to wear uniforms or other identifying markers in most circumstances, and we even have a law - Criminal Procedure Article 2-109 - which requires a police officer to identify him or herself by name, agency, and badge number when approaching a citizen for a traffic stop or other investigation.

Throughout 2025, we saw copious news coverage of federal law enforcement actions conducted by officers wearing street clothes and balaclavas. The fact that incidents of police impersonation have been on the rise in Maryland and nationally is not a coincidence: *when it becomes impossible to determine who is a legitimate law enforcement officer, criminals can more plausibly claim to be police by simply putting on a mask, no fake uniform or badge required.* Even the FBI has recognized the danger, circulating a bulletin to law enforcement agencies in October 2025 that warned criminals were taking advantage of routine mask-wearing by law enforcement to disguise themselves as ICE agents.<sup>1</sup> This confusion also makes routine law enforcement operations more dangerous. Initial contact between officer and civilian is often the most uncertain and dangerous moment in a law enforcement encounter, and ensuring that everyone is on the same page about what is happening can help prevent rash and dangerous decisions.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of SB1, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Arielle Juberg  
3411 Upton Road  
Baltimore, MD 21234  
Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore



**Showing Up for Racial Justice**

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<sup>1</sup> Cameron, Dell & Haskins, Caroline, "FBI warns of criminals posing as ICE, urges agents to ID themselves." WIRED Magazine, Nov. 4, 2025. <https://www.wired.com/story/fbi-warns-of-criminals-posing-as-ice-urges-agents-to-id-themselves/>

# **SB 0001 - Prohibition on Face Coverings 2026.pdf**

Uploaded by: Ayla Hurley

Position: FAV

Ayla Hurley  
6385 Windharp Way  
Columbia, MD 21045  
District 13

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 0001, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers -  
Prohibition on Face Coverings

1/22/2026

TO: Chair William C. Smith, Jr. & the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
FROM: Ayla Hurley

Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee, my name is Ayla Hurley, I live in Columbia, Maryland, and I am writing to support SB 0001, Prohibition on Face Coverings, and to change the effective date of this law to July - or sooner, whenever possible.

In our state, we strive to hold criminals accountable. That should include when the crimes are committed by the very people meant to prevent them. That cannot be done if law enforcement hides behind a mask. If anyone walked into a bank with a mask on and a gun drawn, everyone there might assume their lives were in danger. Yet some members of law enforcement would walk masked in public with a gun drawn, and expect to be trusted.

As a lifelong Marylander, struggling to deal with the day to day injustices of the leaders of our country, masked law enforcement of any kind is simply terrifying. It's dystopian. It evokes the historical imagery of cops moonlighting as members of the Ku Klux Klan. I'm scared - I have to imagine that my neighbors whose first language isn't English are even more afraid. When people are afraid, they may act in ways that are impulsive, or make a tense situation worse. We don't need more tense situations between ourselves and law enforcement officers.

Please let Maryland be a safer place for all of us than elsewhere in our country. Prohibiting masked law enforcement is one small step towards ensuring the people wearing those badges are discharging their duties faithfully. I urge you to support SB 0001 and help ensure that Maryland's law enforcement is being held to the highest standards of conduct.

# **Testimony on Senate Bill0001.pdf**

Uploaded by: Betsy Krieger

Position: FAV

**Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable**

**SB 0001 – 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,

My name is Betsy Krieger and I am a resident of Baltimore City. I am writing in support of SB0001– Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings

I find it incredible that this is even a question. What Country do we live in? Have we turned into a Country that permits masked men to disappear our residents? If law enforcement agents are doing a legitimate job, they must be identifiable. And if they can't be, how do we distinguish them from simple criminals. The answer is- we can't!

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a **favorable report** on **SB 0001**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

# **Written testimony for SB001 banning facemasks for**

Uploaded by: Bob Spear

Position: FAV

**Written testimony for SB001, FAVORABLE. Spear**

Dear Senators,

Please vote in favor of SB001, which will ban ICE from wearing face coverings in Maryland.

ICE is an out-of-control, para-military police force, acting without regard for Constitutional safeguards and due process.

We do need an agency with a mission to protect our borders and to arrest and deport violent criminals who are in this country illegally. But the methods used for apprehension and deportation must follow our laws and Constitution. ICE currently ignores these safeguards.

Faceless government agents breaking car windows and grabbing people off the street do not encourage the trust between citizens and law enforcement so necessary to successful policing.

At the very least, we must insist that ICE agents' faces be recognizable. In our view, they should also wear name badges showing their name, agency, and badge number; carry bodycams to record interactions with civilians; and carry out searches and arrests only with judicially- approved warrants.

When ICE does detain someone, that individual must be brought before a local magistrate, where the accused individual has a chance to show that the arrest was not warranted. This must occur before the individual is shipped off to who-knows-where.

Anyway, as a first step in reining in ICE, please vote in favor of SB001. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Bob and Mary Helen Spear, Swanton, Mary;and

# **SB 1 2026 Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Brandon Russell

Position: FAV

January 20, 2026

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Distinguished Committee Members,

My name is Brandon Russell and I am a resident of St. Mary's County. I'm writing in support of Senate Bill 1 - Prohibition of Face Coverings for Law Enforcement Officers, and urge the committee to issue a **favorable report** on this legislation.

The clearly unconstitutional acts of Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents across the United States have instilled distrust and fear of law enforcement in our communities. Fear is driven by masked abductions of supposed criminals by ICE agents, an action in which local law enforcement agencies could potentially be involved if they have agreements with ICE.

Law enforcement officers wield significant authority on behalf of the public, and that authority must come with clear accountability. Banning face coverings for law enforcement ensures transparency, reinforces public trust, and allows officers to be readily identified when exercising police powers. This policy protects both community members and officers by promoting professionalism, lawful conduct, and confidence in the integrity of policing.

Importantly, the law also includes provisions where masks or other face coverings are allowed under certain circumstances. Marylanders can be sure of no impact to constitutional law enforcement activities keeping them safe.

Again, I urge the committee to issue a **favorable report** on this legislation.

Thank you,

Brandon Russell  
Leonardtown, MD  
[brandon4stmarys@gmail.com](mailto:brandon4stmarys@gmail.com)

## **Merrick letter of support for SB0001.pdf**

Uploaded by: Byron Merrick

Position: FAV

January 22, 2026

Dear Honorable Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is Byron Merrick and I am a resident and voter living in Baltimore, Maryland.

I am writing in support of SB0001 – Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings

I support SB0001 because it is very important, for public safety and public trust, that ICE officers be able to be identified! Without identification and uniform standards that are visible, the public will continue to lack trust in those who are tasked to enforce immigration laws.

As a country, we have long witnessed other countries who have “disappeared” people using police or military that are masked and unidentified - whisking people away in unmarked vehicles. We have long been outraged by those ghastly tactics. Several South American countries, notably Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, and others, experienced widespread forced disappearances by their military regimes, targeting political dissidents, activists, and perceived enemies during the 1970s and 1980s, with thousands becoming 'desaparecidos' (the disappeared). As a country, we were rightfully repulsed by those tactics and protested them!

Today's efforts by ICE are scarily reminiscent of those reprehensible actions – uniformly condemned here in the US – but now, sadly, in place by ICE. So now, we too, must proclaim our opposition to law enforcement officials being masked and not wearing identifiable uniforms.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report on SB0001. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Byron R Merrick  
2703 Halcyon Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21214  
443-695-6341  
[buzzmerrick@comcast.net](mailto:buzzmerrick@comcast.net)

**Testimony\_on\_SB0001\_Carla\_Vincent.pdf**

Uploaded by: Carla Vincent

Position: FAV

**Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable**

**SB0001 – 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:

My name is Carla Vincent, and I am a resident of Gaithersburg, Maryland, in District 17. I am writing in support of SB0001.

In a constitutional democracy, the exercise of state power must be **visible, identifiable, and accountable**. When armed law enforcement officers conceal their faces during routine enforcement actions, that principle is undermined. Members of the public cannot readily identify who is acting under lawful authority, nor can they meaningfully seek accountability if an encounter goes wrong. Over time, this erodes due process, civilian oversight, and public confidence in the rule of law.

SB0001 addresses a basic but critical public safety concern. Civil law enforcement—particularly immigration enforcement—is not combat policing. Face coverings create the appearance of paramilitary or extrajudicial action and introduce fear far out of proportion to the legal authority being exercised. That fear does not remain confined to undocumented individuals; it spreads to mixed-status families, lawful residents, and U.S. citizens, reducing cooperation with law enforcement and weakening community safety overall. From a governance perspective, this is counterproductive enforcement.

Clear identification standards are also necessary to prevent **dangerous confusion and escalation**. When armed individuals act while masked or without clearly visible identification, bystanders have no reliable way to know whether they are witnessing a lawful arrest or a crime in progress. This increases the risk of intervention, resistance, or violence—placing both the public and officers at greater risk. Visible identification protects everyone involved.

Maryland has long benefited from a law enforcement culture that emphasizes transparency and accountability. Our communities are safer when people trust that officers are acting openly, lawfully, and under clear authority. Allowing routine face coverings for law enforcement officers undermines that trust and creates unnecessary risk.

SB0001 does not prevent law enforcement from doing its job. It simply reinforces long-standing American norms: that officers exercising state power do so **openly and identifiably**, except in narrowly defined and truly exigent circumstances.

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

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

**Carla Vincent**

110 Fox Trail Terrace

Gaithersburg, MD 20878

(301)908-7028

**CarolStern\_SB01\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: CAROL STERN

Position: FAV

January 20, 2026

Carol Stern  
4550 North Park Avenue Apt. T106  
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

**Testimony in Support of SB 01- Favorable  
Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**

**TO:** Chairman Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee  
**FROM:** Carol Stern

**I am testifying in favor of SB01 as a resident of Montgomery County's District 16 and a member of Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation in Bethesda.**

My sacred text and tradition teach us to welcome the stranger, for we were strangers in the land of Egypt. Leviticus 19:34 explicitly instructs us to treat immigrants in our land the same as native citizens. Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan wrote " teach us to respect the integrity of every human soul be it that of a friend or stranger, child or adult." When we are working to reform our immigration justice system, we must demand that it operates in accordance with these deeply held Jewish beliefs.

Unmasking ICE agents is crucial for public safety and community trust. Masked agents can create fear, erode trust, and blur lines with criminals, leading to impersonations and crimes. Hiding identities makes it impossible to report misconduct or hold officers accountable. Masked agents terrorize immigrant communities and even native-born citizens, chilling community engagement.

All Marylanders, regardless of immigration status, are entitled to equal protection under the law and deserve to be treated with human dignity. In the face of unprecedented attacks, our immigrant communities in Maryland along with CASA and other non-profits are doing everything they can to protect families and to advocate for their communities. Maryland has the power to stop enabling Trump's ICE agents and be a firewall against authoritarianism. This moment calls for action on the part of the State Legislature. To preserve public safety and public trust for all Marylanders, please pass SB01.

**I respectfully urge a favorable report for SB01.**

## **SB1 Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Carolyn Mitchell

Position: FAV

**Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable**

**SB 1 Face Coverings – Prohibition**

**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

**January 22, 2026**

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

My name is Carolyn Mitchell, and I am a resident of Annapolis, Maryland. I am writing in support of **SB 1 Face Coverings – Prohibition**.

I support **SB 1** because the conduct of Immigration and Customs Enforcement is lawless and face coverings allow the individuals involved to act with a sense of impunity. There is nothing about the current administration's approach to ICE that is legitimate and when the regime is past history and the lawsuits begin, those who have assaulted fellow citizens should not be protected by a face mask from being hunted down and prosecuted. Like everyone else in this country who is not one of the indigenous tribes of America, I am from a line of immigrants and the hatred directed at the most recent immigrants is an outrage that cannot be tolerated much less abetted.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a **favorable report** on **SB 1**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Carolyn Mitchell

33 Pinkney Street

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

# **Testimony on Senate Bill 0001.pdf**

Uploaded by: Catherine Morrison

Position: FAV

Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable  
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,

My name is Catherine Morrison, and I am a resident of Howard County, Maryland. I am writing in support of Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings.

While I, fortunately, have never experienced a confrontation with a masked law enforcement officer, I am sickened by the pictures of terrified people being physically restrained by people in masks. I believe that the anonymity of a mask enables an officer to somehow lose his/her regard for humanity and behave in manners that they would otherwise find unacceptable. I believe that a person, when being confronted by a law officer, has a right to identify by name and badge number, their confronter. While it happens rarely, there are reports of individuals impersonating law enforcement officers and committing crimes themselves. A ban on masks makes it simple and clear to all what is legitimate police activity and what is not.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report on SB 0001. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Catherine Morrison

# **SB1\_CindyBrach\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Cecile Brach

Position: FAV

**Testimony on SB1 – Position: Favorable**  
**Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings Date of**  
**Hearing: January 22, 2026**

**To:** Honorable Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

**From:** Cindy Brach, Silver Spring, MD 20910

**Below you will find my favorable testimony in support of SB1- Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**

My name is Cindy Brach and I live in District 20. I am proud to live in a diverse Maryland community. ICE masked agents are terrorizing, detaining, and incarcerating Maryland residents randomly. We cannot stop their unlawful behavior, but at least we should try to require that they show themselves.

This bill is important because the anonymity that a mask confers enables brutality. It means that ICE agents will think there will be no consequences for their actions. Unmasking them may inhibit behavior, as they know that their friends and family members could see what they are doing to unarmed Maryland residents.

I have seen a video of a masked ICE agent being challenged to remove his mask, “Show yourself! Why won’t you take off your mask” The ICE agent replied, “I have a family,” indicating that he would be embarrassed if his family could see what he was doing.

This is not just happening in Minneapolis, Chicago, and Portland. Not long ago an ICE agent was apprehending a man in the middle of a Hyattsville intersection, a few blocks from where I have choir practice. The ICE agent in charge was not masked and many people were filming on their phones. The ICE agents were having difficulty handcuffing their target, who was pinned to the ground facedown. There is strong reason to believe that had the ICE agent been wearing a mask he would not have been restrained and waited for re-enforcements to arrive to get the man he was struggling into the ICE van. It is likely that instead he would have used excessive force to incapacitate the man who was resisting being dragged away.

If someone in a mask came to take you away, someone who does not show a judicial warrant, who drives an unmarked car, would you go with them trustingly or would you run from them? As a Jew, I find ICE’s actions alarmingly reminiscent to Jews being rounded up, deported, and put into labor and concentration camps. This bill is a small action that speaks volumes about Maryland’s values of transparency, accountability, and public trust.

**I strongly urge all members of the Judiciary Committee to provide a favorable report on SB1.**

# **SB0001\_Public\_Safety\_Law\_EnforcementOfficers\_Proh**

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



## TESTIMONY FOR SB0001

### Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings

**Bill Sponsor:** Senator Augustine

**Committee:** Judicial Proceedings

**Organization Submitting:** Maryland Legislative Coalition

**Person Submitting:** Aileen Alex, co-chair

**Position:** FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0001 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Our members are pretty horrified at what has been happening with federal officers, whether they are Immigration Enforcement or other federal agencies, coming into communities in force wearing military clothes, carrying weaponry that is not suitable for the jobs they are doing, with faces covered like paramilitary gestapos. This serves no one but the irresponsible administration that sent them out like this in the first place.

Face coverings make anyone who wears them and has a weapon feel invincible and that there will be no repercussions for any action they take, no matter how brutal, because they are anonymous. The face coverings terrify anyone who they come near and cause many people to run away out of fear. This gives the officer license to chase them down and inflict more harm.

Law Enforcement Officers used to approach people in a more open and less aggressive manner, so our streets did not seem like something out of a war zone. We have to get back to that. This bill, which we are overwhelmingly in favor of, is a first step. Unmask the people who feel that they are invincible and make them do their jobs without all the aggression. Other than people who have committed major crimes (murder, rape, burglary, etc.), most immigrants have only committed a civil crime (a crime on par with a traffic ticket) which does not warrant the level of a approach that is currently happening.

This bill will prohibit Law Enforcement Officers, whether they are state, local, or federal from hiding their faces with an exception for undercover officers. There are other exceptions for gas masks, masks to protect from viruses, etc. Officers covering their faces can be charged with a misdemeanor and, if convicted, face up to 2 years in jail and a penalty of \$2,000. They also waive any immunity to civil action.

While we understand that there must be exceptions, we feel that the officers involved will use one of those exceptions to cover their faces. We feel, but are unwilling to derail this legislation, that there

should be additional safeguards. For example, any Federal officers coming into Maryland should notify the local police who should ensure they are aware of this law. It would be best if an officer was on the scene to ensure that the law is being followed, but that could put a strain on the local police force

.  
The Maryland Legislative Coalition wholeheartedly supports this bill and recommends a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

# **SOMOS Testimony Template SB0001 - Cecilia Romero.p**

Uploaded by: Cecilia Romero

Position: FAV

## **Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings / SB0001**

Official Testimony  
Position: **FAVORABLE**

To the Judicial Proceeding Committee

My name is Cecilia Romero, I'm a Sophomore at Baltimore City College and a member of SOMOS. I support SB0001, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings.

This bill allows the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission to develop a model policy that limits the use of face covering by law enforcement officers while on duty, except when they are actively engaged in undercover operations. Requiring agencies to follow this policy ensures that officers are clearly identifiable while performing their duties.

I truly believe that passing of this bill is essential because it promotes safety, transparency and even accountability in our communities. When officers are visible and identifiable, it builds trust between law enforcements and the public, this reduces fear during interactions. This is especially important for those who deserve to feel protected, not intimidated, by those meant to serve them.

Additionally, this bill ensures that if any law enforcement officer, including ICE agents, commits a crime or abuses their authority while carrying out their duties, they can be recognized and held accountable rather than being able to hide their identity behind a face covering. Accountability is a key part of justice and fairness, and this policy helps reinforce that indeed no one is above the law.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge this committee to issue a favorable report on SB0001, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings.

Cecilia Romero  
Students Organizing a Multicultural and Open Society (SOMOS)  
District #628  
<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB0155/?ys=2026rs>

[Cecilia.romerorivera2028@baltimorecitycollege.us](mailto:Cecilia.romerorivera2028@baltimorecitycollege.us)  
[somoslegalteams@gmail.com](mailto:somoslegalteams@gmail.com)

# **SB1 Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Pro**

Uploaded by: Charles Chapman

Position: FAV

**Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable**

**SB1 Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**

**Judicial Proceedings Committee**

**January 22, 2026**

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

**SB0001 Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**

ICE agents are engendering fear in neighborhoods across our country and violating the due process rights and human rights of both American citizens and migrants. These agents are consistently acting with excessive force and engaging in acts of intimidation and provocation that directly cause the civil unrest they then use as a pretext for further acts of brutality while hiding their faces and badges from the public.

These civil rights violations undermine the rule of law and undermine public safety. ICE as it is currently constituted is more of an arm of state repression than a law enforcement agency.



We've all seen the images of brutality in the Twin Cities.

Having masked ICE agents terrorizing Marylanders while hiding their identities allows them to act without any concern for accountability. And what about criminals impersonating ICE agents? How are Maryland residents to know that the person claiming to be a law enforcement agent really is one when they don't show identification and are hiding behind a mask?

Please issue a favorable report on SB1.

Sincerely,

Charles Chapman

3500 Forest Edge Dr. 1G

Silver Spring, MD 20906

# **SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers**

Uploaded by: Charlotte Hoffman

Position: FAV



Charlotte Persephone Hoffman, Esq. (they/she)  
Policy Director  
charlotte@transmaryland.org

Thursday January 22, 2026

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.  
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
2 East Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Testimony of Trans Maryland

**IN SUPPORT OF**

**Senate Bill #1: Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**

To the Chair, Vice Chair, and esteemed members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

Trans Maryland is a multi-racial, multi-gender, trans-led community power building organization dedicated to Maryland's trans community. Because Trans Maryland believes in protecting the civil rights of all Marylanders in the face of ongoing radicalization by federal law enforcement agencies and their allies, we strongly support Senate Bill 1, which will go far to ensuring that law enforcement authorities cannot hide behind a mask or other obscuring face covering to evade responsibility for their illegal actions.

Until the past year, federal, state, and local law enforcement officers rarely (if ever) wore facial coverings for the purpose of hiding their identities. This has changed under the second Trump Administration, with US Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE") leading the way on a new disturbing practice whereby officers cover most or all of their faces—a practice that is often done in tandem with the removal of identifying insignia from the officers' uniforms. Together, these practices make the public less safe and make it harder, if not impossible, to identify officers who violate the rights of those they are supposed to protect.

Law enforcement officers, including ICE agents, were able to do their jobs without the use of masks before 2025. They do not need masks now. While Maryland's ability to alter federal practices more broadly is limited, the state can at least stand up to say that officers cannot wear masks to hide their identities within the state's borders. For these reasons, Trans Maryland **strongly urges a favorable report of Senate Bill 1.**

# **SB 1 Favorable.pdf**

Uploaded by: Chauna Brocht

Position: FAV

**Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable**

**SB 1 – Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**

**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

**January 22, 2026**

Dear Honorable Chair Augustine, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Chauna Brocht, and I am a resident of Baltimore City. I am writing in support of **Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**.

I support **SB 1** because allowing law enforcement to cover their faces is an impediment to accountability and creates fear of law enforcement. When people fear contact with law enforcement, they are less likely to report crimes, seek help, or cooperate as witnesses—even when they are victims.

Allowing law enforcement to cover their faces makes it easier for them to engage in racial profiling, discrimination, and wrongful detention. This impacts both immigrants and U.S. Citizens.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a **favorable report** on **SB 1**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Chauna Brocht

2509 Guilford Ave.

Baltimore, MD 21218

# **SB1 AFSCME Council 3 Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Christian Gobel

Position: FAV



1410 Bush Street (Suite A)  
Baltimore, MD 21230  
Phone: 410-547-1515  
Email: [info@afscmemd.org](mailto:info@afscmemd.org)

Patrick Moran – President

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**SB 1 – Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings  
Judicial Proceedings  
January 22, 2026**

**FAVORABLE**

AFSCME Council 3 supports Senate Bill 1. Since the beginning of the new federal administration, Americans throughout our country have been stricken with fear, alarm, and confusion by federal law enforcement actions against people in our communities, including our neighbors who are immigrants. Many times, these events have unfolded with no clear identifying information or insignia that the individuals engaged in actions against people in our communities are federal law enforcement officers. Across our country, swift, unconscionable actions by federal agents, including smashing people's car windows and dragging them from their vehicles, have instilled fear and mistrust in our law enforcement.

AFSCME Council 3 represents approximately 55,000 public service workers at the state, county, and municipal levels of government. AFSCME members are on the frontlines every day across Maryland providing critical public services that make our communities run.

Transparency, accountability, and ensuring law enforcement carries out its operations with integrity cannot take place when law enforcement agents categorically hide their faces behind masks or other face coverings.

Senate Bill 1 establishes reasonable reforms to begin rebuilding trust between law enforcement and everyday residents in our communities. The bill requires the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission to develop a policy that prohibits the use of face coverings by law enforcement in the course of their duties, subject to certain exceptions. The requirements do not apply to law enforcement officers actively engaged in an undercover operation.

AFSCME Council 3 believes these reforms are reasonable, provide flexibility to enable face coverings by law enforcement where appropriate, and will help to build trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

We urge the committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 1.

# **Luminus Network SB0001 FAVORABLE face coverings te**

Uploaded by: Christine (Tina) Horn

Position: FAV



**Testimony on Senate Bill 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,

The Luminus Network respectfully offers favorable testimony in support of **SB 1 – Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings**.

The Luminus Network was founded in 1981 in Howard County as the Foreign-born Immigrant Resource Network (FIRN) to help immigrant students at Howard Community College assimilate to life in central Maryland. We are currently serving immigrants across central Maryland with immigration legal services, including such services as work permit renewals, asylum applications, DACA renewals, other adjustments of status, and U-Visas. Luminus is guided by our core values in everything we do: community, trustworthy, inclusive, supportive, and sustainable.

Requiring that agents of law enforcement be identifiable by prohibiting masking helps enable clear community oversight, furthers public safety, fosters accountability for bad actors, and eliminates confusion within all communities, both immigrant and not.

**SB 1** represents Maryland's values - fairness, dignity, and justice for all. This bill affirms that our state government believes that masked strangers should not be allowed to tear families apart, undermine public trust, or disappear Maryland residents. Instead, Maryland should remain focused on community safety, due process, and equal treatment under the law by prohibiting masking among law enforcement officers acting in their official capacities within our state.

Nationwide, masking has led to bad actors impersonating Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers. This practice emboldens vigilantes to commit mayhem and terrorize communities. We continue to see several chilling effects in central Maryland: parents are reluctant to send their children to school, harming the children's academic futures, families are frightened to leave their homes, increasing demand on charitable support for food deliveries, and rumors spread through immigrant communities, creating fear and fomenting panic.

For these reasons, the Luminus Network urges the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee members to vote favorably on **SB 1**.

# **SEIU Local 500 - Testimony in Support of SB 1 2026**

Uploaded by: Christopher Cano

Position: FAV



Testimony - SB 1, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face  
Coverings  
Favorable  
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
January 22, 2026  
Christopher C. Cano, MPA  
Director of Political & Legislative Affairs on Behalf of SEIU Local 500

Honorable Chairman Smith & Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee:

SEIU Local 500 represents thousands of public sector workers in Maryland who serve our communities every day—from education and social services to public safety-adjacent roles. Central to our mission is advocating for transparent, accountable, and community-centered public safety systems that earn the trust of all residents.

Senate Bill 1 advances these principles by setting statewide standards on the use of face coverings by law enforcement officers while on duty. At a moment when trust between communities and law enforcement remains fragile, adopting clear policies that prioritize visibility, accountability, and public confidence is critical.

Recent national events illustrate why this is so important. Across the country, federal law enforcement activity—particularly by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)—has raised widespread concerns about overreach, lack of transparency, and harm to public trust. In Minnesota, for example, a U.S. immigration agent fatally shot a citizen during an enforcement operation, an incident that has triggered strong public outcry and long-running litigation alleging excessive and dangerous federal tactics.

In other shocking examples, federal agents forcibly entered a private home and brought a naturalized U.S. citizen into freezing conditions in minimal clothing, later releasing him without explanation or apology—a moment that resonated nationally and elicited widespread criticism.

Communities in multiple states have pushed back against what they describe as ICE overreach, passing resolutions and supporting lawsuits arguing that federal enforcement actions have exceeded legal authority and undermined civil liberties.

These controversies aren't isolated—they reflect broader concerns about law enforcement conduct without clear guardrails. When people in our communities feel anonymous forces can operate without accountability or identification, it chills civic participation, erodes trust, and can make it harder for other public servants—teachers, health workers, social service providers—to do their jobs effectively.

Senate Bill 1's focus on ensuring officers remain identifiable and accountable when carrying out official duties responds directly to this moment. The legislation strikes the right balance by providing exceptions for bona fide safety, tactical, and medical needs, while preventing blanket or pretextual use of face coverings that shield officers from accountability.

Our members see daily the consequences when public systems lack transparent standards. Clear statewide guidelines for law enforcement foster stronger relationships between officers and the communities they serve—a necessary foundation for public safety that protects workers, families, and neighborhoods alike.

For these reasons, SEIU Local 500 urges the Committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 1. Thank you to Senate leadership for recognizing the importance of transparency and public trust through this legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Christopher C. Cano, MPA  
Director of Political & Legislative Affairs  
SEIU Local 500

# **Favorable%20SB001%20Claire%20Garner.pdf.pdf**

Uploaded by: Claire Garner

Position: FAV

**Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable**  
**SB0001 - 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,

My name is Claire Garner and I am a resident of New Market, **Maryland**. I am writing in support of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings

It is unbelievable to me that we, as citizens of the United States, have to ask our lawmakers to prohibit law enforcement officers to remove face coverings while patrolling our communities. This should be an assumed protection, and right of citizens, to be able to identify law enforcement AS law enforcement. Law enforcement's duty is to protect and serve, not stalk and terrify.

**Thank you.**

**Claire Garner**

**New Market, MD**

**LWVMD\_01.22.2026\_SB0001\_Law Enforcement Officers -**

Uploaded by: Cynthia Boddie-Willis

Position: FAV



## TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS COMMITTEE

### **SB0001: Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings**

**POSITION: Favorable**

**By: Linda T. Kohn, President**

**Date: January 22, 2026**

The League of Women Voters supports a criminal justice system at the federal, state and local level that is just, effective, equitable, transparent, and that fosters public trust at all stages, including policing practices. As noted by the [Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights](#) of which the League is a member, government agents that conceal their identities not only erode trust but also instill fear, undermine due process, and strip citizens of their ability to hold power accountable.

The League also supports policing practices that promote safety for both law enforcement officers and the communities they serve. As noted in an August 2025 [report from the Center for American Progress](#), the presence of unidentifiable officers makes policing more challenging and dangerous, as both community members and fellow officers could easily mistake them for lawbreakers. Consequent misidentification may result in refusal to comply with well-intentioned directives on the one hand and avoidable “friendly fire” incidents on the other. Moreover, all law enforcement agents should be held to the same policing standards and be afforded the same protections in the line of duty. It is not clear that unmasked federal law enforcement agents are more likely to be subjected to “doxxing” (a practice where personal information is shared as a precursor to harassment) than their state and local counterparts.

In calling for the Maryland Police Standards and Training Commission to develop a policy affirming that all law enforcement agencies operating within the state of Maryland must commit to transparency, accountability and public trust; that the authorized use of face coverings be limited to specific and clearly defined circumstances, and that the generalized and undifferentiated apprehension about law enforcement safety is not sufficient to justify the use of face coverings, SB0001 adheres to principles espoused by the League.

**The League of Women Voters of Maryland, representing nearly 2,000 citizens throughout Maryland, strongly urges you to issue a favorable report.**

# **SB0001 FAV Judicial Procedures.pdf**

Uploaded by: Cynthia Pearson

Position: FAV

Cynthia Pearson  
4312 Sheridan Street, University Park, MD 20782  
(301) 938-0356  
cindy.pearson4312@gmail.com

Committee: Judicial Procedures

Testimony on SB0001- Public Safety Law Enforcement Officers Prohibition on Face Coverings

Organization: Individual

Person Submitting: Cynthia Pearson

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: 22 January 2026

Dear Chairman Augustine and members of the committee,

I am writing in favor of SB0001 (Public Safety Law Enforcement Officers Prohibition on Face Coverings). I believe that banning law enforcement face masks in all but certain situations -- as specified in this bill -- is not only important, but it is also feasible. Many people testifying in support of this legislation emphasize the need for a state law to ban masking by law enforcement officers. The arguments in favor of the need for this law are compelling. Allowing law enforcement officers to wear masks supports criminality, both directly and indirectly. Criminals can easily impersonate masked law enforcement officers, expanding their opportunities to commit crimes. People who encounter masked officers are unlikely to develop trusting relationships with law enforcement and may be less likely to report crimes or assist officers trying to solve crimes. These problems are strong arguments in favor of banning masks. Some opponents of banning masks claim that law enforcement officers need to cover their faces to protect themselves from people who might later harm them. I believe that claim is exaggerated. Unmasked law enforcement officers interact with criminals all the time, including some very dangerous ones. Yet they conscientiously do their jobs, arresting criminals and testifying in court. One of my favorite members of my extended family was a police officer who spent several years on the narcotics task force in his city. He arrested and testified against some really bad folks who were running very lucrative businesses making meth. His face was always uncovered. He's now retired after serving for more than twenty-five years. His experience and the experience of tens of thousands of other law enforcement officers who have worked without masks are important to consider. Except in certain situations, which this legislation allows for, law enforcement officers can safely work without masks and they should do so.

For all these reasons, I recommend a favorable report on SB0001.

Thank you,

Cynthia Pearson

# **support SB0001-DAG-20JAN26.pdf**

Uploaded by: Daniel Golombek

Position: FAV

Dear Chair Smith and members of the JPR Committee,

I am writing in strong support of SB0001. Face coverings make anyone who wears them and has a weapon feel invincible and that there will be no repercussions for any action they take, no matter how brutal, because they are anonymous. The face coverings terrify anyone who they come near and cause many people to run away out of fear. This gives the officer license to chase them down and inflict more harm.

It is necessary for the state we cherish and call home to protect the human rights, community well-being, public health and public safety of its inhabitants.

I cannot fully enjoy what District 11 offers if I am afraid of speaking in a public space because I have an accent. We need to feel that our elected officials as well as the civil servants and police officers are there to respect, protect and serve us.

Thank you  
Daniel Golombek  
Lutherville  
District 11

# **SB1\_HB155 - ban LE face covering .pdf**

Uploaded by: Daryl Yoder

Position: FAV

Dear Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of individuals working to move white folks as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. We are also working in collaboration with CASA. I am a resident of **District 44**. I am **testifying in support of SB1 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**.

In the State of Maryland, we expect the law enforcement officers who serve our communities to openly identify themselves as such when doing their jobs. Law enforcement agencies have policies requiring officers to wear uniforms or other identifying markers in most circumstances, and we even have a law - Criminal Procedure Article 2-109 - which requires a police officer to identify him or herself by name, agency, and badge number when approaching a citizen for a traffic stop or other investigation.

Throughout 2025, we saw copious news coverage of federal law enforcement actions conducted by officers wearing street clothes and balaclavas. The fact that incidents of police impersonation have been on the rise in Maryland and nationally is not a coincidence: when it becomes impossible to determine who is a legitimate law enforcement officer, criminals can more plausibly claim to be police by simply putting on a mask, no fake uniform or badge required. Even the FBI has recognized the danger, circulating a bulletin to law enforcement agencies in October 2025 that warned criminals were taking advantage of routine mask-wearing by law enforcement to disguise themselves as ICE agents.<sup>1</sup> This confusion also makes routine law enforcement operations more dangerous. Initial contact between officer and civilian is often the most uncertain and dangerous moment in a law enforcement encounter, and ensuring that everyone is on the same page about what is happening can help prevent rash and dangerous decisions.

SB1 would require the creation of a model masking policy banning the routine use of full face masks to conceal the identity of law enforcement officers, and require law enforcement agencies operating in Maryland to adopt that policy or its equivalent. Officers would still be permitted to wear necessary tactical and safety equipment, and full face masks could be authorized under specific, defined circumstances. But use of this policy would reinforce a clear distinction between officers conducting enforcement actions, and criminals hiding their faces to masquerade as law enforcement, making everyone safer. It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of SB1, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,  
**Daryl Yoder**  
**309 Glenmore Ave., Catonsville, MD 21228**  
Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore



**Showing Up for Racial Justice**

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<sup>1</sup> Cameron, Dell & Haskins, Caroline, "FBI warns of criminals posing as ICE, urges agents to ID themselves." WIRED Magazine, Nov. 4, 2025. <https://www.wired.com/story/fbi-warns-of-criminals-posing-as-ice-urges-agents-to-id-themselves/>

# **SB0001\_DavidMFriedman\_FA1.pdf**

Uploaded by: David Friedman

Position: FA1

January 22, 2026  
David M. Friedman  
Silver Spring, MD 20905

**TESTIMONY ON SB0001 - POSITION: FAVORABLE**  
**Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**

**TO:** Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

**FROM:** David M. Friedman

**My name is David Friedman. I am a resident of Colesville/Cloverly in District 14. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB0001, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings.**

I am an active member of Oseh Shalom, a Jewish Reconstructionist congregation located in Laurel, MD. Many traditional Jewish perspectives view wearing masks as a moral obligation, fulfilling a mandate to protect life (Deuteronomy 30:19). While more recently used to support mask wearing during the most recent pandemic, modern use of mask wearing, especially by law enforcement officers, has been associated by some Jewish authorities with supporting a culture of anonymity that allows for the spread of hate, antisemitism, and a lack of transparency and accountability. On balance, I feel obligated to support prohibiting law enforcement officers in Maryland from wearing face coverings, allowing for reasonable exemptions such as being involved in an undercover assignment, medical reasons, and the need for protection during a SWAT operation.

Over the past year, I have been distressed to see how President Trump is not only focused on mass deportations but deploying Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and other Federal agencies to terrorize immigrants and entire communities of color. As part of this brutal strategy, the wearing of masks by ICE agents and other law enforcement officers has helped instill an unparalleled fear in many communities throughout the country including in Maryland. This intentional fear is damaging to law enforcement as it seriously undermines public trust and damages the accountability that Maryland leaders have strived to assure in recent years. It is especially antithetical to community policing that requires trust to build collaborative partnerships to assure public safety.

I support the approach outlined in SB0001 as it provides clear guidance for model development by the Maryland Police Standards and Training Commission and allows for reasonable exceptions via its clear definition of "face coverings". **I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB0001.**

# **Testimony in favor of face coverings SB00001.docx**

Uploaded by: David Tupper

Position: FAV

**My name is David Tupper and I offer testimony in support of SB0001 (HB0155),  
Prohibition on Face Covering, the proposed ban on face masks for law enforcement  
officers, especially ICE.**

While I live in Garrett County, I also have family in Prince George's county. Last fall my daughter witnessed a **masked** ICE officer brutally tackling a man at a Queens Chapel Road intersection in Hyattsville while she was riding a bike with her five-year-old son on the way to his school. In a frightening moment, the officer dropped his gun, scrambled for it, then pointed it toward a witness who was filming the incident, which was also frightfully near where my daughter and grandson were waiting to cross the road. My grandson was confused and frightened and asked his mother to explain what was happening. She could not. The careless and negligent actions of this officer could have accidentally turned deadly, and with his face and other identifying information completely hidden, would there have been accountability for his actions?

The physical actions of ICE officers engaging in violent arrests and dangerous encounters with bystanders are bad enough. But covering their faces and refusing to show any other identification makes it even worse. Our local and state law enforcement officers do not wear masks. Our US troops do not wear masks, even when fighting overseas in war. Why should any branch of law enforcement be allowed to cover their faces, especially when there is evidence of careless and brutal encounters with community members?

I am also very concerned that we have no way of knowing if someone is impersonating an ICE officer. There are many bad actors who can easily get camouflage clothing, put on a mask and terrorize communities. ICE is proving to have a lack of adequate training, is often behaving unprofessionally, and often reacting with violence at the slightest provocation. People of ill intent could easily join in on the brutality. With no identifying information or facial recognition, there is a horrifying possibility that there will be violent agitators impersonating law enforcement.

I would like our representatives in the US congress to ban face coverings for law enforcement, but since that is not likely, at minimum I would like to live in a state where such practices are banned.

**It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote in support of SB0001.**

Sincerely,

David Tupper  
6 West Pennington Street, Oakland MD 21550  
[dcraigtupper@gmail.com](mailto:dcraigtupper@gmail.com)

# **2026 SB001 Favorable Arnolia UMC.pdf**

Uploaded by: David Yost

Position: FAV



## Testimony on Senate Bill 001 – Favorable

**SB 001 - 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,

Arnolia UMC offers favorable testimony in support of **SB 001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**.

We are a United Methodist congregation with approximately 100 active members in Parkville, MD whose faith moves us to advocate for and with immigrant families. We work with immigrant families in our congregation and community to embody a way of being in the world rooted in the inherent value, worth, and dignity of all people.

It is important for public safety that ICE officers can be identified. Without visible identification and uniform standards, fear and public distrust in law enforcement increases. Furthermore, community members are more likely to intervene if they watch someone being attacked or kidnapped by a masked, unmarked group. There's no way to know if someone is simply impersonating an ICE officer. Our county sheriff values transparency and the community has benefited from this. We should not be allowing armed individuals with masks to intimidate and frighten communities with impunity.

Our Immigrant family and community members are already moving around in fear and self-selecting to avoid many public events which limits their participation in our worshiping community and our access to provide them care and resources. Doing our best to reduce the fear of masked individuals armed to intimidate and frighten is the least we can do to help ease the tension.

For these reasons, Arnolia UMC urges the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to issue a **favorable report on SB 001**.

# **Testimony - Support SB1 - Dawn Sacks.docx.pdf**

Uploaded by: Dawn Sacks

Position: FAV

**TESTIMONY ON SB1/HB155 – IN SUPPORT**

**SB1 – Public Safety – Law Enforcement – Prohibition on Face Covering**

**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

**January 22, 2026**

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

My name is Dawn Sacks and I am a resident of Harford County, Maryland. I am writing in support of SB0001/HB0155, Public Safety – Law Enforcement – Prohibition on Face Covering.

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. Even worse, the many instances of ICE brutality indicate that the violence is accelerating. The murder of Renee Brown makes clear that law enforcement, and especially ICE, should not be allowed to shield their identities by wearing face masks.

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 SB1.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Dawn Sacks  
1603 Forest Valley Ct.  
Forest Hill, MD 21050  
sacksdawn@comcast.net

# **WRITTEN TESTIMONY.pdf**

Uploaded by: Debbie Shulman

Position: FAV

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY  
IN FAVOR OF SENATE BILL 1 – UNMASK LAW ENFORCEMENT**

**Maryland Senate  
Judicial Proceedings Committee  
January 22, 2026**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

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Dear Chair Augustine, Vice Chair, and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is **Deborah ("Debbie") Shulman**. I am a **31-year resident of Olney, Maryland, in District 14**, and I am submitting this testimony **in strong support of Senate Bill 1**.

Senate Bill 1 is a necessary and timely measure that promotes **accountability, transparency, and public safety**. Currently, federal law enforcement agents—particularly ICE—are permitted to conduct enforcement actions while **masking their faces and concealing their identities**. This practice undermines public trust, weakens constitutional policing, and creates fear within our communities.

Maryland has long upheld higher standards for **humane, fair, and accountable law enforcement**. Masked enforcement actions do not reflect these values.

**SB 1 strengthens public safety** by increasing transparency. When officers are clearly identifiable, residents can distinguish legitimate law enforcement from impersonators. Nationwide, there has been an increase in reports of individuals posing as law enforcement officers to intimidate or harm others. Clear identification helps prevent confusion, fraud, and abuse and protects both the public and legitimate officers.

**SB 1 protects civil liberties and due process**. Masked or unidentified enforcement actions can create fear and uncertainty, particularly in immigrant communities. Transparency is foundational to constitutional policing. SB 1 promotes accountability where it is currently lacking, especially among federal agents operating within Maryland.

**Unmasking law enforcement builds community trust**. Public safety depends on cooperation between residents and law enforcement. When people fear interactions with masked and unidentifiable officers, they are far less likely to report crimes, serve as witnesses, or seek help when they need it most.

**SB 1 reflects Maryland values**. Our state must set clear and consistent standards for all law enforcement operating within our borders. Federal officers conducting civilian enforcement while wearing masks is inconsistent with Maryland's commitment to dignity, fairness, and the rule of law.

There is also a **fiscal impact** to consider. Enforcement actions lacking transparency frequently lead to increased litigation and court costs, which are ultimately borne by taxpayers. Accountability reduces unnecessary legal exposure and protects public resources.

SB 1 does not prevent lawful enforcement. Officers can continue to do their jobs, but they must do so **responsibly, lawfully, and transparently**.

No person is illegal.

Everyone deserves dignity and constitutional protections.

Masked enforcement emboldens misconduct and must not be allowed in Maryland.

Ending 287(g) agreements and unmasking ICE are both aligned with **Maryland's values and commitment to justice**.

I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a **favorable report on Senate Bill 1**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

**Deborah ("Debbie") Shulman**

4137 Danube Ct

Olney, MD 20832

[debbie.j.shulman@gmail.com](mailto:debbie.j.shulman@gmail.com)

240-461-0699

# **SB1 Favorable testimony 2026.pdf**

Uploaded by: Debi Jasen

Position: FAV

Judicial Proceedings  
Senate Bill 1  
Favorable

Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee;

Please give Senate Bill 1, regarding law enforcement being prohibited from using face coverings in most circumstances, a FAVORABLE report.

As we have seen throughout the country, law enforcement officers who wear face coverings cannot be identified, and thus cannot be held accountable for their actions. This is unconstitutional. The people have the right to know the identities of those who have harassed, assaulted, detained, and/or arrested them. The people have the right to know the identities of those who trespass on their property, and of those who break down their doors.

I recognize that it will be difficult to prosecute federal officers under this legislation, and perhaps this bill is but a symbolic measure in regards to ICE. However, it is an important piece of legislation in that it will at least cover law enforcement of the state and local entities. And there is always the chance that the courts will find that this law also pertains to federal officers. We need all the help we can get to counter the fascist actions of the federal government.

Please give Senate Bill 1 a Favorable report. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Debi Jasen  
Pasadena, MD

# **Gmail - SB1 (Unmasking Bill)\_ FAVORABLE.pdf**

Uploaded by: Deborah Lattimer

Position: FAV



Deborah Lattimer &lt;dalattimer@gmail.com&gt;

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**SB1 (Unmasking Bill): FAVORABLE**

1 message

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**Deborah Lattimer** <dalattimer@gmail.com>  
To: Deborah Lattimer <dalattimer@gmail.com>

Tue, Jan 20, 2026 at 9:13 AM

Good day, my name is Deborah Lattimer and I live in Columbia, MD, District 13. I am sending this testimony in support of SB1 as this bill would prohibit law enforcement officers, including ICE, from wearing face coverings. Face coverings allow imposters to impersonate law enforcement officers without risk of being identified, and engender fear among those approached. They also seem to embolden law enforcement officers to break the law without fear of consequences.

For these reasons, I ask that you vote IN FAVOR of SB1.

Thank you!

Deborah Lattimer

# **SB 1 Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Pr**

Uploaded by: deborah miller

Position: FAV



**Testimony in SUPPORT of *Senate Bill 1 – Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings*  
Judicial Proceedings Committee**  
**January 22, 2026**

The Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington (JCRC) serves as the public affairs and community relations arm of the Jewish community. We represent over 100 Jewish social service agencies, synagogues, and schools throughout Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. The JCRC is strongly committed to cultivating a society based on freedom, justice, equity, and pluralism. We work throughout the region to advocate for our nonprofits that serve the most vulnerable on a non-sectarian basis and to campaign for important policy interests on behalf of the Jewish community and all Marylanders.

The JCRC supports Senate Bill 1 which requires the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission to develop a model policy prohibiting the use of a face covering in the performance of duty. It requires law enforcement agencies to adopt a policy consistent with the model policy. SB 1 also prohibits law enforcement officers from wearing face coverings in the performance of duty except when actively engaged in an undercover operation.

The JCRC understands the importance of balancing the security of our state with individuals' due process rights. It is critical for law enforcement to keep Maryland safe, and we also must remain a warm and welcoming community while we do so. To be effective, local police must garner the public's trust and not instill fear with officers hiding their identities while making warrantless arrests. Supporting immigrants has always been a priority for the JCRC, especially since we, the Jewish people, have been immigrants. We know all too well what it feels like to be vulnerable and to be attacked for who we are. Today, our immigrant community is under attack -- Parents go to work, but don't come home, or worse, they are torn away from their children while dropping them off at school. We are witnessing an unprecedented level of inhumanity and cruelty as anonymous officers wearing face coverings appear in our communities.

The JCRC will always speak up for its allies when they face hardship and injustice. Senate Bill 1 tells immigrants that we are here for them – to stand up for their rights, to see that they receive due process, and to fight for their dignity and respect. The JCRC is committed to ensuring that Maryland remains an inclusive, compassionate and caring community where everyone feels safe and not subject to arrests by law enforcement hiding their identities and instilling fear and tearing communities apart. For these reasons, we urge a favorable report for Senate Bill 1.

# **SB001 Testimony for 1-22-2026.pdf**

Uploaded by: Debra Browne

Position: FAV

## **Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable**

**SB 0001 – 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,

My name is Debra Browne, and I am a resident of Leisure World in Silver Spring, Maryland. I am writing in support of **SB 0001 – Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings**.

It must be terrifying to have people, usually men, with their faces covered yelling orders at someone. Even more terrifying would be to be put in the back of an unmarked car by masked men. If it were to happen to me, I would be certain I was being kidnapped and upon further reflection I would be afraid for my life. There is no reason to allow masked enforcement agents to roam the streets.

I support **SB 0001**, and I respectfully urge the committee to issue a **favorable report** on **SB 0001**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

**Debra Browne**  
**3500 Forest Edge Dr., #1G**  
**Silver Spring, MD 20906**

# **SB001 Testimony for 1-22-2026.pdf**

Uploaded by: Debra Browne

Position: FAV

## **Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable**

**SB 0001 – 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,

My name is Debra Browne, and I am a resident of Leisure World in Silver Spring, Maryland. I am writing in support of **SB 0001 – Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings**.

It must be terrifying to have people, usually men, with their faces covered yelling orders at someone. Even more terrifying would be to be put in the back of an unmarked car by masked men. If it were to happen to me, I would be certain I was being kidnapped and upon further reflection I would be afraid for my life. There is no reason to allow masked enforcement agents to roam the streets.

I support **SB 0001**, and I respectfully urge the committee to issue a **favorable report** on **SB 0001**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

**Debra Browne**  
**3500 Forest Edge Dr., #1G**  
**Silver Spring, MD 20906**

# **FAVORABLE SB0001\_Dorian\_BaldwinBott.pdf**

Uploaded by: Dorian Baldwin-Bott

Position: FAV

**Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable**  
**SB0001 - 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,

My name is Dorian Baldwin-Bott, and I am a longtime resident of Berwyn Heights in Prince George's County, **Maryland**. I am writing in support of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings.

It is important for public safety that ICE officers can be identified. Without visible identification and uniform standards, fear and public distrust in law enforcement increases. Furthermore, community members are more likely to intervene if they watch someone being attacked or kidnapped by a masked, unmarked group. There's no way to know if someone is simply impersonating an ICE officer. Our county sheriff values transparency and the community has benefited from this. We should not be allowing armed individuals with masks to intimidate and frighten communities with impunity. I urge you to vote in favor of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings for transparency and safety.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

# **SB1-Zeller-Favorable.pdf**

Uploaded by: Eileen Zeller

Position: FAV

**Senate Bill 1:**  
**Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings**  
**Senate Judicial Proceedings**  
**January 22, 2026**  
**Position: FAVORABLE**

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

My name is Eileen Zeller. I live in Clarksville, MD (District 9). I am writing in support of SB 1.

I feel viscerally about this issue. Although my parents and grandparents survived the horrors of Nazi Germany, the majority of our family—dozens of their brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, and cousins—were murdered in concentration camps. Before that, they were terrorized in the streets, in their workplaces, in their schools, and in their homes by Brown Shirts and the Gestapo—none of whom were masked.

I will not attempt to draw direct analogies between the Gestapo and ICE. But when you have brown skin in the United States and are stopped by a masked individual dressed as law enforcement who demands to know whether you are a citizen, the terror is the same.

Policing in a democracy depends on public consent, not fear. Law enforcement already holds significant power: weapons, the authority to detain and arrest, legal protections, and institutional backing. When officers are anonymous, that power imbalance deepens.

I support SB1 because for democracy and the rule of law to survive, law enforcement must be accountable—not a source of fear and intimidation.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report on SB1.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Eileen Zeller  
Clarksville (District 9)

# **SB1-Zeller-Favorable.pdf**

Uploaded by: Eileen Zeller

Position: FAV

**Senate Bill 1:**  
**Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings**  
**Senate Judicial Proceedings**  
**January 22, 2026**  
**Position: FAVORABLE**

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

My name is Eileen Zeller. I live in Clarksville, MD (District 9). I am writing in support of SB 1.

I feel viscerally about this issue. Although my parents and grandparents survived the horrors of Nazi Germany, the majority of our family—dozens of their brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, and cousins—were murdered in concentration camps. Before that, they were terrorized in the streets, in their workplaces, in their schools, and in their homes by Brown Shirts and the Gestapo—none of whom were masked.

I will not attempt to draw direct analogies between the Gestapo and ICE. But when you have brown skin in the United States and are stopped by a masked individual dressed as law enforcement who demands to know whether you are a citizen, the terror is the same.

Policing in a democracy depends on public consent, not fear. Law enforcement already holds significant power: weapons, the authority to detain and arrest, legal protections, and institutional backing. When officers are anonymous, that power imbalance deepens.

I support SB1 because for democracy and the rule of law to survive, law enforcement must be accountable—not a source of fear and intimidation.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report on SB1.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Eileen Zeller  
Clarksville (District 9)

**SB0001\_2026\_written\_testimony\_in\_favor.pdf**

Uploaded by: Elizabeth Graham

Position: FAV

SB0001 Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings

**Position: Favorable**

Submitted: Tuesday, January 20, 2026.

I was adopted during infancy from Taiwan and I received my Certificate of Citizenship in 1995 and I grew up in Montgomery County for the majority of my life where I still reside. I believe it is important for all law enforcement agents and officers while in Maryland, absent exigent circumstances, not conceal their identity and identify themselves.

Maryland statute Criminal Procedure §2-109, states that unless there are exigent circumstances, a police officer is required to identify themselves during a traffic stop.

(<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Laws/StatuteText?article=gcp&section=2-109>) I agree with the proposed definition of “face covering”. A law enforcement official not wearing a face covering should be part of their identification protocol.

As someone who was not born in this country, I have been carrying my passport card in my wallet ever since the first term of Donald Trump as President. (The passport card is also helpful in situations where I need to prove my age and identity without revealing my address, for safety purposes.)

Immigration Enforcement agents have operated in a very aggressive manner and without compliance and respect for due process and basic human dignity - regardless of color, ethnicity, race, gender identity or expression, or sexual orientation.

Passing this bill and prohibiting wearing of face coverings to conceal an officer’s identity is important to minimizing the trauma that is being carried out and inflected by many law enforcement officials, especially immigration enforcement.

I ask for a favorable report.

Lizzy Graham

[lizzyg0816@gmail.com](mailto:lizzyg0816@gmail.com)

## **SB 001 Statement.pdf**

Uploaded by: Emily Peterson

Position: FAV

**Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable**  
**SB 001– 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,

My name is Emily Peterson, and I am a resident in Baltimore, Maryland. I am writing in support of **SB 001 – Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**.

I am a graduate student studying history at the University of Maryland Baltimore County. I recently worked on a project highlighting one of Baltimore's foremost civil rights leaders, Juanita Jackson Mitchell. Mitchell was the first Black woman to become a practicing lawyer in Maryland and worked on a number of important civil rights cases along with the likes of Thurgood Marshall. One of these cases was to protect the rights of Marylanders from being racially profiled by police officers who went door-to-door without warrants. Mitchell was an ardent opponent of police brutality and believed that individuals should be protected from being targeted on account of their race or neighborhood. When I think of what ICE is doing today, I think Maryland's foremost civil rights leaders would be appalled with the lack of accountability among ICE officers today.

I support **SB 001** because immigration enforcement officers should be accountable and identifiable in the instance that they instigate violence (which has already happened in places like [Glen Burnie](#)). We don't allow police officers to wear face coverings, so there should not be a different standard for ICE officers who receive even less training on de-escalation tactics than police officers. Face coverings offer an anonymity that may incentivize ICE officers to act irresponsibly or violently without having to face repercussions.

As a resident of Baltimore, I deeply feel that we must protect all of our citizens from harm, including those who are undocumented. Prohibiting face coverings is just one piece to achieve this.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a **favorable report** on **SB 001**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

## **Statement.pdf**

Uploaded by: Emily Peterson

Position: FAV

**Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable**  
**SB 245 – Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition**  
**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

**January 22, 2026**

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

My name is Emily Peterson, and I am a resident in Baltimore, Maryland. I am writing in support of **SB 245 – Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition**.

I've had the opportunity to volunteer with the Baltimore Symphony OrchKids program at a school in Highlandtown. I've seen how fear about ICE inhibited student attendance and participation to our after school program which is meant to support students academically and provide them with a creative outlet, which is incredibly important as participation in music as an elementary school student has been proven to have [significant cognitive and social benefits](#). Students should not be afraid to go to school or after school programming, and the intense fear fostered by ICE is obviously having detrimental psychological impacts on the families of these children.

I support **SB 245** because immigration enforcement agreements like 287(g) create fear in immigrant communities and undermine public safety for everyone. When people fear contact with law enforcement, they are less likely to report crimes, seek help, or cooperate as witnesses—even when they are victims.

Maryland can prevent the violence that has occurred in places like Minneapolis and Chicago if we can proactively prevent ICE enforcement agreements.

Programs like 287(g) have been associated with racial profiling, discrimination, and wrongful detention. They divert local resources away from protecting communities and instead entangle local agencies in federal deportation efforts that separate families and destabilize neighborhoods.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a **favorable report** on **SB 245**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

# **Amica Center Favorable Testimony SB1.pdf**

Uploaded by: Eric Lopez

Position: FAV



Center for Immigrant Rights

Formerly known as CAIR Coalition

1025 Connecticut Avenue NW,  
Suite 701 | Washington, DC 20036

[www.amicacenter.org](http://www.amicacenter.org)

## Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 1

SB 1 – Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

January 20, 2026

Dear Honorable Chair Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee,  
Amica Center for Immigrant Rights (Amica Center) is pleased to offer **a favorable testimony in strong support of SB 1 - Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings.**

**The Amica Center.** We are a non-profit organization that provides pro bono legal defense services to community members detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in Maryland and the DMV area. Our organization has specialized in detained removal defense for the past 25 years and are leaders in creating systemic changes in the immigration system for the benefit of vulnerable non-citizen community members.

**Masked Law Enforcement Erodes Public Trust.** Law enforcement officers who wear masks break the public trust by creating a sense of intimidation and fear into engagements with community members.<sup>1</sup> Mask wearing contributes to the risk of escalation because it leaves doubt to the legitimacy of the law enforcement action and to whether it is a law enforcement officer engaging in valid operations. Even former ICE policy regulatory agents have spoken publicly about the dangers of utilizing masks in the field.<sup>2</sup> As pointed out by former ICE employee, ‘It’s very dangerous. . . [h]ow do you know that you need to not resist to avoid arrest, as opposed to resist arrest to possibly survive the encounter?’

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<sup>1</sup> Leila Fadel, et. all, “Masked ICE agents are spurring fear and confusion across the U.S.”, *National Public Radio*, July 10, 2025, <https://www.npr.org/2025/07/09/nx-s1-5440311/ice-raids-masked-agents>

<sup>2</sup> Jenny Jarvie, “ICE agents wearing mask add new levels of intimidation, confusion during L.A. raids,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 7, 2025, <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2025-07-07/masking-of-federal-agents-very-dangerous-and-perfectly-legal>



Center for Immigrant Rights

Formerly known as CAIR Coalition

1025 Connecticut Avenue NW,  
Suite 701 | Washington, DC 20036

[www.amicacenter.org](http://www.amicacenter.org)

**Our Clients Fear Masked Officers.** Our organization has been providing legal services to non-citizens in ICE custody for over 25 years. But this past year has been different from anything our clients have previously confronted. They are terrified of the sight of masked officers posted up in immigrant neighborhoods. There is no certainty of whether the masked people pulling them over in their vehicle is law enforcement. Additionally, many of our clients have experienced persecution or torture in the past at the hands of law enforcement or private actors and being approached by masked individuals can invoke a similar type of fear.

**Senate Bill 1 takes a critical step towards affirming that there is transparency and accountability for law enforcement officers engaged in their duties in Maryland.**

Through the course of our work, we regularly represent community members who have been the victims of crimes and who have relied on law enforcement for help in their most vulnerable moments. Trust and accountability in our law enforcement is foundational to creating a sense of safety for everyone in Maryland. No one, including law enforcement officers are beyond reproach of our legal system. Prohibiting mask wearing holds officers accountable for their actions.

**Additionally, SB 1 includes sensible exceptions in circumstances that require masks.** This bill recognizes circumstances that may require the use of masks by law enforcement. As such, it is well tailored to not impede law enforcement officers from engaging in their duties.

The individuals that we serve would greatly benefit from this bill. It would return to them a semblance of safety in their daily lives that is no longer there. Everyone should be free of fear and intimidation from law enforcement officers. Clear law enforcement boundaries build trust, strengthening communities and institutions. **For these reasons, the Amica Center urges the committee to provide a favorable report on SB 1.**

Sincerely,

Eric Lopez  
Deputy Program Director



Center for Immigrant Rights

Formerly known as CAIR Coalition

1025 Connecticut Avenue NW,  
Suite 701 | Washington, DC 20036

[www.amicacenter.org](http://www.amicacenter.org)

Amica Center for Immigrant Rights  
10 E. North Ave  
Baltimore, MD 21202

# **Testimony supporting SB0001 E Hodge-Williams.pdf**

Uploaded by: Erin Hodge-Williams

Position: FAV

Testimony on Senate Bill – **Favorable**  
**SB0001 - 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,

My name is Erin Hodge-Williams. I am a resident of Baltimore City and a homeowner in Garrett County, Maryland. I am writing in **strong support** of SB0001 – Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings. I am a **licensed clinical social worker with over 35 years of experience working in community-based settings and as a psychotherapist in private practice**. My professional expertise includes depression, anxiety, trauma—including vicarious trauma—and community-level trauma.

I write with deep concern about the psychological and public safety impacts of law enforcement officers wearing masks while engaging in enforcement actions, particularly when those actions involve aggression or escalate to violence. Mask-wearing affects both the individual wearing the mask and those subjected to or witnessing the encounter.

**First, decades of psychological research demonstrate that anonymity increases the likelihood of aggression and violence.** This phenomenon—often referred to as *deindividuation*—reduces accountability and increases the risk of excessive force. Research conducted in Northern Ireland during the conflict known as *the Troubles*, particularly in and around Belfast, found that individuals who concealed their identities during enforcement or paramilitary actions were significantly more likely to engage in violent behavior compared to those whose faces were visible. The masking of identity consistently correlated with increased aggression, reduced inhibition, and diminished personal responsibility.

**Second**, extensive clinical and public health research shows that exposure to aggressive or violent law enforcement activity—whether experienced directly, witnessed as a bystander, or encountered repeatedly through media—can lead to trauma-related symptoms. These include anxiety, hypervigilance, sleep disturbance, mistrust of authority, and impaired daily functioning. **Importantly, when the individual committing the aggressive act is masked, the traumatic impact is often intensified. A masked perpetrator signals danger, unpredictability, and lack of accountability, which significantly heightens fear responses. This harm extends not only to the direct target of the encounter, but also to bystanders and entire communities who witness or later view these events.** The role of social media further amplifies these effects. Masked officers appearing in these videos contribute to widespread fear, community distress, and erosion of public trust.

From both a clinical and public safety perspective, allowing law enforcement officers to conceal their identities during enforcement actions is harmful. Mask-wearing during aggressive encounters undermines accountability, increases the risk of violence, and exacerbates trauma for individuals and communities alike. When officers—particularly ICE agents—cannot be readily identified, the risk to mental health and public safety increases. For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a **favorable report on SB0001 – Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings**.

Thank you for your consideration.



Respectfully,  
Erin Hodge-Williams, LCSW



# **SB1\_Face Coverings Prohibition\_QV\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Erinn Camp Mansour

Position: FAV

**Bill Title:** Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings - SB1  
**Position:** SUPPORT (FAV)  
**To:** Judicial Proceedings Committee  
**Date:** January 22, 2026

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

Quaker Voice of Maryland (QVM) is a faith-based advocacy group that advocates for policies that are just, compassionate, equitable, and respectful of the inherent worth of every person and the Earth upon which we live. Quakers across Maryland shared with us their increasing concern for stronger immigrant protections. QVM sees SB1 as an urgent priority in response to the unconstitutional and inhumane actions taken by our federal government to implement mass deportation policies.

The Department of Homeland Security Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is operating as a paramilitary force, using draconian operational practices that threaten the lives, dignity and human rights of the people they claim to protect. Removing face coverings from law enforcement officers can prevent potential abuse and protect the public from potential threats. Allowing ICE agents to be unidentifiable can lead to misunderstandings and potential danger for both agents and bystanders.

Ensuring ICE agents are identifiable upholds the right to due process and helps prevent wrongful detention, since face coverings can deter immigrants from seeking legal assistance or reporting violations as they may fear for their safety. Unmasking agents allows them to be held accountable for their actions and ensures transparency in immigration enforcement. Requiring that law enforcement agents are identifiable will reduce fear in immigrant communities and enhance trust in law enforcement officers.

Impersonation of federal, state, and local law enforcement is on the rise around the country. Masking makes legitimate law enforcement more difficult when people cannot distinguish between legitimate enforcement and criminal activity. A ban on masks makes it simple and clear to all what is legitimate police activity and what is not. In Maryland, law enforcement officers are required by law to clearly identify themselves.

The Quaker experience of the Divine affects what we do in our personal lives, what we believe and how we work for changes in the wider world. We embrace the knowledge that all persons are children of the Divine and brothers and sisters of one another. **Our spiritual and social testimonies, including those of peace, community, integrity, and equality, lead us to submit this testimony for SB1.** Please protect the lives, dignity and human rights of all people, and the integrity and effectiveness of local law enforcement, by issuing a **FAVORABLE** report for SB1. Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.

Sincerely,

Erinn Camp Mansour, *Working Group Member, on behalf of Quaker Voice of Maryland*  
*Organization email: quakervoicemd@gmail.com*

**EzraTowne\_SB0001\_Favorable\_2026\_0120\_JPR.pdf**

Uploaded by: Ezra Towne

Position: FAV

**Testimony Favorable to SB0001:  
Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**

January 20, 2026

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

My name is Ezra Towne, and my pronouns are they/them. I am writing you today because I am appalled by the recent trend of police officers, and ICE agents in particular, wearing face coverings. **I fully support SB0001 - and ask for a favorable report.**

First, facial coverings impede due process. It can be difficult to jot down a badge number or snap a photo while interacting with law enforcement - but most people can remember faces. A lack of facial covering means that those detained by law enforcement, and witnesses to the arrest, can provide enough information for a sketch, or identify an officer from a photo.

Second, facial coverings are also meant to intimidate people when interacting with law enforcement, including federal ICE officers. It makes mistaking a law enforcement interaction as an attack by a criminal hiding their face all too easy. It invokes fear in unnecessary and cruel ways. If law enforcement officers are doing their jobs according to procedure there is no reason to hide their identity.

Lastly, the bill clearly establishes that the ban on facial coverings applies to more than just local law enforcement, but federal agents as well. SB0001 ensures that any ICE activity that includes facial coverings is against the law in Maryland and punishable via a fine of \$2,000, imprisonment not exceeding 2 years, or both.

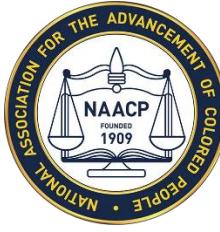
**I respectfully ask for a favorable report on SB0001 from the Judicial Proceedings Committee.**

Sincerely,  
Mx. Ezra Towne  
District 18, Wheaton

# **GCNAACP testimony in favor of SB1.pdf**

Uploaded by: Garrett County NAACP Branch 7139

Position: FAV



**The Garrett County Branch of NAACP strongly supports SB1 with a full ban on face coverings for law enforcement officers.**

The NAACP was formed in 1909 partly due to the violent white supremacist attacks, including those by **masked** groups like the KKK and other mobs. The brutal 1908 Springfield Race Riot serving as a major catalyst for its founding in 1909 to fight racism, lynching, and discrimination. Masked mobs brutally attacking the Black community has been a significant part of our country's dark history and it is appalling to see it happening in Black and Brown urban neighborhoods today.

**The Garrett County Branch of the NAACP supports the position of the national NAACP**

The NAACP strongly opposes the use of masks by ICE agents during operations, viewing it as a tactic for intimidation, lack of accountability, and a continuation of systemic oppression, highlighting it as part of a pattern of racial profiling, unconstitutional actions, and violence against Black and Brown communities, demanding congressional action to hold ICE accountable and protect due process.

NAACP President Derrick Johnson condemned ICE's "egregious attack in Chicago" and other cities, linking masked agents to trauma, brutality, and intimidation against Black and Brown individuals. The NAACP joins civil rights groups in urging Congress to investigate and check ICE's use of force, lack of transparency, and constitutional violations, including those involving masked agents.

The Garrett County NAACP sees masked ICE operations as a violation of civil rights, a tool of oppression, and a threat to democracy, requiring immediate reform and accountability for the agency. While we hope that our United States representatives will also act to stop the use of face coverings, we now urge our Maryland representatives to take the lead in banning this abhorrent, cowardly and unnecessary practice on the part of law enforcement agencies, including ICE.

**For these reasons we ask for your favorable vote on SB1 with a full ban on face coverings for law enforcement officers.**

**GCNAACP Branch Leadership**

**SB001 letter.pdf**

Uploaded by: Gena Wade

Position: FAV

703.819.6280  
GENACWADE@GMAIL.COM

44930 GLEBE LANE  
VALLEY LEE, MD 20692

JANUARY 20, 2026

DEAR SENATOR AUGUSTINE,

I am writing to express my strong support for SB0001, requiring the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission to develop a model policy prohibiting the use of a face covering in the performance of duty and requiring law enforcement agencies to adopt this policy. I am appalled at the use of face coverings by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers and find it to be both an effort to intimidate everyone around them and an effort to avoid personal accountability for their actions.

I am proud to be a Maryland resident, and I would like law enforcement operating in our state to be held to a higher standard than that presently demonstrated by our federal government.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



GENA C. WADE

RESIDENT, ST. MARY'S COUNTY



# **Testimony on Senate Bill 0001.pdf**

Uploaded by: Gita Lefstein

Position: FAV

**Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable**

**SB 0001 – 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,

My name is Gita Lefstein, and I am a resident of Baltimore County, Maryland. I am writing in support of **SB 0001 – Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings**

When law enforcement officers wear masks and/or don't clearly identify themselves, attack people, haul them off the streets, and out of their homes, workplaces, cars, and communities, they become indistinguishable from criminals. They become kidnappers. They terrorize individuals, families, and neighborhoods. At a minimum, they should be required to be identifiable. Otherwise, any criminal could put on a mask and be taken for law enforcement officers.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a **favorable report** on **SB 0001**.

Thank you.

# **2026 Testimony SB0001.pdf**

Uploaded by: Heather Thomas

Position: FAV

## **Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings / SB0001**

Official Testimony  
Position: **FAVORABLE**

To the **Judicial Proceedings Committee**,

My name is **Heather Thomas**, and I'm a **Rosedale** resident and a member of District **6**. I support **SB0001**, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings.

This bill will increase public safety and trust by preventing law officers from acting anonymously. There's no reason why law enforcement officers that are appropriately upholding the law should be masked. It will also prevent anyone attempting to impersonate ICE from being able to do so anonymously.

I believe that passing of this bill is essential because there have been numerous news stories showing how violent ICE agents often are, and their frequent violations of our laws and constitutional rights. Without anonymity there can be greater transparency and accountability.

Masked agents also add to the sense of fear currently present in our communities, especially for immigrants and people of color.

I respectfully urge this committee to issue a favorable report on **SB0001, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**.

Sincerely,

**Heather Thomas**  
[heatherthomas513@gmail.com](mailto:heatherthomas513@gmail.com)  
**443-600-0653**

# **SB1\_HB155 - ban LE face covering .pdf**

Uploaded by: Holly Powell

Position: FAV

Dear Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of individuals working to move white folks as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. We are also working in collaboration with CASA. I am a resident of **District 46**. I am **testifying in support of SB1 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings.**

In the State of Maryland, we expect the law enforcement officers who serve our communities to openly identify themselves as such when doing their jobs. Law enforcement agencies have policies requiring officers to wear uniforms or other identifying markers in most circumstances, and we even have a law - Criminal Procedure Article 2-109 - which requires a police officer to identify him or herself by name, agency, and badge number when approaching a citizen for a traffic stop or other investigation.

Throughout 2025, we saw copious news coverage of federal law enforcement actions conducted by officers wearing street clothes and balaclavas. The fact that incidents of police impersonation have been on the rise in Maryland and nationally is not a coincidence: when it becomes impossible to determine who is a legitimate law enforcement officer, criminals can more plausibly claim to be police by simply putting on a mask, no fake uniform or badge required. Even the FBI has recognized the danger, circulating a bulletin to law enforcement agencies in October 2025 that warned criminals were taking advantage of routine mask-wearing by law enforcement to disguise themselves as ICE agents.<sup>1</sup> This confusion also makes routine law enforcement operations more dangerous. Initial contact between officer and civilian is often the most uncertain and dangerous moment in a law enforcement encounter, and ensuring that everyone is on the same page about what is happening can help prevent rash and dangerous decisions.

SB1 would require the creation of a model masking policy banning the routine use of full face masks to conceal the identity of law enforcement officers, and require law enforcement agencies operating in Maryland to adopt that policy or its equivalent. Officers would still be permitted to wear necessary tactical and safety equipment, and full face masks could be authorized under specific, defined circumstances. But use of this policy would reinforce a clear distinction between officers conducting enforcement actions, and criminals hiding their faces to masquerade as law enforcement, making everyone safer. It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of SB1, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,  
**Holly Powell**  
**2308 Cambridge Street**  
**Baltimore, Maryland 21224**  
Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore



**Showing Up for Racial Justice**

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<sup>1</sup> Cameron, Dell & Haskins, Caroline, "FBI warns of criminals posing as ICE, urges agents to ID themselves." WIRED Magazine, Nov. 4, 2025. <https://www.wired.com/story/fbi-warns-of-criminals-posing-as-ice-urges-agents-to-id-themselves/>

# **kennalda - SB0001.pdf**

Uploaded by: ida kenna

Position: FAV

ida kenna  
716 e 41st st  
Baltimore, Maryland 21218  
District 43A

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 0245, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings

2026-01-20

TO: Chair William C. Smith, Jr. & the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
FROM: ida kenna, Greater Baltimore Democratic Socialists of America,

Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee, my name is ida kenna, I live in Baltimore City, Maryland, and I am writing to support SB 0001, Prohibition on Face Coverings.

Community accountability is an essential component for trustworthy and safe policing. Allowing police to obscure their identity alarms people who encounter them and immediately destroys trust, because obviously officers hiding their faces are not willing to take responsibility for their actions. This behavior has become the standard for ICE and supporting DHS officers in their violent "immigration enforcement" that has often resulted in citizens as well as noncitizens getting brutalized, arrested, and even trafficked out of the country. We, the public, the safety of whom the state and the police are supposed to protect, must be able to seek accountability for law enforcement that break laws and abuse power in our presence.

Please let Maryland be a safer place for all of us than elsewhere in our country. Prohibiting masked law enforcement is one small step towards ensuring the people wearing those badges are discharging their duties faithfully. I urge you to support SB 0001 and help ensure that Maryland's law enforcement is being held to the highest standards of conduct.

# **Ishai Barnoy - SB001 Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Ishai Barnoy

Position: FAV

**Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable**  
**SB 0001 – Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**

**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

**January 22, 2026**

Hello, my name is Ishai Barnoy and I'm a constituent from Baltimore City.

I am writing in support of **SB 0001 – Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**.

I care about prohibiting law enforcement from collaborating with ICE first and foremost because of the horrifying images and stories out of the takeover in Minneapolis, most recently, but also from previous instances all around the nation. It really looks like a lawless descent of Trump's personal thugs as a way to punish people who do not support him. But it's more than that, it finally obviously looks like this is what ICE and by extension the whole DHS was meant to be: A tool of state terror, to be applied not only against innocent immigrants, but also citizens.

Being that I, myself, am an immigrant and a naturalized citizen, I am terrified by and furious about ICE. I urge you to support any effort to allow the state of Maryland to stand up to that department of violent goons and to protect the residents of Maryland by opposing ICE in this way but also any possible way.

This bill, **SB 0001**, will maximize both public safety and community health and well being in Baltimore City and in the state of Maryland overall by:

- ensuring that limited state and local resources are dedicated to proven public safety strategies
- restoring trust in community law enforcement
- preventing intimidation and harassment of innocent people, immigrants and citizens alike
- reinforcing the constitutional and civil rights of all residents

Escalating tensions with federal ICE agents and collaboration by local law enforcement threaten to undermine our health, our safety, and the constitutional right to due process. By keeping law enforcement visible and accountable, and ending controversial immigration enforcement agreements, this bill will promote fairness, dignity, and justice for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Ishai Barnoy

240-888-6461

[ishaibarnoy@gmail.com](mailto:ishaibarnoy@gmail.com)

2705 Montebello Terrace,  
Baltimore, MD 21214

# **JZ HB 0155 - Prohibition on Face Coverings 2026 -**

Uploaded by: Jane Zagajeski

Position: FAV

Jane Zagajeski  
10712 Tenbrook Dr.  
Silver Spring, MD 20901  
State District 20

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 0155, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers -  
Prohibition on Face Coverings

January 18, 2026

TO: Chair J. Sandy Bartlett & Members of the House Judiciary Committee  
FROM: Jane Zagajeski

Members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Jane, I live in Silver Spring, Maryland, and I am writing to support HB 0155, Prohibition on Face Coverings.

As a teacher, mother, neighbor, wife, and Maryland resident, I am baffled by the situation we find ourselves in. How can ICE be allowed to operate like secret police in our communities? If I am stopped while driving by people in masks, how would I reasonably know if they are legitimate or trying to carjack me? If people in masks come to my door, how will my son know if they are “safe helpers” or the bad guys? I am a middle-aged, American-born white woman and as such, feel safe from actually being deported. But many of my neighbors, students, colleagues, and fellow Maryland residents do not have this luxury of “assumed safety.” For everyone’s safety, prohibiting face covering is a first step in making ICE activity less secretive, more accountable, and more transparent.

I urge you to support HB 0155 and help ensure that Maryland’s law enforcement is being held to the highest standards of conduct.

# **SB1 Janelle Wong testimony 1\_22\_26.pdf**

Uploaded by: Janelle Wong

Position: FAV

## Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable

### SB 001– Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers– Prohibition of Face Coverings

#### Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

January 22, 2026

My name is **Janelle Wong**, and I am a **resident of Montgomery County, Maryland**. I am writing in support of **SB 1 – Public Safety Law Enforcement Officers– Prohibition of Face Coverings**.

I am writing in my capacity as a scholar and researcher of Asian American Studies and as an Asian American resident of this state. Immigrants account for more than a third of our state population. Immigrants from Asia make-up more than half of the foreign-born population in Howard County, and more than a third in Montgomery, Carroll, Baltimore, and Anne Arundel Counties. And, about 1 out of every 7 Asian immigrants is undocumented. Asian Americans have seen anti-immigrant sentiment hit our communities hard in the past. Chinese migrants to the U.S. were the first “undocumented” immigrants in U.S. history, arriving under Chinese Exclusion policies in the late 1880s. And our communities were subject to raids, deportations, and racial profiling during that period.

I support **SB 1** not only because of the history of harsh immigration enforcement actions against Asian American communities, but because when ICE agents wear masks, they are shielded from individual accountability and allowed to intimidate our Maryland community members more broadly. This undermines overall trust in the government. In addition, when ICE agents are masked it allows other masked impersonators to exploit fears of ICE and act nefariously, undermining public safety.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a **favorable report** on **SB 1**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Janelle Wong

# **Testimony in favor of face coverings SB00001.pdf**

Uploaded by: Janet Tupper

Position: FAV

**My name is Janet Tupper and offer a favorable testimony in support SB0001 (HB0155) Prohibition on Face Covering**, the proposed ban on face masks for law enforcement officers, especially ICE.

While I live in Garrett County, I also have family in Prince George's county. Last fall my daughter witnessed a **masked** ICE officer brutally tackling a man at a Queens Chapel Road intersection in Hyattsville while she was riding a bike with her five-year-old son on the way to his school. In a frightening moment, the officer dropped his gun, scrambled for it, then pointed it toward the witness who was filming the incident, which was also frightfully near where my daughter and grandson were standing while waiting to cross the road. My grandson was confused and frightened and asked his mother to explain what was happening. She could not. The careless and negligent actions of this officer could have accidentally turned deadly, and with his face and other identifying information completely hidden, would there have been accountability for his actions?

The physical actions of ICE officers engaging in violent arrests and dangerous encounters with bystanders are bad enough. But covering their faces and refusing to show any other identification makes it even worse. Our local and state law enforcement officers do not wear masks. Our US troops do not wear masks, even when fighting overseas in war. Why should any branch of law enforcement be allowed to cover their faces especially when there is evidence of careless and brutal encounters with community members?

I am also very concerned that we have no way of knowing if someone is impersonating an ICE officer. There are many bad actors who can easily get camouflage clothing, put on a mask and terrorize communities. ICE is proving to have a lack of adequate training, is often behaving unprofessionally, and often reacting with violence at the slightest provocation. There are many ill-intent people who could easily join in on the brutality. With no identifying information or facial recognition, there is a horrifying but inevitable possibility that there will be violent agitators impersonating law enforcement.

I would like our representatives in the US congress to ban face coverings for law enforcement, but since that is not likely, at minimum I would like to live in a state where such practices are banned.

**It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote in support of SB00001.**

Sincerely,

Janet Tupper  
6 West Pennington Street, Oakland MD 21550  
Janet.tupper@gmail.com

# **SB001TestimonyJarvis.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jennifer Jarvis

Position: FAV

**Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable**  
**SB001 Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**

**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

**January 20, 2026**

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

My name is Jennifer Jarvis, and I am a native-born US citizen and resident of Baltimore City. I am writing in support of **SB001 Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**.

We live in a supposedly free country, where the rule of law is supposed to prevail and where all residents have certain rights, even if they are suspected of committing a crime. Therefore, there is absolutely no need for any law enforcement officer to wear a mask or face-covering at any time while on duty. Officers are supposed to be serving their communities, not hiding from us. If we entrust them with public safety, and if they are following the law, the constitution, and public engagement protocols, then they should not wish to hide their faces or obscure their identity. If you cover your face, barring illness of course, then you must have something to hide. Who is going to trust a police officer who refuses to show us their face or identify themselves?

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a **favorable report** on **SB 001**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jennifer Jarvis  
4326 Evans Chapel Rd.  
Baltimore, MD 21211  
jajbookbinder@gmail.com

# **FAVORABLE SB0001\_JeredEbenreck.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jered Ebenreck

Position: FAV

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

My name is Jered Ebenreck, and I am a resident of Calvert County, **Maryland**. I am writing in support of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings.

Masks are relevant to stop disease transmission, air pollution, and workplace hazards in factories and research laboratories. Masks on officers, especially those they refuse to remove in order to be identified, represent a double-standard—somehow citizens in masks gathering to peacefully protest are a threat, but officers need masks to protect them ... despite the fact that those officers are armed with guns, the law (ostensibly in the case of ICE), and cadres of others who are armed just like them. Knowing who they are keeps cops honest—masked cops are shady.

It is important for public safety that ICE officers can be identified. Without visible identification and uniform standards, fear and public distrust in law enforcement increases. Furthermore, community members are more likely to intervene if they watch someone being attacked or kidnapped by a masked, unmarked group. Wouldn't you?!? There's no way to know if someone is simply impersonating an ICE officer. The footage I have seen shows how scary it is for these masked agents to roll up in a group, barge down doors, pull people from cars and shoot them in broad daylight near schools, hospitals, and department stores. If they are proud of what they do, let them show their faces in our communities. Using masks reveals their shame.

Our county sheriff values transparency and the community benefits from this. We should not be allowing armed individuals with masks to intimidate and frighten communities with impunity.

I urge you to vote in favor of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings for transparency and safety.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Jered Ebenreck, [jebenreck@icloud.com](mailto:jebenreck@icloud.com)

# **FAVORABLE SB0001\_Jeremiah\_Raftovich.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jeremiah Raftovich

Position: FAV

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

My name is **Jeremiah Raftovich** and I am a **resident of Anne Arundel County, Maryland**. I am writing in support of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings

There should be absolutely no legal space for secret police or armed racist vigilantes in our state. ICE's insistence of allowing officers to go about unidentified and unidentifiable provides space for both.

It is important for public safety that ICE officers can be identified. Without visible identification and uniform standards, fear and public distrust in law enforcement increases. Furthermore, community members are more likely to intervene if they watch someone being attacked or kidnapped by a masked, unmarked group. There's no way to know if someone is simply impersonating an ICE officer.

We should not be allowing armed individuals with masks to intimidate and frighten our communities with impunity.

I urge you to vote in favor of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings for transparency and safety.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

## **Testimony Hencke.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jess Hencke

Position: FAV

Jess Hencke  
6552 Tinker Round  
Columbia, MD 21045  
District 13

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB0001, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers -  
Prohibition on Face Coverings

1-20-26

TO: Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee  
FROM: Jess Hencke

Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee, my name is Jess Hencke, I live in Columbia, Maryland, and I am writing to support SB0001, Prohibition on Face Coverings for Law Enforcement Officers, and to change the effective date of this law to July—or sooner, if possible.

In our state, we strive to hold citizens accountable for crimes committed—and no one should be immune from this accountability. Face coverings for Law Enforcement Officers actively impede this goal and harm the transparency of investigative procedures against unsuitable officers. Public trust will erode when the people meant to protect our communities make their appearances as masked individuals with guns drawn.

Transparency is critical for the safety and security of our communities, and Law Enforcement Officers need not be exempt. Interactions with officers sometimes occur with heightened emotion. To have officers seemingly immune from consequence via the anonymity of face coverings could increase fear in the public space and runs counter to helping officers to de-escalate and resolve an encounter.

Let us progress towards a safer Maryland and be an example for our country by embodying the concept of Justice for All. Prohibiting masked law enforcement is one small step towards ensuring the people wearing badges are discharging their duties faithfully. I urge you to support SB 0001 and help ensure that Maryland's law enforcement is being held to the highest standards of conduct. Thank you for your time.

# **Support-SB 1-Face Coverings- UULM-MD - Jim Caldier**

Uploaded by: Jim Caldiero

Position: FAV



### Testimony IN FAVOR of SB 1 Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers -- Prohibition on Face Coverings

DATE: January 22, 2026

TO: Sen. William Smith, Chair, Sen. Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice-Chair,  
and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
FROM: Jim Caldiero, Lead Advocate for Immigration,  
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony IN FAVOR of SB 1, Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings that will establish a model policy prohibiting the use of a face covering by a law enforcement officer in the course of duty.

As a child growing up in New York City in the late 1940's, early 1950's, I would watch *Officer Joe Bolton* on WPIX-TV as he introduced various children's programs. He was an avuncular, friendly face, much like the real policemen who walked the beat. In the playgrounds, on the streets, on your way to school, you knew you were safe as they offered comforting smiles, but you knew they'd tell your mom if you didn't behave.

You could trust these police officers.

Their *faces* told you so.

Today, however, instead of trust, fear pervades every immigrant community as strong-armed, unaccountable, unidentifiable Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents roam the streets, abducting individuals, throwing them into unmarked vans, separating parents from their children. Some states, like California, New York, Massachusetts, have already recognized the dysfunction unidentifiable federal agents present, the fear and mistrust they engender, the abuse of power that can come when hiding behind a mask, and are working on legislation to protect their citizens. For example:

- CA: No Secret Police Act;
- NY: Mandating End of Lawless Tactics (MELT) Act;
- MA: Ensuring Law Enforcement Identification and Public Trust Act.

In addition to community trust and reducing fear, there are other reasons to ensure that all law enforcement officers are clearly identifiable.

They include:

- *Public Safety*: Identifiable law enforcement officers can prevent potential misunderstandings between agents and the public that can lead to violent encounters, as we recently witnessed in Minneapolis.
- *Due Process*: Identifiable law enforcement officers can uphold the right to due process and prevent wrongful detention. Face coverings can deter immigrants from seeking legal assistance or reporting violations as they may fear for their safety.
- *Prevention of Impersonation*: Identifiable law enforcement officers prevent the misuse of information and potential vigilantism.

As former ICE Assistant Director, Scott Schuchart, said, “If somebody comes up to you with a mask and a T-shirt and no badge, why would you think that they are exercising a legitimate authority, as opposed to being a violent criminal trying to do you harm? How do you know that you need to not resist to avoid arrest, as opposed to resist arrest to possibly survive the encounter?”

My Unitarian Universalist faith calls me to promote and affirm justice, equity and compassion as we relate to each other. Faith that our law enforcement officers will do the right thing, not fear, should guide us. We should not turn our neighbors into suspects. We must restore trust between law enforcement officers and all our Maryland communities.

I encourage you to vote IN FAVOR on SB 1.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sources:

California, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/09/20/us/california-ice-agents-masks-law.html>

<https://trackbill.com/bill/california-senate-bill-627-law-enforcement-masks/2670575/>

New York,

<https://www.nysenate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2025/patricia-fahy/senator-fahy-introduces-mel-t-act-prohibit-masking-ice>

Massachusetts,

<https://www.masslive.com/news/2025/07/mass-lawmakers-bill-would-ban-ice-agents-from-wearing-masks.html>

Scott Schuchart,

<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2025-07-07/masking-of-federal-agents-very-dangerous-and-perfectly-legal>

Reasons for Unmasking ICE Agents,

<https://www.salon.com/2025/07/19/it-comes-across-as-kidnapping-pressure-grows-to-unmask-ice/>

**UULM-MD c/o UU Church of Annapolis 333 Dubois Road Annapolis, MD 21401 410-266-8044,**

[www.uulmmd.org](http://www.uulmmd.org) [info@uulmmd.org](mailto:info@uulmmd.org) [www.facebook.com/uulmmd](http://www.facebook.com/uulmmd) [www.Twitter.com/uulmmd](http://www.Twitter.com/uulmmd)

**Senate Bill 01 favorable 1.20.2026.pdf**

Uploaded by: Joanne Bates Crimmins

Position: FAV

**Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable**  
**SB0001 - 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,

My name is Joanne Bates Crimmins, and I am a resident of Frederick, Maryland. I am writing in support of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings

This issue is so important for public safety. There have been instances where copycat masked individuals have committed crimes under the guise of being an “ICE agent”. This cannot stand. Not only does this make everyone in Maryland more vulnerable to senseless, unnecessary, and traumatic crime, it is just un-American. Frederick should be getting safer, not more dangerous.

It is important for public safety that ICE officers can be identified. Without visible identification and uniform standards, fear and public distrust in law enforcement increases. Furthermore, community members are more likely to intervene if they watch someone being attacked or kidnapped by a masked, unmarked group. There’s no way to know if someone is simply impersonating an ICE officer.

Our county sheriff values transparency and our community has benefited from this. We should not be allowing armed **individuals with masks to intimidate and frighten communities with impunity.**

I urge you to vote in favor of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings for transparency and safety.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Joanne Bates Crimmins, resident of Frederick

# **SB1\_HB155-John Ford-favorable.pdf**

Uploaded by: John Ford

Position: FAV

Dear **Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee**,

This testimony is being submitted in collaboration with Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore and CASA. I am a resident District 46 in Baltimore City. When I am stopped in the City by a law enforcement officer, or call 911 for help, I can generally trust the person I am interacting with is a legitimate officer and that we will both be safe in that interaction. When secret police – generally defined as enforcement officers that hide their faces and identities while doing operations – are added to the equation, as has happened in the last year, that is no longer the case. **I am testifying in support of SB1 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings.**

In the State of Maryland, we expect the law enforcement officers who serve our communities to openly identify themselves as such when doing their jobs. Law enforcement agencies have policies requiring officers to wear uniforms or other identifying markers in most circumstances, and we even have a law - Criminal Procedure Article 2-109 - which requires a police officer to identify him or herself by name, agency, and badge number when approaching a citizen for a traffic stop or other investigation.

Throughout 2025, we saw copious news coverage of federal law enforcement actions conducted by officers wearing street clothes and balaclavas. The fact that incidents of police impersonation have been on the rise in Maryland and nationally is not a coincidence: when it becomes impossible to determine who is a legitimate law enforcement officer, criminals can more plausibly claim to be police by simply putting on a mask, no fake uniform or badge required. Even the FBI has recognized the danger, circulating a bulletin to law enforcement agencies in October 2025 that warned criminals were taking advantage of routine mask-wearing by law enforcement to disguise themselves as ICE agents.<sup>1</sup> This confusion also makes routine law enforcement operations more dangerous. Initial contact between officer and civilian is often the most uncertain and dangerous moment in a law enforcement encounter, and ensuring that everyone is on the same page about what is happening can help prevent rash and dangerous decisions.

SB1 would require the creation of a model masking policy banning the routine use of full face masks to conceal the identity of law enforcement officers, and require law enforcement agencies operating in Maryland to adopt that policy or its equivalent. Officers would still be permitted to wear necessary tactical and safety equipment, and full face masks could be authorized under specific, defined circumstances. But use of this policy would reinforce a clear distinction between officers conducting enforcement actions, and criminals hiding their faces to masquerade as law enforcement, making everyone safer. It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of SB1, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,  
**John Preston Ford**  
**529 S East Ave**  
**Baltimore, MD 21224**

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<sup>1</sup> Cameron, Dell & Haskins, Caroline, "FBI warns of criminals posing as ICE, urges agents to ID themselves." WIRED Magazine, Nov. 4, 2025. <https://www.wired.com/story/fbi-warns-of-criminals-posing-as-ice-urges-agents-to-id-themselves/>

# **Senate Bill 1 One Pasadena 2026.pdf**

Uploaded by: John Jasen

Position: FAV

**Senate Bill 1**  
**Judicial Proceedings Committee**  
**Favorable Report**

Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee;

We, the Steering Committee of the neighborhood group One Pasadena: Building a Safe and Inclusive Community, urge you to give Senate Bill 1 a favorable report.

Without the ability to identify law enforcement officers, people cannot exercise their Constitutional rights. People who wear face coverings to hide their identities can claim that they're law enforcement, even when they're not. We need to be able to depend on law enforcement to not hide their identities. Without a way to verify who they are, we are left helpless. If we resist, as many of us would against an unknown assailant, we could be found guilty of a number of crimes against law enforcement. If we don't resist, we could find ourselves abducted, raped, and even killed. If we make it to court, we wouldn't be able to identify any individual who has harmed us. We also couldn't argue that they have demonstrated a trend of unlawful discrimination in their actions.

For these, and many other reasons, we hope that you will give Senate Bill 1 a favorable report. Thank you.

Sincerely,  
The One Pasadena Steering Committee  
Pasadena, MD

# **Chris Apple - SB0001 - FAVORABLE.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jonathan Tuttle

Position: FAV

Chris Apple  
6385 Windharp Way  
Columbia, MD 21045  
District 13

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 0001, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers -  
Prohibition on Face Coverings

Jan 22, 2026

TO: Chair William Smith & Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee, my name is Chris Apple, I live in Columbia, Maryland, and I am writing to support SB 0001, Prohibition on Face Coverings.

This country has a long and bloody history of masked vigilantes claiming to enforce the law. From Slave Patrols to Red Shirts to the Ku Klux Klan, many people have acted out their worst racist impulses while wearing a mask and a badge of office. Wearing a mask is an excuse to do violence to the community, while escaping the consequences of that violence. Masked officers are not heroes and they do not serve the people. If someone truly wishes to serve the people, he can do so with his face in the clear, open to judgement and the review of the community he polices. One only wears a mask if he is ashamed of his actions.

Recent events in Minneapolis have shown us that we have plenty to fear from masked law enforcement officers. They commit misconduct, violence, and even murder – and face no consequences for their actions. Maryland should not suffer the violent actions of masked vigilantes, even if they wear a badge of office. All law enforcement officers should be fully unmasked and accountable for their actions. That is why SB 0001 is so important - to hold law enforcement accountable, so that Maryland does not suffer the same injustices that Minnesota is currently suffering.

History shows us there is only one true way forward: if you wish to enforce the law in Maryland, you can do so without obscuring your face. To do anything else is to shirk your responsibility as a law enforcement officer.

I urge you to support SB 0001 and help ensure that Maryland's law enforcement is being held to the highest standards of conduct.

# **To the MD General Assembly SB0001 – Submitted Judi**

Uploaded by: Judith Tanner

Position: FAV

To the MD General Assembly SB0001 – Submitted Judith Tanner 1-20-2026  
I am strongly in favor of passing SB0001 Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers –  
Prohibition on Face Coverings

Masking protects ICE agents makes people more afraid... it helps keep ICEA agents from being held accountable for illegal actions. This bill will make us all safer since it will enable everyone to be a bit less afraid to report crime for fear that they or someone in their household will be dragged away by an unknown ICE agent, it will make people less afraid to call for help for themselves and others for medical emergencies and situations of abuse and it will make people more willing to be witnesses for crimes they may see. No one, and certainly not ICE agents who are using violence daily, should be able to use anything that will help them avoid responsibility for their actions.

**But the foremost reason that you should pass SB0001 is tied to the fact that we have a Federal Gov't that is blatantly racist and corrupt beyond description in just about everything it does and we must stand against hate and for love of neighbor, for justice and democracy.** The historical backdrop for ICE terrorism is the unfair immigration system that has existed for many years where all parties refused to pass legislation to deal equitably with immigrants... particularly those who are now deemed "illegal." What is fair about turning a blind eye to those who came without "proper" work papers **but** have done and continue to do much of the hard work that the country needs and wants... those who work on farms, slaughter houses, cleaning hotels and hospitals, being our personal house cleaners and nannies, roofers, construction workers just to name a very few. They pay taxes, and contribute to SS and Medicare and are not eligible for these benefits, they get no health insurance, no retirement benefits and for years everyone concerned has colluded to "not rock the boat"... employers often take advantage of such workers and again we pretend this is not happening. These workers should have been welcomed into the US legally to begin with and offered a "path to citizenship" after a certain number of productive years of living here. Why is that not been the case? I think racism and a lack of will in both parties to fight for fair immigration legislation have been the main two impediments, but "at the end of the day" this is tied to a lack of moral responsibility. Is it really okay to take advantage of people in this way... to have a class of people who do the work we want done, to pretend they are treated fairly when they are not and now to allow ICE to violently pull their families apart, still refusing to see the immorality of our behavior?

ICE offers huge bonuses to get people to sign up. They do not do serious background checks, they recruit agents from places and organizations that promote force and gun use, they let agents use masks and clearly want agents to be those who hold a positive view of coercion through violence ("tough guy" mentality). The Justice Department supports ICE beating people, smashing vehicle windows, abusing protestors, zip-tying children, shooting and killing people. They go house to house pulling people out, to schools, churches, immigration courts where people are petitioning to stay here legally, taking folks who have lived here for many years without any criminal record and who contribute greatly to our state and country, separating families, sending various people back to countries that are quite dangerous for them and detaining many in unsafe camps where death rates are going up.

SB0001 will make us all safer in Maryland but the underlying reason why you should vote for this bill is to keep your integrity as a person, as one who stands up for what is right in terms of protecting innocent people from harm by ICE agents.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

## **Favorable SB0001\_Judy McClure.pdf**

Uploaded by: Judy McClure

Position: FAV

**Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable**  
**SB0001 - 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,

My name is Judy McClure, and I am a resident of Salisbury, Maryland. I am writing in support of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings

Having masked law enforcement agents in our community is causing widespread fear and allows for absolute lack of accountability for their brutal tactics, such as breaking car windows and throwing people to the ground. This is not the Salisbury we know. These people are NOT keeping us safe or creating an atmosphere where residents feel safe. They are doing just the opposite.

It is important for public safety that ICE officers can be identified. Without visible identification and uniform standards, fear and public distrust in law enforcement increases. Furthermore, community members are more likely to intervene if they watch someone being attacked or kidnapped by a masked, unmarked group. There's no way to know if someone is simply impersonating an ICE officer.

Our county sheriff values transparency and the community has benefited from this. We should not be allowing armed individuals with masks to intimidate and frighten communities with impunity.

I urge you to vote in favor of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings for transparency and safety.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

# **MD Senate Judicial Proceedings Template SB#1.pdf**

Uploaded by: Julie Solomon

Position: FAV

Date of Hearing: January 20, 2026

Julie Robin Solomon

Baltimore, MD 21231

Your City/Town, State Zip

**TESTIMONY ON SB# SB1 - POSITION: FAVORABLE**

**Full Bill Name:** Public Safety-Law Enforcement Officers--Prohibition on Face Coverings

**TO:** Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

**FROM:** Julie Robin Solomon

My name is Julie Robin Solomon. I am a resident of District 46. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#1 Public Safety--Law Enforcement Officers--Prohibition on Face Coverings

I have been a city resident of Butcher's Hill for 35 years and work as a psychiatric nurse practitioner. Because of my personal involvement with the African-American community--I have adopted black children--I have witnessed up close and personal the ways that the Baltimore City Police Department has abused and harassed black people in our city. Lately I have witnessed abuse by ICE of brown people and immigrants in Baltimore. The use of face coverings by ICE is a violation of our civil and legal culture. Arresting police and agents of the federal government that arrest and detain should be unmasked. If they are executing the law, they should be unmasked. They are not investigators or undercover agents. They are public officials who should operate with transparency. This is a tradition within American police and other law enforcement. Its how we know the good guys from the bad guys. The only reason for masking is to protect their illegal actions--if any.

I thank the members of this committee for their hard work in protecting citizens of Maryland against crime and illegality. I believe that masked Ice and Border Patrol Agents in our state helps supports crime and illegality on the part of these agents and perhaps others. I urge the members of this committee to support this bill to protect Marylanders from the heinous actions of masked men.

# **NASW Maryland - 2026 SB 1 FAV - Prohibition on Fac**

Uploaded by: Karessa Proctor

Position: FAV



**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**  
**January 22, 2026**

**Senate Bill 1: Judicial Proceedings – Law Enforcement Officers –  
Prohibition on Face Coverings**

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

The National Association of Social Workers – Maryland Chapter (NASW-MD), representing licensed social workers across the State of Maryland, respectfully submits this testimony in support of Senate Bill 1, legislation that would prohibit law enforcement officers from wearing face coverings while performing official duties.

NASW-MD's support for this bill is firmly grounded in the NASW Code of Ethics, which establishes the ethical responsibilities of social workers to promote human dignity, social justice, integrity, and the importance of human relationships. These values are essential to the creation of public systems that are transparent, accountable, and responsive to community needs.

The NASW Code of Ethics affirms the dignity and worth of the person and emphasizes that all individuals have the right to be treated with respect and fairness. The presence of law enforcement officers wearing face coverings while exercising state authority undermines this principle by creating fear, anxiety, and intimidation among community members. Such practices are especially harmful to vulnerable and marginalized populations, including children, older adults, individuals with disabilities, immigrants, and communities that have historically experienced disproportionate policing.

The Code of Ethics further underscores the importance of human relationships, recognizing trust as a cornerstone of effective social systems and community safety. Visible identification of law enforcement officers is a critical component of establishing trust, facilitating communication, and promoting accountability. Face coverings erode these relationships by obscuring identity, limiting nonverbal communication, and reducing perceived responsibility for conduct.

NASW-MD is also guided by the ethical principle of social justice, which compels social workers to challenge policies and practices that contribute to oppression, fear, or harm. Anonymous policing tactics have been shown to escalate tensions, discourage community cooperation, and weaken public confidence in law enforcement institutions. These outcomes are inconsistent with ethical governance and trauma-informed community engagement.

(over)

Senate Bill 1 appropriately directs the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission to develop a model policy prohibiting face coverings during the course of duty. This approach promotes statewide consistency while reinforcing ethical standards of transparency and accountability, without impeding legitimate public safety functions already addressed through existing policies and exceptions.

NASW-MD believes this legislation represents an important step toward strengthening trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve, in alignment with ethical principles that prioritize human dignity, relationship-building, and community well-being.

For these reasons, the National Association of Social Workers – Maryland Chapter urges the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 1 and advance it to the full Senate for consideration.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Philip A. Pratt, BSW, MSW, ACSW  
NASW-MD Chapter President

Karessa Proctor, BSW, MSW  
Executive Director: Maryland, Metro DC, Delaware Chapters  
National Association of Social Workers

# **SB 1 JPR D4CC fav.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kate Sugarman

Position: FAV



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, and Members of the Committee,

Doctors for Camp Closure Maryland chapter offers favorable testimony in support of SB1 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings.

Doctors for Camp Closure is a group who advocates for humane and just treatment for immigrants and is very opposed to ICE detention for our immigrant community.

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.

We see how ICE actions have a negative impact on the health of our immigrant patients. Allowing ICE and law enforcement to hide behind face masks, increases the terror of law enforcement encounters. Distrust leads immigrants to not report crimes or serve as witnesses,

which makes all of us less safe. And that distrust of engaging with law enforcement makes our patients so fearful, that they neglect their health out of fear of deportation. I just witnessed 3 young children lose their parents to an ICE raid in Maryland. These children are severely suffering emotionally, physically and financially.

Our mission is to promote good mental and physical health for our patients, while ICE actions including hiding behind masks, has a damaging effect on their health.

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.

Doctors for Camp Closure Maryland urges the committee to provide a favorable report on SB 1.

Kate Sugarman, MD

Doctors for Camp Closure co leader

Potomac MD

# **Testimony in Support of SB1 HB155\_Blaha\_SURJ.pdf**

Uploaded by: Katherine Blaha

Position: FAV

Tuesday, January 20, 2026



## Showing Up for Racial Justice

Dear the Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee,

I am submitting this testimony as a member of Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) Baltimore, a group of Marylanders working to mobilize white people in a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. We are also working in collaboration with CASA de Maryland, an immigration advocacy and assistance organization based in Maryland. I am testifying in **support** of **SB1 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**.

In the State of Maryland, we expect the law enforcement officers who serve our communities to openly identify themselves as such when doing their jobs. Law enforcement agencies have policies requiring officers to wear uniforms or other identifying markers in most circumstances, and we even have a law - **Criminal Procedure Article 2-109** - which requires a police officer to identify him or herself by name, agency, and badge number when approaching a citizen for a traffic stop or other investigation.

Throughout 2025, we saw alarming and abundant incidents of federal law enforcement actions conducted by officers wearing street clothes and balaclavas or other face coverings, clearly obscuring their identities and the agencies under which they were operating. Simultaneously, incidents of police impersonation have been on the rise in Maryland and nationally. This is not a coincidence: without requiring law enforcement officials to clearly identify themselves, it becomes impossible to determine who is a legitimate law enforcement officer and criminals can more easily and plausibly claim to be police by simply putting on a mask. Even the FBI has recognized this danger, circulating a bulletin to law enforcement agencies in October 2025 that warned that criminals were taking

advantage of routine mask-wearing by law enforcement to disguise themselves as ICE agents.<sup>1</sup>

Trust between law enforcement and the communities is crucial for law enforcement to be able to do its job. Failure to enforce clear identification of law enforcement and creating easy opportunities for criminals to impersonate law enforcement endangers the public, undermines the public's trust in actual law enforcement, and fosters a sense of fear in communities everywhere.

In addition to endangering civilians everywhere, this confusion makes routine law enforcement operations more dangerous. Initial contact between an officer and a civilian is often the most uncertain and dangerous moment in a law enforcement encounter. Ensuring that everyone is informed about what is happening and who is involved can help prevent rash and dangerous decisions.

SB1 would require the creation of a model masking policy banning the routine use of full face masks to conceal the identity of law enforcement officers. It would also require law enforcement agencies operating in Maryland to adopt that policy or its equivalent. Officers would still be permitted to wear necessary tactical and safety equipment, and full face masks could be authorized under specific, defined circumstances. Use of this policy would reinforce a clear distinction between officers conducting enforcement actions and criminals hiding their faces to masquerade as law enforcement, making everyone safer. It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of SB1, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Katherine Blaha  
Baltimore, MD  
Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) Baltimore

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<sup>1</sup> Cameron, Dell & Haskins, Caroline, "FBI warns of criminals posing as ICE, urges agents to ID themselves." WIRED Magazine, Nov. 4, 2025. <https://www.wired.com/story/fbi-warns-of-criminals-posing-as-ice-urges-agents-to-id-themselves/>

# **FAVORABLE SB0001\_Katherine Vaughn.pdf**

Uploaded by: Katherine Vaughn

Position: FAV

## Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable

### SB0001 - 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,

My name is **Katherine Vaughn**, and I am a resident of **Catonsville, Maryland**. I am writing in support of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings

I am a concerned citizen who loves my friends, neighbors, and community members and wants them to live in peace and security, especially those who are immigrants, people of color, and people exercising their First Amendment rights to peacefully protest.

It is important for public safety that ICE officers can be identified. Without visible identification and uniform standards, fear and public distrust in law enforcement increases. Furthermore, community members are more likely to intervene if they watch someone being attacked or kidnapped by a masked, unmarked group. There's no way to know if someone is simply impersonating an ICE officer, which I find terrifying.

Our county sheriff values transparency and the community has benefited from this. We should not be allowing armed individuals with masks to intimidate and frighten communities with impunity.

I urge you to vote in favor of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings for transparency and safety.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

# **FAVORABLE SB0001\_KathleenClair.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kathleen Clair

Position: FAV

**Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable**

**SB0001 - 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,

My name is Kathleen Clair and I am a resident of Columbia, Maryland. I submit this testimony in my personal capacity only. I am writing in support of **SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**.

I grew up in Columbia, Maryland and now am raising my two children here. I also lived in Montgomery County, Maryland for 14 years. Immigrants and their family members are our neighbors, our friends, our children's classmates and confidants. The same people who have graciously opened their homes and hearts to my family are now in danger. The spaces in which my children have shared laughter and celebrated birthdays are now among the targets for roving gangs of armed federal agents who shove, shoot, and grab first, and ask questions later.

But not only are federal immigration authorities engaged in overly broad and abusive sweeps in which they are brazenly violating the law and common decency, they are doing so while hiding their identities. This environment of anonymity and impunity discourages accountability and restraint. If one were designing a system to encourage abusive tactics, it would involve anonymity for the men with guns and handcuffs.

I have also been horrified by the—sadly entirely predictable—news reports of people impersonating immigration agents to threaten, rob, kidnap, and sexually assault victims, a danger of which the FBI itself has now had to warn people. A society in which the government's policies and practices require people to submit to the will of any group of masked men with guns who begin ordering them around is not a free society.

It is important for public safety that ICE and other federal officers can be identified. Without visible identification and uniform standards, fear and public distrust in law enforcement increases. Furthermore, community members are more likely to intervene if they watch someone being attacked or kidnapped by a masked, unmarked group. There's no way to know if someone is simply impersonating an ICE officer.

I urge you to vote in favor of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings for transparency and safety. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Clair

## **Written Testimony - SB0001.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kathryn Little

Position: FAV

Written Testimony

Bill: **SB0001**

Position: **FAV**

January 20, 2026

As a concerned Maryland citizen, I am in favor SB0001 (Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings) and I urge your support. We have seen law enforcement, particularly ICE, abusing the use of face masks to terrorize our communities. I fully support protecting oneself and others against disease and other reasonable uses of masks, which this bill does make exception for. However, the use of masks by law enforcement solely to conceal identity is inappropriate. If they are enforcing the law in good faith, they have no reason to hide their face. If they are abusing their power, the community deserves to know who they are as they do so.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathryn Little  
881 W Lombard St  
Baltimore, MD 21201

## **Written Testimony - SB0001.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kathryn Little

Position: FAV

Written Testimony

Bill: **SB0001**

Position: **FAV**

January 20, 2026

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Respectfully submitted,

Kathryn Little

881 W Lombard St

Baltimore, MD 21201

## **Written Testimony - SB0001.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kathryn Little

Position: FAV

Written Testimony

Bill: **SB0001**

Position: **FAV**

January 20, 2026

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Respectfully submitted,

Kathryn Little

881 W Lombard St

Baltimore, MD 21201

# **SOMOS Testimony Template SB0001 - Keily Pacheco.pd**

Uploaded by: Keily Pacheco Hernandez

Position: FAV

## **Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings / SB0001**

Official Testimony  
Position: **FAVORABLE**

To the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is Keily Pacheco, and I'm a 11th grade student at Baltimore City College and a member of Students Organizing a Multicultural Open Society. I support SB0001, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings.

This bill will protect the public by requiring law enforcement officers to have their faces visible while on duty, except in specific circumstances where face coverings are necessary for safety or health reasons. By prohibiting unnecessary face coverings ( facemasks, skimasks, ect), this bill promotes transparency and accountability in policing, making it easier for community members to identify officers and build trust with law enforcement.

I believe that passing this bill is essential because it helps ensure that police officers are recognizable and accountable for their actions. As a student and community member, I feel safer knowing that officers cannot hide their identities during interactions with the public. This transparency is important for building trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve, especially for young people like me who want to feel safe and respected in our neighborhoods.

I respectfully urge this committee to issue a favorable report on **SB0001, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**

Sincerely,

Keily Pacheco  
Students Organizing a Multicultural Open Society (SOMOS)  
District #215  
<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/members/district>

Keily.PachecoHernandez2027@BaltimoreCityCollege.US  
somaslegalteam@gmail.com

# **SB 0001 Favorable Testimony from Kelly Hodge-Willi**

Uploaded by: Kelly Hodge-Williams

Position: FAV

**Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable**  
**SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face**  
**Coverings**

**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**  
**January 22, 2026**

January 20, 2026

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

My name is Kelly Hodge-Williams and I am a home owner in Garrett County, Maryland. I am submitting this testimony in strong support of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings which establishes a model policy prohibiting the use of face coverings by law enforcement officers in the course of duty, with limited exceptions.

I support this legislation because it strengthens the transparency, accountability, and public trust that are essential for effective community policing. When law enforcement officers are identifiable, it builds trust between the police and the community they serve. Conversely, the use of face coverings that obscure an officer's identity can create fear and inhibit communication, particularly during routine encounters.

Our county sheriff values transparency and the community has benefited from this. We should not allow armed individuals with masks to intimidate and frighten communities with impunity. By establishing a uniform, statewide policy, SB0001 ensures that all Marylanders, regardless of their location, can interact with law enforcement with confidence and clarity.

For these reasons, I strongly urge a favorable report on SB0001.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kelly Hodge-Williams  
105 Redrun Road, 2B2  
Oakland, MD 21550

# **Testimony K Hencke.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kevin Hencke

Position: FAV

Kevin Hencke  
6552 Tinker Round  
Columbia, MD 21045  
District 13

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB0001, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers -  
Prohibition on Face Coverings

1-20-26

TO: Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee  
FROM: Kevin Hencke

Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee, my name is Kevin Hencke, I live in Columbia, Maryland, and I am writing to support SB0001, Prohibition on Face Coverings for Law Enforcement Officers, and to change the effective date of this law to July—or sooner, if possible.

We Marylanders strive to collaborate to create a society where kind people can trust each other, and work hard to improve our lives together. We understand that this is not easy nor guaranteed, and that conflict and misunderstanding is a constant challenge in life.

I am grateful to people who put themselves at risk to make life safer and happier for Marylanders, including most members of our law enforcement. I rely on them to de-escalate confrontations with good people who are having their worst day, to prevent or reduce needless tragedy. Human connection is essential to overcome the divisions between people in conflict, and this is much harder when our faces are obscured.

It is also important to acknowledge that there are potential criminals among our citizens and among our law enforcement, who are empowered to cause suffering if they are protected from consequences by covering their faces. We cannot provide anonymity to people with weapons or positions of power, and expect Marylanders to benefit.

Let us progress towards a safer Maryland and be an example for our country by embodying the concept of Justice for All. Prohibiting masked law enforcement is one small step towards ensuring the people wearing badges are discharging their duties faithfully. I urge you to support SB 0001 and help ensure that Maryland's law enforcement is being held to the highest standards of conduct. Thank you for your time.

# **SB1 Written Testimony 2026.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kristina Korona

Position: FAV

**SUPPORT Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**  
**Senate Bill 1**

In my role as president of the Teachers Association of Anne Arundel County, I continue to hear the concerns and fears of educators as immigration enforcement becomes more pervasive throughout our county. The students and families we serve are afraid for their safety, worry that a guardian will not be home when a child arrives after school, and—as a result—sometimes avoid attending school.

I support Senate Bill 1 and the development of a model policy prohibiting the use of face coverings by any law enforcement officer operating in the state of Maryland. As a local affiliate of the Maryland State Education Association, we reiterate their stance that communities are being traumatized by the increased authoritarian actions of the federal government over the last 12 months, requiring states like Maryland that have the political power and legal wherewithal to resist assaults on our civil liberties, to act. This bill is one of the ways that we can act to protect our community members.

As educators, we have accepted the responsibility to protect our students—every single student regardless of their immigration status—and we are called to protect families and communities. More importantly, our job is to provide an educational environment that inspires students' natural curiosity, imagination, and love of learning. Senate Bill 1's prohibition of masked law enforcement actions is part of creating a safer community that allows every one of our students to thrive.

I urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 1.

## **Written Testimony for SB001.pdf**

Uploaded by: Lahiruni Dias Amarawardena

Position: FAV

## Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable

### **SB 0001 – 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,

My name is Lahiruni Dias, and I am a resident of **Montgomery County, Maryland**. I am writing in support of **SB1 – Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings**.

I support **SB1** as the bill aims to prevent federal, state or local law enforcement agents from wearing masks or other facial coverings while on duty. Facial coverings, outside of surgical grade-medical masks and other respiratory equipment that may be needed while on the job, prevent the identification of officers by residents in contact with them.

Identifying officers is a necessary step in reporting excessive violence, racial profiling, or other discrimination people may face at the hands of law enforcement officials. Ultimately, this is a measure needed to hold officers accountable for their performance as public servants.

In light of ICE activity around the country, this requirement would reduce fear during contact with law enforcement and aid in a just process where victims of violence and other residents can exercise the rights afforded to them by the Bill of Rights and U.S. Constitution.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a **favorable report** on **SB 1**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

## **Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable SB0001.pdf**

Uploaded by: Lana Foley

Position: FAV

**Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable**

**SB0001 - 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,

My name is Lana Foley and I am a Salisbury, Maryland. I am writing in support of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings.

I believe that face coverings should be banned because they create more terror than necessary. Aggressive force and brutal tactics are causing so much trauma and violence with our ICE agents currently. If they were responsible and presented themselves with guidelines and humanity then they would be held responsible for their actions.

Law Enforcement Officers have to clearly identify themselves. They follow rules and guidelines and are held responsible for their actions. Why should ICE be any different? They are abusing their powers and terrifying people in our communities.

I had a young mother swarmed by 7 masked agents in front of our house. She had just dropped her 5 year old off at school and if we had been 15 minutes late that day our 8 year old child would have witness these agents busting our this poor woman's window. I guarantee if they had approached her in a manner of treating her like a human she wouldn't have been so terrified. She is only 4'10" tall and they didn't give her any reason for her being swarmed. This woman had been in our country since she was 2 years old. They are abusing the masks and creating fear. They need to be visible. It will eliminate the absurd behaviors when they know they are being watched and held

accountable. I don't want my child or myself to be around these people. The public should be able to know who they are just like our law enforcement.

It is important for public safety that ICE officers can be identified. Without visible identification and uniform standards, fear and public distrust in law enforcement increases. Furthermore, community members are more likely to intervene if they watch someone being attacked or kidnapped by a masked, unmarked group. There's no way to know if someone is simply impersonating an ICE officer. We should not be allowing armed individuals with masks to intimidate and frighten communities with impunity.

I urge you to vote in favor of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings for transparency and safety.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely

Lana Foley

**Senate.SB0001.Favorable.LauraAtwood.pdf**

Uploaded by: Laura Atwood

Position: FAV

**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.

# **masks.pdf**

Uploaded by: Laura Roth

Position: FAV

**Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings / SB0001**

**Official Testimony**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

**To the Judicial Proceedings Committee,**

**My name is Laura Roth, and I'm a Baltimore City resident and a member of District 41. I support SB0001, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings.**

**This bill will help protect the civil rights of residents within the State of Maryland by increasing transparency and accountability of all law enforcement operating within the state, including federal agents.**

**I believe that passing of this bill is essential because currently federal agents are repeatedly operating in ways that violate the civil rights of residents. I strongly feel that the obscuring of their identification causes agents to act in a manner that assumes they will have no accountability. Additionally, the face obscuring increases fear in the population and reduces community confidence that agents are who they purport to be.**

**I respectfully urge this committee to issue a favorable report on SB0001, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings.**

**Sincerely,**

**Laura Roth**

**District 41**

**[lauraK2roth@gmail.com](mailto:lauraK2roth@gmail.com)**

# **SB0001 Prohibition on Face Coverings Written Testi**

Uploaded by: Laura Stayman

Position: FAV

# **SB0001 Prohibition on Face Coverings Written Testimony**

Laura Stayman  
11205 Rokeby Av  
Garrett Park, MD  
District 18

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 0155, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers -  
Prohibition on Face Coverings

01/20/2026

TO: Chair J. Sandy Bartlett & Members of the House Judiciary Committee  
FROM: Laura Stayman

Members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Laura Stayman, I live in Garrett Park, Maryland, and I am writing to support SB 0001, Prohibition on Face Coverings.

I support this bill because I believe accountability is essential to legitimate law enforcement, and visibility plays a real role in that. Not only do face coverings remove personal accountability for law enforcement, but psychological research has shown that anonymity allows for de-individuation, lowering inhibitions to socially unacceptable behavior. This is already widely known in anonymous online environments where people take much more extreme viewpoints than they might voice in real life and engage in stalking and cyberbullying behavior, knowing that their actions can't be traced back to their person.

On a human level, masks can also create fear—when people cannot see who is behind the badge, fear of the unknown can quickly become fear of law enforcement itself. Requiring uncovered faces affirms transparency, reinforces professionalism, and helps ensure that authority is exercised in a way that is both responsible and worthy of public trust.

I urge you to support SB 0001 and help ensure that Maryland's law enforcement is being held to the highest standards of conduct.

Thank you.

# **Testimony FAVORABLE on Senate Bill 1-Indivisible Ho**

Uploaded by: Laurie Liskin

Position: FAV



**Testimony on Senate Bill 1 – Favorable**  
**SB 1-Public Safety-Law Enforcement Officers-Prohibitions on Face Coverings**  
**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**  
**January 22, 2026**

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

Indivisible Howard County offers favorable testimony in support of **SB 1-Public Safety-Law Enforcement Officers -Prohibitions on Face Coverings**.

Established in 2017 as part of the national Indivisible movement, Indivisible Howard County has more than 1,400 members focused on making our state safe, equitable, and welcoming for all residents. Our Immigration Action Team collaborates with other immigrant support groups statewide. In 2025 we have distributed more than 7,700 Know Your Rights cards to community members, hosted Know Your Rights trainings, established a Rapid Response Team Network, and lobbied for immigrant rights in Annapolis.

**SB1- Public Safety-Law-Enforcement Officers-Prohibitions on Face Covering** will require **all** law enforcement officers working in Maryland to keep their faces uncovered and to clearly identify their name and specific provide their name and except for certain circumstances. These requirements are already mandated in Maryland and in many other states. There are sound reasons for these laws. Transparency increases community collaboration, holds officers accountable, and helps deescalate potential violence. These laws should apply to ICE agents as well as local law enforcement.

Masking sows fear and mistrust in the community. It allows criminals and other bad actors to impersonal ICE agents—three such cases have been reported in Maryland. This makes legitimate law enforcement more difficult. It undermines the rule of law and terrorizes citizens and immigrants alike. ICE agents should not be above the law. Our communities should not live in fear.

Indivisible Howard County urges the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to issue **a favorable report on SB 1.**

# **FAVORABLE SB0001\_Lia Nigro.pdf**

Uploaded by: Lia Nigro

Position: FAV

**Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable**

**SB0001 - 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:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony IN FAVOR of SB1, which will restrict face mask use by law enforcement in Maryland.

My name is Lia Nigro. I am a resident of Columbia, MD, and a volunteer with Indivisible Howard County. In that capacity, this past July I conducted research related to anti-masking legislation efforts and related concerns. This research strengthened my instinctive belief that it is vital to see the faces of those enforcing the law (and terrifying not to). Here is some background on why restricting masking to cases in which it is necessary for health or safety is important for law enforcement and the public:

- Masking is psychologically associated with criminals. Use of masks could endanger law enforcement officers if an armed citizen, reacting quickly in a stressful situation, takes officers for criminals. This is a more immediate and likely risk than doxing, which is a non-immediate threat with protection offered by numerous federal and state laws against harassment and cyberstalking.
- Anonymity has been shown to reduce a person's sense of accountability, and to increase the chance of rogue behavior. Maryland has strong and admirable requirements for officers to identify themselves immediately but showing one's face is a basic element contributing to interacting in a civilized way with other human beings.
- Being able to see that officers of the law are in fact fellow human beings decreases fear and confusion among citizens and increases trust in law enforcement.
- If law enforcement does not use masks, that decreases opportunity for imposture by criminals and vigilantes (a threat on the rise around the country), and allows those victimized by such imposters to identify their victimizers.

Please vote IN FAVOR of SB 1. Thank you for your consideration.

**Additional Background:**

No One Can Tell Who's a Cop Anymore. New York Magazine, 2025

<https://nymag.com/intelligencer/article/trump-immigration-ice-agents-masks-criminal-imposters.html>

Masked Federal Agents Undermine the Rule of Law. Human Rights Watch, 2025

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/12/18/us-masked-federal-agents-undermine-rule-of-law>

Who Is That? The Study of Anonymity and Behavior. Association for Psychological Science, 2018

<https://www.psychologicalscience.org/observer/who-is-that-the-study-of-anonymity-and-behavior>

## **New testimony on SB0001.pdf**

Uploaded by: Linda Green

Position: FAV

SB0001- Law Enforcement Officers: Prohibition on Face Coverings

Judicial Proceedings

January 22, 2026

Position: Favorable

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

My name is Linda Green and I am a resident of Mount Rainier. I am a retired physician and member of Health Care Workers for Palestine and the International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines. Activities with these groups has informed my work in the American Public Health Association and in my community. I am speaking in favor of SB0001-Law Enforcement Officers: Prohibition on Face Coverings.

For the past several years masking has become a politicized issue even when it comes to protection from airborne illnesses such as COVID-19 and flu. Last year masking became an issue in legislative circles because residents seeking an end to the genocide in Gaza feared both medical disease and political persecution, doxxing and unfounded charges of anti-semitism. Careers, educational tracks and safety were all reasons that students and faculty masked during protests because they feared the power of the US government which was seeking to protect its interests in the middle east by any means necessary. Dissent over government policy was viewed as anti-semitic rather than a fight for justice and humanity. It is to the credit of the Judiciary Committee that you listened to the many students and organizations that discussed this topic last session.

This year the power of the US government has taken an even more ominous direction as it uses military personnel and an expanded homeland security force to attack immigrants working in the country. Racist profiling, random detentions and deportations and violent attacks on residents have led to protests once again. This time federal enforcers have worn masks and refused to identify themselves. They do this to intimidate residents as well as to protect their identity when snatching residents off the streets, out of medical and educational facilities and using gas and bullets to deter protestors armed with whistles. State power does not seem to be enough protection for them. The enforcers from ICE, Border Patrol, Park Police, Transit police, Secret Service and other agencies know that they are participating in fascism and seek to hide their identities. This secret police and gestapo- like army needs to be resisted and this bill is a small step towards pushing back. Certainly our state police forces are expected to identify themselves in encounters with civilians and we need to preempt any desire for state forces to adopt behaviour similar to that we are seeing now among federal forces.

The exceptions in this bill to a rule about not wearing face coverings certainly still allows police to carry out their missions as usual.

I urge the committee to issue a favorable report on SB0001. Thank you for your time and consideration of this important bill.

**SB1\_HB155 - ban LE face covering .pdf**

Uploaded by: Lindsay Keipper

Position: FAV

Dear **Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,**

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of individuals working to move white folks as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. We are also working in collaboration with CASA. I am a resident of **District 46, and I am testifying in support of SB1 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings.**

In the State of Maryland, we expect the law enforcement officers who serve our communities to openly identify themselves as such when doing their jobs. Law enforcement agencies have policies requiring officers to wear uniforms or other identifying markers in most circumstances, and we even have a law - Criminal Procedure Article 2-109 - which requires a police officer to identify him or herself by name, agency, and badge number when approaching a citizen for a traffic stop or other investigation.

Throughout 2025, we saw copious news coverage of federal law enforcement actions conducted by officers wearing street clothes and balaclavas. The fact that incidents of police impersonation have been on the rise in Maryland and nationally is not a coincidence: when it becomes impossible to determine who is a legitimate law enforcement officer, criminals can more plausibly claim to be police by simply putting on a mask, no fake uniform or badge required. Even the FBI has recognized the danger, circulating a bulletin to law enforcement agencies in October 2025 that warned criminals were taking advantage of routine mask-wearing by law enforcement to disguise themselves as ICE agents.<sup>1</sup> This confusion also makes routine law enforcement operations more dangerous. Initial contact between officer and civilian is often the most uncertain and dangerous moment in a law enforcement encounter, and ensuring that everyone is on the same page about what is happening can help prevent rash and dangerous decisions.

SB1 would require the creation of a model masking policy banning the routine use of full face masks to conceal the identity of law enforcement officers, and require law enforcement agencies operating in Maryland to adopt that policy or its equivalent. Officers would still be permitted to wear necessary tactical and safety equipment, and full face masks could be authorized under specific, defined circumstances. But use of this policy would reinforce a clear distinction between officers conducting enforcement actions, and criminals hiding their faces to masquerade as law enforcement, making everyone safer. It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of SB1, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,  
**Lindsay Keipper**  
**2425 Fleet St.**  
Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore



**Showing Up for Racial Justice**

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<sup>1</sup> Cameron, Dell & Haskins, Caroline, "FBI warns of criminals posing as ICE, urges agents to ID themselves." WIRED Magazine, Nov. 4, 2025. <https://www.wired.com/story/fbi-warns-of-criminals-posing-as-ice-urges-agents-to-id-themselves/>

# **Testimony FOR SB0001.pdf**

Uploaded by: Linnie Girdner

Position: FAV

**Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**

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

My name is Linda Girdner and I am a resident of Gambrills, MD. I am writing in **support of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**

My mother grew up in Nazi Germany. She saw Nazi officers kidnap and beat people on the street. As a child, she and her father met one day to say goodbye to a Jewish friend, because the man said he had to report for deportation the next day. He died in Auschwitz. Throughout Germany and later in occupied countries, Nazi officers followed the orders of their Führer. There was no accountability to any fair and just law, no opportunity to be heard for those taken, no recourse until the Nuremberg Trials in 1945. And even those only addressed a minority of the Nazis who had been involved.

The United States government, by allowing ICE officers to disguise themselves, follows the same intent. It is so there will be no accountability, no opportunity for those taken or beaten to identify the agent, no consequences for their horrendous actions. Let us not model ourselves after Nazi Germany.

The masking of ICE officers and Vance's suggestion that they have "absolute immunity" only emboldens the worst of them to terrorize communities of color and to see peaceful protestors as enemies of the State, deserving to be dragged out of their cars, pepper-sprayed, and even murdered. We should not be allowing armed individuals with masks to intimidate and frighten communities with impunity. They should not be masked. They should wear a badge number and clear identification as to which agency they are with. It is important for public safety that ICE officers can be identified. Without visible identification and uniform standards, fear and public distrust in law enforcement increases. And opposition to their tactics through nonviolent supposedly protected speech will continue.

I urge you to vote **in favor of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings for transparency and safety.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Linda Girdner

941 Fall Ridge Way

Gambrills, MD 21054

# **TESTIMONY FOR SB0001\_unmasking.pdf**

Uploaded by: Liz Enagonio

Position: FAV



**Admin Team**  
**Email:** [info@ibbmd.org](mailto:info@ibbmd.org)  
Liz Enagonio  
Jasmine Gollup  
Amy Stevens  
Carrieann Petersen

**TESTIMONY FOR SB0001**  
**Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**

**Bill Sponsor:** Senators Augustine, Love, Beadle Brooks, et al

**Committee:** Judicial Proceedings

**Organization Submitting:** Indivisible Bowie and Beyond (IBBMD)

**Person Submitting:** Liz Enagonio, co-founder

**Position:** FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony **in favor of SB0001** on behalf of Indivisible Bowie and Beyond (IBBMD). IBBMD is a group of several hundred grassroots activists in Bowie and surrounding areas in Prince George's County, working to bring justice, equality, and people-centric legislation to Maryland.

SB0001 requires the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission to develop a model policy prohibiting the use of a face covering in the performance of duty; requires a law enforcement agency to adopt a policy consistent with the model policy developed by the Commission; and prohibits law enforcement officers from wearing face coverings while in the performance of duty in the State, except when actively engaged in an undercover operation.

Requiring law enforcement officers to be identifiable is a basic prerequisite for transparency. Officers conducting law enforcement should be readily identifiable and proud to present themselves as who they are. As well, unidentified masked men present a genuine threat to all community members, who have no way of knowing whether they are being robbed, kidnapped, or murdered. For women and children especially, the sight of a threatening masked man in some sort of bogus "uniform" is horrifying and genuinely life-threatening. It is a minimum requirement of a free society that law enforcement be recognizable, identifiable, and accountable to residents and communities.

IBBMD urges that you support SB0001 and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

# **SB0001 - Prohibiting Masking -HoCoCA\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Liz Feighner

Position: FAV



**SB0001 – Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**

**Bill Sponsor: Senators Augustine**

**Committee: Senate Judicial Proceedings**

**Hearing Date: January 22, 2026**

**Submitting: Liz Feighner for Howard County Climate Action**

**Position: Favorable**

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

[HoCo Climate Action](#) is a [350.org](#) local chapter and a grassroots organization representing approximately 1,400 subscribers. We are also a member of the [Climate Justice Wing](#) of the [Maryland Legislative Coalition](#). Our organization works with residents and ally organizations to promote a safe climate and a just and clean energy future.

We urge you to vote favorably on **SB0001 – Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**, which would prohibit local, state and law enforcement agencies from entering into an immigration enforcement agreement.

Members of our organization have been horrified by federal agents' illegal and unconstitutional actions. Their thuggish behavior includes unconstitutional racial and ethnic profiling and destroys the fabric of our society and democracy.

Our work is focused on addressing climate change in a just and equitable way for Howard County and all Marylanders. We inform, educate, and engage with communities and legislators advocating for critical climate justice policy. We work in partnership with other groups and coalitions and seek to support and lift up the issues, needs, and goals of frontline communities and communities of color. Many of these communities are already overburdened and underserved and should not be subjected to masked immigration enforcement agents.

We support **SB0001** because we do not want "secret police" terrorizing our communities. When officers hide their identity, they are accountable to no one. We are all in danger when we have no idea who is stopping us and asking for personal identification. Masking makes legitimate law enforcement more difficult, because people cannot distinguish between legitimate enforcement and criminal activity.

We have seen reports of bad actors impersonating federal, state, and local law enforcement officers around the country and here in MD. This creates unacceptable fear. As a result, people will be less likely to cooperate, which only escalates encounters with the "secret police."

This legislation promotes transparency, accountability, and trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

We support **SB0001** and recommend a FAVORABLE report in committee.

Howard County Climate Action

Submitted by Liz Feighner, Steering and Advocacy Committee

[www.HoCoClimateAction.org](http://www.HoCoClimateAction.org)

[HoCoClimateAction@gmail.com](mailto:HoCoClimateAction@gmail.com)

## **Testimony for SB0001.pdf**

Uploaded by: Liz Feighner

Position: FAV

**Testimony for [SB0001](#)**

**SB0001 – Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**

**Bill Sponsor: Senators Augustine**

**Committee: Senate Judicial Proceedings**

**Hearing Date: January 22, 2026**

**Submitting: Liz Feighner**

**Position: Favorable**

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

My name is Liz Feighner and I am a resident of Howard County, Maryland in District 13. I am writing in **support of SB0001 – Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**

I have been horrified by the illegal and unconstitutional actions by ICE and other federal agents. Their thuggish behavior includes unconstitutional racial and ethnic profiling and is detrimental to the fabric of our society and democracy. As a granddaughter of immigrants, I realize that my family could be hunted down like dogs had they immigrated to the states in later years than when they did in the early 1900's.

I support **SB0001** because we shouldn't have "secret police" terrorizing our communities. Hiding their identity is a danger to all of us as we have no idea who is stopping us and asking for personal identification. Masking makes legitimate law enforcement more difficult when people cannot distinguish between legitimate enforcement and criminal activity.

There are reports of incidents of impersonation of federal, state, and local law enforcement that are on the rise around the country and here in MD. It creates unbelievable fear in our communities by agents hiding their identity if we can't distinguish between legitimate police and criminals pretending to be police. People are less likely to cooperate therefore escalating their encounter with the "secret police".

This legislation promotes transparency, accountability, and trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

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

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Liz Feighner

Howard County, MD

District 13

**SB0001, FAV, Jud Proc.pdf**

Uploaded by: Lore Rosenthal

Position: FAV

***Lore Lyon Rosenthal  
2 Gardenway, Unit R  
Greenbelt, MD 20770  
301-345-2234H  
SimplicityGroupsMD@gmail.com***

**Committee: Judicial Proceedings**

**Testimony on: SB 0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**

**Organization: Individual**

**Person Submitting: Lore Lyon Rosenthal**

**Position: favorable**

**Hearing Date: Jan 22, 2026**

Dear Chairman Smith and members of the committee,

I am writing in favor of SB0001- Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings

I find it appalling that ICE officers feel the need to cover their faces while carrying out their duties. Their identity should be fully revealed in the same manner as the person being detained. Their agency, name, and badge number should also be revealed,

They should not hide their identity, neither should they be embarrassed by what they are being asked to do. [Senator Mark Kelly has already reminded all military that it is illegal to follow a superior officer's command if it is against the law.] If what they are doing is illegal, they should stop.

This is very intimidating to be approached by a masked officer.

Legislation currently exists in CA (as of Jan 1) and NY and PA are working on similar laws

For all these reasons, I recommend a favorable report on SB0001.

Thanks,

Lore Lyon Rosenthal

# **SB 0001 Masking.pdf**

Uploaded by: Loreen Heinz

Position: FAV

SB 0001 Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers -  
Prohibition on Face Coverings

Position: Favorable

January 20, 2026

To: William Smith, Chair, Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice Chair, and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee.

My name is Loreen Heinz; I'm from District 12A and am representing myself.

The United States is governed by the rule of law which depends on transparency and accountability. To maintain trust in the system, law enforcement officers should identify themselves fully (name, agency, and showing their faces). Face coverings result in loss of trust in officers at all levels; people will be less likely to seek help from or give information to officers whose identity is unknown. Also, impostors can take advantage of the lack of transparency and can terrorize harmless people.

For consistency, please vote in favor of this bill in order to extend Maryland masking prohibition to all law enforcement officers who operate in our state.

Thank you for your consideration.

# **FAVORABLE SB0001\_LORETTE VETUSI.pdf**

Uploaded by: Lorette Vetusi

Position: FAV

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

My name is Lorette Vetusi and I am resident of Harford County, Maryland. I am writing in support of SB0001/HB0155, Public Safety – Law Enforcement – Prohibition on Face Covering.

I want to voice my serious concerns about ICE agents being masked while on the job. I am becoming increasingly alarmed at seeing horrific images and videos of people being forcefully grabbed and whisked off to unknown locations without due process by armed and masked agents. Families are being cruelly separated, and children are feeling justifiably terrified and traumatized. It is hard to believe that these atrocities are happening here in our country and in our state!

Normalizing mask-wearing by ICE agents is clearly endangering our public safety and security. And just as terrifying as having innocent people being kidnapped by ICE agents is the fact that criminals could easily impersonate agents for nefarious purposes! Furthermore, masking only enhances feelings of impunity among some of the agents, which leads to increasingly brazen acts of aggression and violence. And all the while, Federal government officials are putting forth false narratives about what is happening, while justifying the ICE agents' violent behaviors and blaming the victims.

Establishing a state law which requires ICE agents to be unmasked will help reduce fear among Maryland residents. It will also help us hold agents accountable for any illegal and unconstitutional actions that they take when trying to meet their outlandish quotas for arresting people. During this extremely dangerous period in our country's history, I at least feel fortunate to live in a blue state where our state government officials are hard at work trying to protect us from abuses of the federal government led by a dictator wannabe.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report on SB0001/HB0155. Thank you for all of your current and future efforts to keep Marylanders safe!

# **testimony concerning SB0001.pdf**

Uploaded by: Lorraine Wilson

Position: FAV

Testimony Concerning: SB0001 Public safety-Law Enforcement Officers-Prohibition on face coverings

Judicial Proceedings Committee Hearing for January 22, 2026

Position: SUPPORT

Honorable Judicial Proceedings Committee Members

I am writing in support of prohibiting face coverings on all law enforcement officers. I have been a citizen of Maryland for over 30 years. I speak as an individual and not as a member of any group. My position stems mainly from the fact that for many years now (perhaps too many), I and others have worked tirelessly to ensure that law enforcement, any and all law enforcement, can be trusted to do what their mission has been and should remain, to protect not only the citizens of our State and country, but to ensure the safety of all who live and work here. Without trust, I fear, we cannot believe that what they do is in our best interest. That is tearing away the very fabric of our society. When we can't trust those who were sent here to supposedly protect us, what are we then supposed to think or do? I say this not just for myself and my family, but for all of us, and just as much as anyone else the law enforcement officers themselves.

I can tell you that as an elderly white woman who has never broken a law in her life, I am sometimes intimidated by law enforcement officers, not necessarily because they are there, but all sorts of other things that make them seem intimidating even if they are not. The guns, the extra paraphernalia does nothing to reassure me because I am never really comfortable unless they speak to me in a kind, calm voice, and I can see the expression on their face. This is not a small matter. We need to know and be reassured that they will not succumb to some inner turmoil that might make them boil over. This is much more important than I think most believe.

Today, many are afraid when they shouldn't be. They have done nothing wrong, or at least, nothing so wrong as the rash behavior of some law enforcement officers would suggest. Please vote this through. It is, I believe, an important Bill, too important to ignore or push aside for later. Thank you.

Sincerely

Lorraine A. Wilson

8719 62<sup>nd</sup> Ave.

Berwyn Heights, MD 20740

[barranw@comcast.net](mailto:barranw@comcast.net)



## **Testimony masks.pdf**

Uploaded by: Lucy Buxton

Position: FAV

**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 **Lucy Buxton** and I am a **resident of Harford County, Maryland**. I am writing in support of SB0001/HB0155, Public Safety – Law Enforcement – Prohibition on Face Covering.

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 instances 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. We have all seen the videos taken in Minneapolis.

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 for your time and consideration.



## **Support SB0001.pdf**

Uploaded by: Lynda Davis

Position: FAV

Support SB0001

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

My name is Lynda Davis and I am a resident of Anne Arundel County, Maryland. I am writing in support of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings

It is important for public safety that ICE officers can be identified. Without visible identification and uniform standards, fear and public distrust in law enforcement increases. Furthermore, community members are more likely to intervene if they watch someone being attacked or kidnapped by a masked, unmarked group. There's no way to know if someone is simply impersonating an ICE officer.

We should not be allowing armed individuals with masks to intimidate and frighten communities with impunity.

I urge you to vote in favor of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings for transparency and safety.

Thank you for your time and consideration

Sincerely,

Lynda Davis

# **January 22,2026 SB0001 2025 Written Testimony .pdf**

Uploaded by: Lynn Mortoro

Position: FAV



## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB0001

Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings

**January 22, 2026**

**FAVORABLE**

**TO:** Chair Senator William C. Smith, Jr, Vice Chair, Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, all members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

**FROM:** Lynn R. Mortoro, member of the Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network. (MEPPN)

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair, Senator Waldstreicher and all members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

The Episcopal Church urges our members, as people of faith and people of conscience, pledge to challenge and question any unjust immigration law, policy, or practice that is inconsistent with our biblical mandate to “not wrong or oppress a resident alien” (Exodus 22:21)

The idea that certain members of our law enforcement community are able to work in these vulnerable immigrant communities with no identification of any kind, including no name badges, but especially wearing face masks leads to suspicion and fear. No one is certain who to trust, what they are supposed to do and what their rights, according to our Constitution really are.

These actions are damaging to our communities that they are supposed to be protecting.

It must stop, beginning with the removal of facial masks. Stop the hiding.

The 287(g) program has a documented history of racial profiling, discrimination, and wrongful detention. It diverts local law enforcement away from their primary role of protecting public safety and erodes trust between law enforcement and immigrant communities. When trust is broken, community safety suffers.

**The Diocese of Maryland requests a FAVORABLE report**

**SB 1 - MoCo\_Elrich\_FAV (GA 26).pdf**

Uploaded by: Marc Elrich

Position: FAV



## OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

**Marc Elrich**  
*County Executive*

January 22, 2026

TO: The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.  
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Marc Elrich  
County Executive

RE: Senate Bill 1, *Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings*

Support

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I am writing to express my support for Senate Bill 1, the *Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings*. The bill requires the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission to develop a policy prohibiting the use of face coverings by a law enforcement officer that conceals or obscures the officer's facial identity in the course of duty and requires a law enforcement agency to adopt a face covering policy consistent with the Commission's policy. Exceptions to the mask prohibition include allowances for tactical operations for purposes of physical safety, and medical masks applicable for occupational health and safety. A law enforcement officer who violates the mask ban would be guilty of a misdemeanor, and on conviction, would be subject to imprisonment of up to two years or a fine of \$2,000 or both.

As the Trump Administration ramps up immigration enforcement, raids by mask-wearing agents of the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement have terrorized our communities and have had a chilling effect on local law enforcement. Residents who may have been generally supportive of the police, and who previously trusted law enforcement to provide community safety and promote stability, have either lost that relationship with police officers or have become extremely suspicious of any law enforcement in their midst.

I am certain that numerous legal and operational concerns will be raised as the Committee deliberates the provisions of Senate Bill 1 and will need to be addressed. I stand ready to support the Committee in any way as it works to address these issues.

cc: Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

# **SB1 Prohibition on Face Coverings EconActionMD FA**

Uploaded by: Marceline White

Position: FAV



**Testimony on SB1**  
**Public Safety-Law Enforcement Officers-Prohibition on Face Coverings**  
**Position: Favorable**

January 22, 2026

The Honorable Will Smith, Chair  
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
2 East, Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
cc: Members, Judicial Proceedings Committee

Chair Smith and Members of the Committee:

Economic Action Maryland Fund is a statewide coalition of individuals and organizations that advances economic rights, equity, and housing justice for Maryland families through research, education, direct service, and advocacy. Our 12,500 supporters include consumer advocates, practitioners, and low-income and working families throughout Maryland.

**Economic Action Maryland Fund writes in support of SB1.**

Through our tenant and older adult direct service programs, Economic Action Maryland Fund serves immigrant clients and communities. Our work to expand economic security is harmed when seniors and eligible renters do not attend community workshops and outreach efforts due to fear and intimidation by masked officers. Our best avenue to reach older adults to assist them with tax credits is through personal outreach at senior and community centers while our fair housing and tenant work to educate individuals about their rights relies on a mix of online and in-person events.

Given the cost-of-living crisis and the cuts in federal assistance, everyday Marylanders need access to economic supports and information to assist renters and those facing housing discrimination now more than ever.

Masked law enforcement officers reduce public trust in law enforcement and may make law-abiding Marylanders less likely to turn to officers when in need.

For these reasons, Economic Action Maryland Fund supports SB1 and urges a favorable report.

Best,

Marceline White  
Executive Director

*Economic Action (formerly the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition) champions economic rights and housing justice through advocacy, research, consumer education, and direct service. Our 12,500 supporters include consumer advocates, practitioners, and low-income and working families throughout Maryland.*

# **Greenberg - Favorable SB0001 01-22-26.pdf**

Uploaded by: Marcia Greenberg

Position: FAV

## **Testimony on SB0001 – Favorable**

### **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,

My name is Marcia Greenberg and I am a resident of Lexington Park in St Mary's County. I am writing in support of SB0001 - Prohibition on Face Coverings

I earned my JD degree from Northwestern School of Law, where I studied constitutional law. I graduated from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, where I studied human rights and international law. In the early 1990s, I reviewed nominees from Latin American for the Reebok Human Rights award, and worked for the RF Kennedy Center for Human Rights where we focused on Guatemala, South Africa and South Korea. I worked in Eastern Europe in the early 90s after the Berlin Wall came down. I also worked on a contract for USAID ensuring that women would contribute and benefit from US-sponsored democracy programs around the world – particularly in Eastern Europe and West Africa.

So I know quite a bit about repressive regimes, authoritarian tactics, and governments that spy on and “disappear” their own people. And I never, ever – in my wildest nightmares – imagined that our country, the United States of America, would slide into terrorizing our own communities in ways reminiscent of Russia and East Germany, of Pinochet in Chile and the military in Argentina, of Duterte in the Philippines and the military in Myanmar.

Such “official” treatment of citizens and innocent residents by government-led thugs, should not happen in the United States of America. It violates all that we hold true – both legally and morally. What we see now – with ICE agents terrorizing our communities, dragging people out of their cars and their homes, and murdering peaceful protesters – must be stopped in every way possible. They are ruthless and cruel; they ignore our laws and due process. And they are doing it all while hiding their faces, MASKED! We should not be allowing armed individuals with masks to intimidate and frighten communities with impunity.

As long as the Republicans control the House, Senate and White House, we cannot stop this ICE horror at the federal level. Even if we had counties that were willing to protect our neighbors, many do not have the mechanisms to stop it – and some “red counties” would continue to collaborate with ICE. At the local level, this is despite the fact that public safety for ALL of us depends on being able to identify ICE agents. Without visible identification and uniform standards, fear and public distrust in law enforcement increases. Furthermore, community members are more likely to intervene if they see a member of their community being attacked or kidnapped by a masked, unmarked group. How would we be able to distinguish kidnappers and gangs from ICE? There's no way to know if someone is simply impersonating an ICE officer.

Finally, why are they masked in the first place? Are they embarrassed? Do they worry that their friends, family, former coaches and teachers, local pastors and mentors ... will be disgusted that they have

accepted monetary incentives, and taken jobs that involve vicious tactics against innocent people and sowing terror in our communities? If they have some concern about people knowing what they are doing, then maybe they should search their hearts and get out.

So let's help them: Let's get rid of masks in Maryland! Unable to protect ourselves at the federal and county levels, it is imperative that protections be passed and enforced at the state level. We turn to you, our Senators, to urge you to do the right thing for all Marylanders.

I urge you to vote in favor of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings for transparency and safety.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Marcia Greenberg

# **FAVORABLE SB 0001\_Marian Marbury.pdf**

Uploaded by: Marian Marbury

Position: FAV

**Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable**  
**SB0001 - 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,

My name is Marian Marbury and I am a [resident of Baltimore City, Maryland. I am writing in support of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings.

I never thought the day would come in the United States when masked men with no identification could stop people and demand identification, pull people out of their cars, throw people to the ground, and/or haul them away. I've seen pictures like this in other countries, ones where dictators rule and dissent is crushed, but never in the United States. I have always avoided the use of the word fascism as inaccurate and overwrought, but anonymity that enables the abuse of power is a hallmark of a fascist regime.

We have always been a country where the rule of law mattered, and a first step in that is accountability. Any law enforcement officer who cannot be identified, cannot be held accountable. We have seen what that means in the streets of LA, Portland, Minneapolis, Charlotte and Memphis. And we are increasingly seeing that here in Baltimore.

The time has come when everyone who loves our democracy must take a stand.

I urge you to vote in favor of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings for transparency and safety.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

## **Marina Broome-Eason Testimony.PDF**

Uploaded by: Marina Broome-Eason

Position: FAV

Marina Broome-Eason  
40874 Cooper Drive, Leonardtown, MD 20650  
District 29A

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 0001, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings

January 22, 2026

TO: Senator Augustine and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
FROM: Marina Broome-Eason

Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee, my name is Marina Broome-Eason, I live in Leonardtown, Maryland, and I am writing to support SB 0001, Prohibition on Face Coverings.

I am submitting this testimony in support of SB 0001, which establishes a model policy to prevent law enforcement officers from concealing their faces. Transparency is essential for public trust in policing. Allowing officers to hide their identity while on duty hampers accountability and undermines the relationship between police and the communities they serve. The passage of this law would make me feel a lot safer in my community. Seeing masked law enforcement in our state recently while going to and from work fills me with a sense of dread and distrust. Law enforcement should exist for the greater good of the community but we cannot trust in that greater good when officers are allowed to disguise their identity and in turn avoid accountability for their actions.

I urge you to support SB 0001 and help ensure that Maryland's law enforcement is being held to the highest standards of conduct.

# **Testimony SB 0001 Jan 2026.pdf**

Uploaded by: Mary Margaret Dineen

Position: FAV

**Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable**

**SB 0001 – Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition**

**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

**January 20, 2026**

Dear Honorable Chair Augustine and Members of the Committee,

My name is Mary Margaret Dineen, and I am a resident of Baltimore City, Maryland. I am writing in support of **SB 0001 – Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings.**

As someone who has had a career in international development and the honor and privilege of living and working in numerous countries to support communities in building democratic institutions and practices, I know the importance of being able to trust that government agencies and actors will follow the rule of law, which includes transparency about who they are and who they represent/work for. This unfortunately is less and less the case in with certain law enforcement agents acting unlawfully in our communities. Prohibiting face coverings will help mitigate and reduce their ability to act anonymously.

I support **SB 0001** because having law enforcement officers with their faces covered creates fear in communities and undermine public safety for everyone. When people fear contact with law enforcement, they are less likely to report crimes, seek help, or cooperate as witnesses—even when they are victims.

I am aware of neighbors and visitors in my community being sought and snatched off the street and from their homes in horrible ways by people whose identities we should be able to know for accountability. It these instances is un-American that people who work for the government and are paid with our tax dollars not be transparent and held to account for what they are doing and how they are doing.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a **favorable report** on **SB 0001**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mary Margaret Dineen

# **SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers**

Uploaded by: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus

Position: FAV



## MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

Lowe House Office Building, 6 Bladen Street, Room 200 · Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
Phone 410-841-3374 | 301-858-3374 · 800-492-7122 Ext. 3374 · Fax 410-841-3342 | 301-858-3342  
latino.caucus@house.state.md.us · www.mdlatinocaucus.org

ASHANTI MARTINEZ, CHAIR  
GABRIEL ACEVERO, VICE-CHAIR  
DENI TAVERAS, TREASURER  
JOE VOGEL, SECRETARY  
JASON A. AVILA GARCIA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TO: Senator Smith, Jr., Chair  
Senator Waldstreicher, Vice Chair  
Judicial Committee Members  
Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus  
FROM: DATE: 1/20/2026  
RE: SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings

### **The MLLC supports SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of SB0001.

Within the past year, federal agents, primarily ICE agents, have worked with state and local law enforcement agencies across the country to carry out enforcement and removal operations. These operations have been subject to a great deal of scrutiny for various reasons, one being the intimidating and secretive nature of the facial coverings worn by ICE and local law enforcement agents during these operations. The practice has raised serious concerns about accountability and public trust, prompting legislative action in other states. California addressed this issue directly through its "No Secret Police Act," enacted in November 2025, which restricted the use of facial coverings by state law enforcement officers.<sup>1</sup> California's rationale for enacting this legislation was due to the impact these practices had on the public perception of officers, like instilling fear among members of the public.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the California Legislature stated that the reduced visibility of an officer's face could lead to more intense interactions with the public.<sup>3</sup> As illustrated on ICE's website, most of these enforcement operations are directed toward Latino communities.<sup>4</sup> Maryland's Latino communities also are particularly vulnerable in these situations.

This bill will prohibit the use of face coverings by law enforcement officers in the course of duty and requires law enforcement agencies with officers operating within Maryland to adopt a policy consistent with the policy developed under the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commissions.

Additionally, the bill establishes penalties for violating the prohibition, such as making it a misdemeanor and holding that a violator waives all immunity in civil action. This bill can help hold law enforcement officers accountable for violations made against the Latino community. Moreover, it is a valuable step toward ensuring the safety of the Maryland Latino community.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on SB0001.

<sup>1</sup> [California SB-627 Law Enforcement: Masks](#)

<sup>2</sup> [California SB-627 \(1\)\(a-b\) Law Enforcement: Masks](#)

<sup>3</sup> [California SB-627 \(1\)\(c-d\) Law Enforcement: Masks](#)

<sup>4</sup> [ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations Statistics | ICE](#)

# **people on the go Maryland testimony in support of**

Uploaded by: Mat Rice

Position: FAV



## **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB1 Public Safety – Police Officers – Face Coverings**

TO: Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings committee

FROM: People on The Go of Maryland

DATE: January 22, 2026

### **Sponsored by**

Senators [Augustine](#), [Love](#), [Beidle](#), [Brooks](#), [Feldman](#), [Ferguson](#), [Guzzone](#), [Hettleman](#), [Kagan](#), [King](#), [Kramer](#), [Lam](#), [Lewis Young](#), [Muse](#),, [Rosapepe](#), [Smith](#), [Sydnor](#), and [Zucker](#)

support for SB 1 – Prohibition of Face Coverings for Police Officers in Normal Duties

Dear Honorable Members of the Committee,

People On The Go of Maryland is a statewide self advocacy/systems advocacy organization led by and for people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities more commonly referred to by professionals without disabilities as (I/DD). We are writing today in strong support of SB one,

which would prohibit/not allow police officers from wearing face coverings while performing their normal duties, with appropriate exceptions for undercover work and legitimate health or safety emergencies this bill also requires the Maryland police training commission to develop clear rules/standards around when it is appropriate to wear a mask/face covering.

## **Why This Matters for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities**

For people with I/DD, clear and effective communication is essential—especially in stressful or confusing situations. Many individuals/people in our community rely heavily on facial expressions, lip reading, and visual cues to understand what is being said and to assess/figure out whether a situation is safe. When police officers wear face coverings during routine interactions, it creates significant barriers:

- **Communication Barriers:** Many people with I/DD process information differently and depend on seeing a person's full face to understand tone, intent, and instructions. A covered face can make it nearly impossible to read emotions or follow verbal/spoken directions
- **Increased Anxiety and Fear:** Encounters with law enforcement can already be intimidating. When an officer's face is hidden, it can heighten fear, confusion, and anxiety—making it harder for individuals to respond appropriately or advocate for themselves/someone else; like a parent advocating for their child.
- **Difficulty Building Trust:** Trust between police and the disability community is built through human connections. Seeing an officer's face helps people with I/DD feel safer, more respected, and more willing to cooperate and communicate.
- **Risk of Misunderstanding:** People with I/DD are already at higher risk of being misunderstood or misinterpreted during police encounters. Face coverings add another layer of confusion that can escalate situations unnecessarily.

## **Benefits for the Community at Large**

This legislation is not only critical for people with disabilities—it benefits everyone. Transparent, accountable policing strengthens public safety and community trust:

- **Accountability and Transparency:** Visible faces make officers identifiable and accountable. This is a cornerstone of democratic policing and helps prevent abuses of power.
- **De-escalation:** Officers who show their faces are more likely to be seen as approachable and human, which can de-escalate/calm down tense situations and reduce the likelihood of conflict.
- **Community Policing:** Building relationships between police and the communities they serve requires openness and visibility. Face coverings undermine these efforts.

- Public Confidence: When the public can see and identify the officers sworn to protect them, it fosters/creates greater confidence in law enforcement and the justice system.

## **Reasonable Exceptions Are Included**

We recognize that there are legitimate circumstances where face coverings may be necessary—such as undercover operations, hazardous material situations, or public health emergencies. SB1appropriately accounts for these exceptions while ensuring that routine, everyday policing is conducted with full transparency and respect for the dignity of all community members.

## **Conclusion**

People On the Go of Maryland requests for you to support SB one. This bill promotes clear communication, reduces fear and confusion, and strengthens trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve—especially for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are too often overlooked in policy discussions.

Policing should be transparent, accountable, and human. SB 1 helps ensure that it is.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

People on The Go of Maryland  
Statewide self-advocacy/systems advocacy organization

for any questions regarding this testimony please contact Mat Rice Executive Director

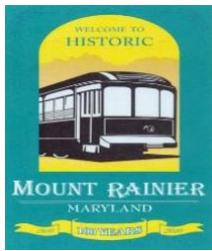
phone: 410-925-5706

email: [mat@pogmd.org](mailto:mat@pogmd.org)

# **Strong Support for Senate Bill 1.pdf**

Uploaded by: Mayor Celina Benitez

Position: FAV



## Office of The Mayor Celina Benitez

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1 Municipal Place, Mount Rainier, Maryland 20712 Telephone: (301) 985-6585 MountRainierMD.org

January 20, 2026

**Re: Strong Support for Senate Bill 1**

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

On behalf of the City of Mount Rainier, I respectfully submit this testimony in **strong support of Senate Bill 1**, legislation that promotes transparency, accountability, and public trust in law enforcement by prohibiting the use of face coverings by law enforcement officers while performing official duties, except when engaged in undercover operations.

For the City, this legislation is especially important given our community's strong emphasis on relationship-based, community-oriented public safety. Mount Rainier is a diverse municipality where residents regularly interact with the same officers at community events, neighborhood patrols, and local meetings. Clear visibility and identification of officers during these interactions is essential to maintaining trust, de-escalating conflict, and ensuring that residents feel safe and respected. When community members can clearly see and identify the officers serving them, it strengthens legitimacy, improves cooperation, and supports the collaborative public safety model Mount Rainier has worked hard to build.

Senate Bill 1 strikes an appropriate and thoughtful balance between **public transparency and officer safety**. By directing the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission to develop a model policy, the bill ensures statewide consistency while allowing for professional standards grounded in best practices. At the same time, the exception for undercover operations appropriately recognizes circumstances where anonymity is necessary to protect officers and preserve the integrity of investigations.

Mount Rainier supports this legislation because it reinforces the principle that public servants, especially those entrusted with significant authority, should operate in a manner that is visible and accountable to the communities they serve. Clear identification not only protects residents, but also protects officers by reducing confusion, miscommunication, and mistrust during interactions.

For these reasons, the City of Mount Rainier urges the Committee to issue a **favorable report on Senate Bill 1** and move this important legislation forward. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony and for your continued commitment to public safety and good governance. Please feel free to contact me at 301-985-6585 if you have any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

*Celina Benitez*

Mayor Celina Benitez, City of Mount Rainier

**SB 1\_FAV\_MGood.pdf**

Uploaded by: Megan Good

Position: FAV

## FAVORABLE Testimony

### Senate Bill 1

#### **Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings**

Chairperson and esteemed members of the Committee,

In our capacity as residents of Maryland and foster parents of unaccompanied minors, we strongly urge you to **Support** Senate Bill 1.

The face coverings federal agents are using when carrying out enforcement actions run counter to that which we value in our society – freedom, trust, transparency, safety. **DHS personnel are intentionally carrying out their immigration enforcement in a manner that terrifies communities and minimizes transparency and accountability.** Maryland lawmakers must act to protect us from this terrorism and lawlessness as much as possible.

When targeted community members are faced with masked, armed men, breaking their car windows to drag them from their vehicles, or kidnapping them off the street, we *all* have a right to know who these officers are, and whether they are in fact federal officials rather than private citizens deciding to kidnap someone in broad daylight.

The complete lack of transparency is not only an attempt to evade accountability for abuses. It also erodes community faith in *all* law enforcement agencies, including Maryland state and local police agencies, who have spent decades working to build trust in our communities.

**SB 1 is drafted to responsibly permit law enforcement officers to use the protective gear they need to carry out their work safely, while banning the use of face coverings for the sole purpose of concealing agent identities and instilling fear in the communities our government is supposed to be *serving*.** To permit government officials to conceal their identities while murdering and kidnapping residents of our communities parallels the tactics of the Ku Klux Klan. This chilling fact cannot be ignored.

As you well know, the terror ICE has spread in our society is real, widespread, and well-justified. As temporary caregivers to a young child who was terrified that her mother had been taken every time she did answer the phone, we witnessed firsthand the stress and trauma that this lawlessness inflicts on not only the adults being targeted based on their ethnicity, but also their children.

We call on all Maryland lawmakers to **strongly support** this legislation that preserves the ability of law enforcement officers to protect their faces as needed to carry out legitimate functions but prohibits their use when its function is to allow government agents to terrorize our communities anonymously.

Signed,

Megan Good & Misti McKeeken

# **SB 1 - Gibson-Banks Center Testimony (Favorable).p**

Uploaded by: Michael Pinard

Position: FAV



**Testimony Concerning Senate Bill 1  
Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings  
Position: Favorable**

**To:** Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chair  
Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice-Chair  
Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

**From:** Michael Pinard, Faculty Director and Monique L. Dixon, Executive Director,  
Gibson-Banks Center for Race and the Law, University of Maryland Francis King  
Carey School of Law

**Date:** January 20, 2026

On behalf of the Gibson-Banks Center for Race and the Law (“Gibson-Banks Center”) at the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law,<sup>1</sup> we appreciate the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of Senate Bill 1 (“SB 1”), which would require the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission to develop a model policy prohibiting law enforcement officers from using a face covering, and also require state (including out-of-state), local, and federal law enforcement agencies with officers policing in Maryland to adopt a policy consistent with the model policy. We urge the Committee to issue a favorable report because prohibiting face coverings worn by law enforcement officers aligns with our collective interests in transparency, accountability, trust, dignity, and public safety. Additionally, SB 1 aligns with Maryland state law as well as local law enforcement policies that advance these same interests.<sup>2</sup>

The Gibson-Banks Center works collaboratively to re-imagine and transform institutions and systems of racial inequality, marginalization, and oppression. Through education and engagement, advocacy, and research, the Center examines and addresses racial inequality and advances racial justice in a variety of issue areas, including the criminal legal system. Policing is a core component of the criminal legal system. Effective policing is also critical to the overall health of communities.

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<sup>1</sup> This written testimony is submitted on behalf of the Gibson-Banks Center and not on behalf of the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law, the University of Maryland, Baltimore, or the University System Maryland.

<sup>2</sup> *Infra* notes 11 and 12.

SB 1 appreciates that law enforcement officers are public agents tasked with serving and protecting communities. Officers have mighty powers, vis-à-vis the public, to exercise these duties. When legally justified, officers can pursue, detain, arrest, injure, and even kill an individual. However, these powers are paired with monumental responsibilities, which include transparency, accountability, and elevating public safety. To execute these responsibilities effectively—and to fulfill their oaths—officers need to earn and keep the public’s trust. In Maryland, they must do so in Black or Brown communities that bear the scars and traumas of over-policing, disinvestment, and neglect, as well as in communities that have been privileged to enjoy productive, mutually beneficial relationships with law enforcement.<sup>3</sup>

SB 1 is crucial because no officer should exercise their powers while hiding, shielding, or concealing their faces. Our faces reveal who we are. Our non-verbal communications—in the forms of facial movements and expressions—provide insight into our thoughts, dispositions, moods, and intentions. Over five years ago, in the throes of the COVID-19 pandemic and thus in a different context than the current climate, the International Association of Chiefs of Police warned that “because face coverings block facial expressions that help humans interpret language, communication between community members and law enforcement can be even more challenging whether either or both parties are wearing face coverings.”<sup>4</sup> Any time law enforcement officers wear face coverings, their interactions with communities and the public are compromised.

Clearly in these current times, some law enforcement officers, such as U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents, who wear face coverings do not want the public to know who they are.<sup>5</sup> Armed with deadly weapons, they are interfering with and detaining people on streets, in homes, and in buildings. As the national scene demonstrates, these officers, because they are essentially anonymized, are stoking fear in the individuals and communities they are targeting as well as with family members, friends, co-workers, and passersby. Also, in many instances they are causing confusion, as in the fog of the fright it is often not apparent to the targeted individuals and others that they are even law enforcement officers.<sup>6</sup> The ripple effects of the horror and confusion are endless, extending to the broader public absorbing videos of these encounters on television and

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<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., CIVIL RIGHTS DIV., U.S. DEP’T OF JUSTICE, INVESTIGATION OF THE BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT 4-5 (Aug. 10, 2016) (conveying Baltimore City residents’ perceptions of “two Baltimores” vis-à-vis the Baltimore City Police Department. “Community members living in the City’s wealthier and largely white neighborhoods told [investigators from the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice] that officers tend to be respectful and responsive to their needs, while many individuals living in the City’s largely African-American communities informed [investigators] that officers tend to be disrespectful and do not respond promptly to their calls for service.”).

<sup>4</sup> INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POLICE CHIEFS, FACE COVERINGS AND POLICE-COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (Oct. 2020), [https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/246232\\_IACP\\_Covid19\\_Face-coverings\\_P3.pdf](https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/246232_IACP_Covid19_Face-coverings_P3.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> See generally, CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS, MASKED AND UNIDENTIFIABLE: THE RISKS OF FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OPERATING WITHOUT IDENTIFICATION, (Aug. 28, 2025) (hereafter MASKED AND UNIDENTIFIABLE), <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/masked-and-unidentifiable-the-risks-of-federal-law-enforcement-operating-without-identification/>.

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., Sophia Sostrin, *WA lawmakers move to ban law enforcement from covering their faces*, SEATTLE TIMES, Jan. 14, 2026 (reporting that sponsor of a similar bill in Washington State “pointed to reports from communities with large immigrant populations where residents struggle to tell whether masked officers are legitimate law enforcement or imposters, particularly in during high stressed encounters”), <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/wa-lawmakers-move-to-ban-law-enforcement-from-covering-their-faces/>.

social media. The result is that face coverings have *escalated* law enforcement encounters with individuals and communities, the very antithesis of effective policing.<sup>7</sup>

Quite simply, it is impossible to expect the public to trust public servants who conceal their faces. Concealment, in this context, signals the absence and disregard of accountability and transparency and, therefore, eviscerates these pillars of policing. More concretely, allowing and incentivizing officers to wear face coverings further traumatizes communities of color that have suffered from unconstitutional and abusive policing, as well as destabilizes communities that have enjoyed historically healthy relationships with law enforcement. We have seen nationally that allowing (and incentivizing) officers to hide and conceal their faces has undermined public safety and trust and has promoted fear and doubts about our democracy.<sup>8</sup>

The relationships between law enforcement, the public, the rule of law, and our democracy are fraught at this moment. With SB 1, Maryland joins states that have passed<sup>9</sup> or are considering similar bills.<sup>10</sup> It also aligns with Maryland state law<sup>11</sup> and local law enforcement policies and practices<sup>12</sup> that require officers to identify themselves to members of the public.

SB 1 is rightfully and urgently focused on transparency, accountability, dignity, and public safety. For the reasons set forth above, we ask for a favorable report.

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<sup>7</sup> For example, the National Policing Institute (“NPI”) has a webpage that provides an overview of its research and resources on de-escalation skills. In introducing the page, the NPI asserts that “[d]e-escalation in policing is a critical strategy for safely managing high-stress, potentially volatile interactions between law enforcement and the public.” NATIONAL POLICING INSTITUTE, *Advancing De-escalation in Policing*,

<https://www.policinginstitute.org/de-escalation/>.

<sup>8</sup> See MASKED AND UNIDENTIFIABLE, *supra* note 5.

<sup>9</sup> CAL. GOV’T CODE § 7289 (West 2026).

<sup>10</sup> Among these states are Alaska (H.B. 250, 34<sup>th</sup> Leg., 2<sup>nd</sup> Sess. (Ak. 2026)); Florida (H.B. 419, 2026 Reg. Sess. (Fla. 2026)); Georgia (S.B. 389, Gen. Assem., 158<sup>th</sup> Sess. (Ga. 2026)); New Jersey (S.B. 3114, 222<sup>nd</sup> Leg., 2026 Sess. (N.J. 2026)); Washington (H.B. 2173, 69<sup>th</sup> Leg., Reg. Sess. (Wash. 2026)); Illinois (H.B. 4086, 104<sup>th</sup> Gen. Assem., 2025-2026 Sess. (Ill. 2025)); Massachusetts (H.4684, 194<sup>th</sup> Gen. Court (Mass. 2025)); New York (S.8462, 248<sup>th</sup> Gen. Assem., 2025-2026 Reg. Sess. (N.Y. 2025)); Pennsylvania, (S.B. 1071, Gen. Assem., 2025-2026 Reg. Sess. (Pa. 2025)); Tennessee (H.B. 1442, 114<sup>th</sup> Gen. Assem., 2025-2026 Sess. (Tenn. 2025)); and Vermont (S.208, Gen. Assem., 2025-2026 Reg. Sess. (Vt. 2026)).

<sup>11</sup> See MD. CRIM PROC. § 2-109(a) (West 2022) (requiring police officers to identify themselves at the outset “of a traffic stop or other stop”).

<sup>12</sup> See, e.g., Baltimore Police Department, Policy 1501, Police Badges (March 25, 2017) (“Uniformed [officers] shall display their badges on the outermost garment, over their left breast”),

<https://public.powerdms.com/BALTIMOREMD/documents/54986#:~:text=Issued%20Police%20Badge%20%E2%94%80%20Cured.1>

## **Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable.PDF**

Uploaded by: Michelle Finzel

Position: FAV

**Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable**  
**SB 245 – Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition**  
**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

**January 22, 2026**

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

My name is **Michelle Finzel**, and I am a **resident of Owings Mills, Maryland**. I am writing in support of **SB 245 – Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition**.

**When our children returned to school after covid, they were forbidden from wearing fuller faces covers. When we shop in any store, we are told not to hide our face because we are not there to commit a crime. Why then are people who claim to be doing the government's work allowed to hide their identities from the people they are harassing?**

I support **SB 245** because immigration enforcement agreements like 287(g) create fear in immigrant communities and undermine public safety for everyone. When people fear contact with law enforcement, they are less likely to report crimes, seek help, or cooperate as witnesses—even when they are victims.

**My children are scared. My neighbors are scared.**

Programs like 287(g) have been associated with racial profiling, discrimination, and wrongful detention. They divert local resources away from protecting communities and instead entangle local agencies in federal deportation efforts that separate families and destabilize neighborhoods.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a **favorable report** on **SB 245**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

# **Testimony SB 0001 Flamholz jan. 20 2026.pdf**

Uploaded by: mindie flamholz

Position: FAV

TESTIMONY ON Senate Bill – FAVORABLE

SB – 0001- Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

January 22, 2026

Dear Honorable Chair Smit, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Mindie Flamholz. I am a resident of Baltimore County, Maryland and have lived in this county for over 40 years and in Maryland for 72 ½ of my 73 years.

I am writing in support of SB 0001 – Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings.

I believe in trust. Yet, how are we to trust ICE agents and others when they do not wear anything that identifies them as agents of the government or of local law enforcement?

As a woman, rape is real. If someone masked approaches a woman, what is she to believe? Rape? Kidnapping? I've watched enough movies with masked (mostly men, most likely) approaching people...kidnapping children, torturing, raping, abusing, etc. etc. Or listen to news. The sites and sounds are horrific – seen, heard and/or imagined.

If ICE is truly proud of what they are doing, then why hide? If what they are doing is truly legal, then why hide? Why use the tactics they are using?

How do we protect our neighbors and friends who are here, contributing to our communities, our economies, who want nothing more than to live in peace? To join us in this American Dream? When people who've committed white collar crimes are arrested, are those arresting them wearing masks? Unidentifiable?

As a woman, I am so angry I could scream. As a Jew who lost relatives to hatred, I could scream. As someone who believes in people's rights and trust, I could scream. (So written testimony is preferable, even though as a QI Gong instructor, I do practice and teach my students to be calm.)

How do we remain calm now? Thankfully, we have you, our legislators, to do the right, the moral and ethical thing.

I, therefore, respectfully and with admiration for the positions to which you were elected and which you hold for the betterment of our state, urge you to issue - FAVORABLE on SB 0001.

Thank you for your time and your consideration of this deeply important bill,

Mindie Flamholz

## **SB #0001 Prohibition on Face Masks .pdf**

Uploaded by: Miner Brown

Position: FAV

SB # 0001

Miner L. Brown

Favorable

**Title: Public Safety-Law Enforcement Officers-Prohibition on Face Coverings**

**Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee: Senator William C. Smith, Jr.**

**Sponsored by: Senators Augustine, Love, Beidle, Brooks, Feldman, Ferguson, Guzzone, Hettleman, Kagan, King, Kramer, Lam, Lewis, Young, Muse, Rosapepe, Smith, Sydnor, and Zucker**

This testimony is written in strong support of Senate Bill #0001, Public Safety Law Enforcement Officers- Prohibition-on Face Coverings. My name is Miner I. (Moe) Brown, a 37-year resident of MD & District 11B. I am a parent, grandparent, greatgrandparent, Eagle Scout, Silver Beaver Awardee, 1<sup>st</sup> Life Time Achievement Awardee from Irvine Nature Center, a Red Hat at Habitat for Humanity in Baltimore (9 ½ yrs.), and an original CASA Ally.

This bill is co-sponsored by 18 Senators (indicative of its overwhelming urgency to become law as quickly as possible) cross filed in the House with 31 Sponsors.

**SERIOUS CONCERN:** **How can anyone even try to identify who are attacking our neighbors at work, the Home Depot parking lot, taking their children to school, food shopping, walking down the street, or forcefully entering their residence without a legal warrant? When passed, this new law will legally “prohibit a certain law enforcement officer from wearing a certain face covering while in the performance of duty in the State, except when actively engaged in an undercover operation.” Excellent!**

**Our racially diverse immigrant friends and neighbors and even American citizens are illegally and unconstitutionally under attack. They are initially met by masked unidentified men and women using unnecessary force who come at them, in numbers, from unmarked vans and black cars. They are being inhumanely treated, arrested, detained, immediately separated from family, deported and even killed with no regard for them as human-beings. This cannot continue to be allowed! A model enforceable law “prohibiting the use of a face covering in the performance of duty” will help provide some safety for our friends and neighbors not currently available. It also is solid evidence of the values and support we have for all our Maryland residents.**

# **Untitled document (12).pdf**

Uploaded by: Monica O'Connor

Position: FAV

## **TESTIMONY FOR SB0001**

### **Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings**

**Bill Sponsor:** Senator Augustine

**Committee:** Judicial Proceedings

**Person Submitting:** Monica Oconnor

**Position:** FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0001. I appeal to you as a Maryland resident, a citizen of this country and above all a human being longing for a country I can be proud of. I am terrified and angry that federal officers, whether they are Immigration Enforcement or other federal agencies, are coming into communities in force wearing military clothes, carrying weaponry that is not suitable for the jobs they are doing, with faces covered like paramilitary gestapos. This serves no one but the irresponsible administration that sent them out like this in the first place. In this atmosphere we are all Renee Good.

Face coverings make anyone who wears them and has a weapon feel invincible and that there will be no repercussions for any action they take, no matter how brutal, because they are anonymous. The face coverings terrify anyone who they come near and cause many people to run away out of fear. This gives the officer license to chase them down and inflict more harm.

Law Enforcement Officers used to approach people in a more open and less aggressive manner, so our streets did not seem like something out of a war zone. We have to get back to that. This bill, which we are overwhelmingly in favor of, is a first step. Unmask the people who feel that they are invincible and make them do their jobs without all the aggression. Other than people who have committed major crimes (murder, rape, burglary, etc.), most immigrants have only committed a civil crime (a crime on par with a traffic ticket) which does not warrant the level of a approach that is currently happening.

This bill will prohibit Law Enforcement Officers, whether they are state, local, or federal from hiding their faces with an exception for undercover officers. There are other exceptions for gas masks, masks to protect from viruses, etc. Officers covering their faces can be charged with a misdemeanor and, if convicted, face up to 2 years in jail and a penalty of \$2,000. They also waive any immunity to civil action.

I look to you, our elected officials to de-escalate the inhumane the violent tactics that are being used to terrify and intimidate the public. I hold you responsible for protecting the public by legislating a mask-of policy and request a FAVORABLE vote.



**SB1 FAV MAJ.pdf**

Uploaded by: Morgan Mills

Position: FAV



## 2026 WRITTEN TESTIMONY

SB 1

SB1- Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings

**FAVORABLE**

MAJ urges a favorable vote on SB1. SB1 is a necessary, and unfortunate, response to the state of civil liberty protections in our State, and country. This legislation would ensure appropriate measures are implemented and followed to protect citizens and police, while at the same time avoiding the abuse of face coverings we have seen in various “law enforcement” capacities. The transparency of police action is necessary to keeping the public trust in law enforcement, and to protect against intentional abuses of police powers.

SB1 also provides a necessary incentive for police to follow the law. SB1 removes an officer’s claim for immunity if the new standards are not followed, and is accompanied by a presumption in favor of misconduct. Without such statutory incentive, law enforcement would have little reason to abide by these standards. MAJ supports SB1 as a necessary step to protect the civil rights of all Marylanders.

**The Maryland Association for Justice urges a FAVORABLE Report on SB 1.**

### About Maryland Association for Justice

The Maryland Association for Justice (MAJ) represents over 1,250 trial attorneys throughout the state of Maryland. MAJ advocates for the preservation of the civil justice system, the protection of the rights of consumers and the education and professional development of its members.

10440 Little Patuxent Parkway, Suite 250  
Columbia, MD 21044

(410) 872-0990 | FAX (410) 872-0993  
[info@mdforjustice.com](mailto:info@mdforjustice.com)

[mdforjustice.com](http://mdforjustice.com)

## **Testimony on SB0001 Nancy Hadad.pdf**

Uploaded by: Nancy Hadad

Position: FAV

**Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable**

**SB0001 – 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:

My name is Nancy Hadad, and I am a resident of Gaithersburg, Maryland, in District 17. I am writing in support of SB0001.

In a constitutional democracy, the exercise of state power must be **visible, identifiable, and accountable**. When armed law enforcement officers conceal their faces during routine enforcement actions, that principle is undermined. Members of the public cannot readily identify who is acting under lawful authority, nor can they meaningfully seek accountability if an encounter goes wrong. Over time, this erodes due process, civilian oversight, and public confidence in the rule of law.

SB0001 addresses a basic but critical public safety concern. Civil law enforcement—particularly immigration enforcement—is not combat policing. Face coverings create the appearance of paramilitary or extrajudicial action and introduce fear far out of proportion to the legal authority being exercised. That fear does not remain confined to undocumented individuals; it spreads to mixed-status families, lawful residents, and U.S. citizens, reducing cooperation with law enforcement and weakening community safety overall. From a governance perspective, this is counterproductive enforcement.

Clear identification standards are also necessary to prevent **dangerous confusion and escalation**. When armed individuals act while masked or without clearly visible identification, bystanders have no reliable way to know whether they are witnessing a lawful arrest or a crime in progress. This increases the risk of intervention, resistance, or violence—placing both the public and officers at greater risk. Visible identification protects everyone involved.

Maryland has long benefited from a law enforcement culture that emphasizes transparency and accountability. Our communities are safer when people trust that officers are acting openly, lawfully, and under clear authority. Allowing routine face coverings for law enforcement officers undermines that trust and creates unnecessary risk.

SB0001 does not prevent law enforcement from doing its job. It simply reinforces long-standing American norms: that officers exercising state power do so **openly and identifiably**, except in narrowly defined and truly exigent circumstances.

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

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

**Nancy Hadad**

302 Alderwood Drive  
Gaithersburg, MD 20878  
hadad@dunlopweb.net  
(202) 425-5487

## **Testimony in favor of SB0001.pdf**

Uploaded by: Natalie Younger

Position: FAV

# Testimony in favor of SB0001

As a proud resident of Maryland, I strongly support SB0001, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings. Transparency and accountability are the foundation of trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve. When officers conceal their identities, it erodes that trust and creates fear rather than safety.

The recent behaviors of ICE have made me, my family, and my community feel less safe and more vulnerable. We deserve to know who is enforcing the law in our neighborhoods, and we deserve assurance that those entrusted with authority are acting responsibly and openly. SB0001 is a necessary step toward restoring confidence in public safety and ensuring that all officers are held accountable for their actions.

I urge the General Assembly to pass this bill and affirm Maryland's commitment to justice, transparency, and community trust.

With Faith and Hope for our Future,

Natalie Younger  
Resident of Leonardtown, MD.

# **MD SB1\_Franklin LEAP\_Favorable.pdf**

Uploaded by: Neill Franklin

Position: FAV



# LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTION PARTNERSHIP

ADVANCING JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY SOLUTIONS

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Commissioner Trevor Velinor  
St. Croix, USVI

Date: January 19, 2026

Re: SB 01

Position: FAVORABLE

## STATEMENT OF MAJOR STANFORD “NEILL” FRANKLIN,<sup>i</sup> Maryland State Police (Ret.) ON BEHALF OF THE LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTION PARTNERSHIP<sup>ii</sup>

SUBMITTED TO  
THE MARYLAND SENATE  
JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS  
HON. WILLIAM C. SMITH, JR., CHAIR  
HON. JEFF WALDSTREICHER, VICE CHAIR

## Testimony – Favorable SB 01 – Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, Distinguished Representatives, on behalf of the Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP), we support Senate Bill 1 and urge you to give it a favorable report because it will:

- Ensure a basic level of transparency by law enforcement;
- Establish a fundamental foundation for building and maintaining community trust;
- Enable the public to confidently hold members of law enforcement accountable for their actions;
- Establish statewide consistency in how law enforcement officers interact with members of the public; and
- Serve as a direct enhancement to the Maryland Police Accountability Act of 2021, which requires de-escalation when feasible, enhancing community and law enforcement safety.

LEAP greatly appreciates the courageous leadership in introducing this bill that benefit not just the public, but members of the law enforcement community. Many people may not initially understand the benefit to members of law enforcement, but when members of the public immediately recognize and feel a comfortable level of transparency and trust, the process of de-escalation is quickly established. And so goes the saying, “cooler heads prevail,” creating a safer environment for all.

I am a law enforcement professional with over 30 years of leadership and training experience with the Maryland State Police, Baltimore City Police Department, and one other agency. I have served as Executive Director of the Law Enforcement Action Partnership and presently provide law enforcement training through Powers Consulting. My testimony reflects extensive operational, training, and public policy experience.

The Law Enforcement Action Partnership strongly supports Maryland Senate Bill 1, which prohibits law enforcement officers from wearing face coverings (masking) during the normal performance of their duties, except in narrowly defined circumstances such as undercover or health-related needs. This bill is essential to uphold transparency—the foundation of community trust and accountability in policing.

### Key Arguments for Support

#### 1. Transparency as a Foundational Principle of Policing

Transparency is critical for building and maintaining public trust, legitimacy, and accountability in law enforcement. Police officers are trained and required to identify themselves visibly and audibly during enforcement interactions.

The Baltimore City Police Department’s policy on Field Interviews and Investigative Stops explicitly requires officers to identify themselves during investigative stops, stating clearly under "Required Actions – Investigative Stops" (page 7) that officers must make their identity known to members of the public to foster transparency and trust (Baltimore City Police Department Policy 1112, Field Interviews and Investigative Stops, p.7).<sup>iii</sup>

Similarly, the Maryland State Police Traffic Stop Procedures codify this principle in Section D, "Trooper and Violator Contact," where troopers are instructed to approach violators and state their rank, name, and department at the beginning of the stop, along with the reason for the stop. This mandated officer identification exemplifies transparency during routine traffic enforcement encounters (Maryland State Police, Operations Directive OPS 03.02, Traffic Stop Procedures, Section D, p.2).<sup>iv</sup>

These policies reflect core policing values that Maryland Senate Bill 1 protects by prohibiting face coverings that obscure an officer’s face and impede the community’s ability to verify officer identity or legitimacy during normal public interactions.

#### 2. No Tactical Benefit to Masking During Routine Duties

In my experience commanding and training law enforcement officers, face coverings are justified only in specific circumstances such as protection from chemical agents, hazardous environments, medical necessity,

or covert operations. Masking during routine patrol or enforcement lacks tactical merit and diminishes transparency, accountability, and public confidence.

It is my professional opinion that random masking has no measurable benefit to law enforcement officers, and that masking is done under the belief that masking will protect officers from the harms of doxing. There is no concrete evidence that masking protects ethically behaving law enforcement officers more than those who do not wear face coverings, including other public officials, such as judges and prosecutors.

### 3. Risks of Masking and Impersonation

Masking creates public confusion and fear, especially given recent incidents of impersonators unlawfully detaining citizens. By requiring visible identification and restricting masking, Senate Bill 1 mitigates this risk and enhances public safety.

### 4. Accountability and Ethical Policing

Visible identification is a key safeguard against misconduct and abuse of authority. Senate Bill 1 reinforces this accountability by endorsing policies that ensure officers cannot anonymously carry out public enforcement.

### 5. Alignment with Best Practices and Maryland Law

By mandating model policies through the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission, Senate Bill 1 harmonizes Maryland law with national best practices emphasizing officer transparency, accountability, and public trust. It will also serve as a direct enhancement to the Maryland Police Accountability Act of 2021, which requires de-escalation when feasible (Maryland Police Accountability Act of 2021, p.10, lines 23-26).<sup>v</sup>

In closing, federal law, 10 USC 723: Support of Federal Authorities in Response to Civil Disturbances,<sup>vi</sup> requires federal agents to properly identify themselves by visible displaying their names in conjunction with their agency name. Senate Bill 1 simply takes law enforcement identification one step further along the necessary path of government transparency, and no one should be more transparent than government agents who have the power to revoke the people's fundamental right of freedom.

Senate Bill 1 is a crucial measure to guarantee that law enforcement officers engage openly and transparently with the public, fostering trust and ensuring ethical and constitutional policing. I urge this committee and the Maryland Senate to support this important legislation.

I will make myself available to offer additional expert testimony and training regarding the implementation of these principles throughout Maryland law enforcement.

Respectfully,



Major Stanford "Neill" Franklin (Ret.)

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<sup>i</sup> Major Neill Franklin (Ret.) is a distinguished figure in law enforcement, boasting a remarkable 34-year career that includes notable positions within both the Maryland State Police and the Baltimore Police Department. Franklin's extensive service began with the Maryland State Police, where he dedicated 23 years of his life to public safety. His exceptional performance led him to be selected in 2000 by the Commissioner of the Baltimore Police Department to reconstruct and lead the Education and Training Section in Baltimore.

Throughout his tenure with the Maryland State Police, Franklin made significant contributions, notably serving as the commander of the Education and Training Division and the Bureau of Drug and Criminal Enforcement. He was instrumental in the creation and oversight of the first Domestic Violence Investigative Units for the Maryland State Police, showcasing his commitment to progressive policing practices.

Franklin's perspective on the War on Drugs was profoundly shaped by the community impacts he witnessed during his career. Influenced by former Baltimore Mayor Kurt Schmoke, who famously criticized the drug war's violent repercussions, Franklin became a staunch advocate for reform. This commitment was further fueled by the heartbreaking loss of his close friend, Maryland State Police Corporal Ed Toatley, who was killed during an undercover drug operation. This tragedy solidified his resolve to challenge and change ineffective policing and drug policies.

In 2010, Franklin transitioned from active duty to leadership as the Executive Director of the Law Enforcement Action Partnership, a role he held for a decade until his retirement in 2020. Under his guidance, the organization worked towards reshaping public safety strategies and advocating for reformative public policy solutions.

Franklin's expertise in policing has also been recognized in judicial settings, where he has served as an expert witness in both Maryland Circuit and federal district courts. His commitment to community engagement and reform extends beyond his professional duties; he has held positions on various boards, including the Youth & Police Initiative, the Alliance for Safety and Justice, the National Organization of Retired State Troopers, the Faith Based Community Council on Law Enforcement and Intelligence, and TurnAround Inc. among others.

Through his extensive service and advocacy, Major Neill Franklin has made a lasting impact on law enforcement practices and community safety initiatives, demonstrating a profound commitment to justice and reform.

<sup>ii</sup> The Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEA) is a nonprofit group of police, prosecutors, judges, and other criminal justice professionals who speak from firsthand experience. Our mission is to make communities safer by focusing law enforcement resources on the greatest threats to public safety and working toward healing police-community relations.

<sup>iii</sup> Baltimore City Police Department Policy 1112, Field Interviews and Investigative Stops, p.7.

24. At the commencement of all Investigative Stops, including Vehicle Stops, absent exigent circumstances, members shall: 24.1. Introduce themselves, be professional and courteous, and exercise Procedural Justice principles. (See Policy 325, Procedural Justice in Interactions). 24.2. Provide notification of the BWC recording; 24.3. Display proper identification to the Stopped individual; and 24.4. Provide the following information to the Stopped individual: 24.4.1. The member's name; 24.4.2. The member's badge number; 24.4.3. That the member is a member of the Baltimore Police Department; and 24.4.4. The reason for the Vehicle or other Stop.

<sup>iv</sup> Maryland State Police, Operations Directive OPS 03.02, Traffic Stop Procedures, p.2.

D. Trooper and Violator Contact 1. Officer safety should be the determining factor on the type of approach employed. 2. The driver and any passengers may be ordered out of the car for the trooper's safety. 3. The trooper will approach the violator and: a. state his rank, name and department; b. provide the reason for the stop; c. if applicable, notify the violator the stop is being audibly and visually recorded; and d. request the appropriate documentation (driver's license, registration).

<sup>v</sup> Maryland Police Accountability Act of 2021, p.10, lines 23-26.

3-524, (E) A police Officer Shall: (1) When time, circumstances and safety allow, take steps to gain compliance and de-escalate conflict without using physical force.

<sup>vi</sup> §723. Support of Federal authorities in response to civil disturbances: requirement for use of members of the Armed Forces and Federal law enforcement personnel.

(a) Requirement.-Whenever a member of the armed forces (including the National Guard) or Federal law enforcement personnel provide support to Federal authorities to respond to a civil disturbance, each individual employed in the capacity of providing such support shall visibly display- (1) the individual's name or other individual identifier that is unique to that individual; and (2) the name of the armed force, Federal entity, or other organization by which such individual is employed. (b) Exception. -The requirement under subsection (a) shall not apply to individuals referred to in such subsection who- (1) do not wear a uniform or other distinguishing clothing or equipment in the regular performance of their official duties; or (2) are engaged in undercover operations in the regular performance of their official duties.

**SB001-1.pdf**

Uploaded by: Nevan McMillian

Position: FAV

**Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable**  
**SB 001 – Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition**  
**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**  
**January 22, 2026**

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

My name is **Nevan McMillian**, and I am a **resident of Windsor Mill Baltimore County, Maryland** and I am also a student at the University of Maryland College Park. I am writing in support of **SB 001 – Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings**.

I support **SB 001** because face coverings with police officers leads to a lack of accountability, failure for an ease of identification of law enforcement, leads law enforcement to appear intimidating, and otherwise reduces the efficacy of law enforcement.

**My favorability of SB 001 is large part due to ICE's continuous use of face coverings when undergoing their duties. The combination of face coverings, lack of law enforcement identification, the use of unmarked vehicles, and the lack of uniforms leads to a total lack of accountability from ICE officers when they overuse force. If a victim cannot ID an offending officer it will be impossible to seek accountability through legal systems.**

**Furthermore, face coverings for any law enforcement is unprofessional and if combined without uniforms or marked vehicles it will make it harder for citizens to identify whether or not they are speaking or encountering law enforcement. This induces fear in the population that could lead to more incidents between law enforcement and civilians that could end in lethal results.**

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a **favorable report** on **SB 001**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

I urge Judicial Proceedings to issue a favorable report.

Nevan McMillian

[nmcmillian1105@gmail.com](mailto:nmcmillian1105@gmail.com)

# **SOMD4RE for SB1.pdf**

Uploaded by: Ongisa Ichile-Mckenzie

Position: FAV

To: Maryland General Assembly

From: Ongisa Ichile-Mckenzie, Director, Southern Marylanders for Racial Equality

Re: Senate Bill 1

January 20, 2026

Dear Senators:

As Director of Southern Marylanders for Racial Equality, I write in urgent and personal support of Senate Bill 1, which would require law enforcement officers—including state, local, and in practice prohibiting face coverings while performing duty—to serve with their faces and identities clearly visible, except in narrowly defined undercover operations.

This bill responds directly to how opaque and unaccountable enforcement actions by immigration agents have created danger and fear in communities across the United States. In the fatal shooting of Renée Nicole Good by an ICE agent in Minneapolis, video footage captured the agent firing at her vehicle; subsequent reporting noted that federal agents present often operated without visible identification. Without clear visibility of who is performing enforcement actions — including the agent's name, badge, or agency — residents are unable to protect their rights or understand whom they are interacting with.

Senate Bill 1 would:

- Require law enforcement agencies in Maryland to adopt policies prohibiting officers from wearing face coverings that obscure their identity while on duty;
- Ensure that the public, courts, and victims know who is enforcing the laws, preventing anonymous enforcement that parallels many of the troubling ICE operations seen recently;
- Provide greater accountability if enforcement actions — including arrests, detentions, or use of force — result in harm, wrongful detention, or escalation.

Recent federal immigration enforcement tactics nationwide — including fatal shootings, sudden detentions, and what many describe as home invasions — illustrate the danger of agents acting without accountability mechanisms. When agents are masked or unidentified, neighbors cannot verify the legitimacy of an operation, and families are left vulnerable to serious harm.

Proponents of transparency laws have noted that requiring visible identification diminishes the likelihood of misconduct and increases trust in public safety institutions. Allowing agents to hide their identity shields them from accountability and increases the risk of illegal detentions,

wrongful confrontations, or escalating encounters. Prohibiting face coverings in enforcement actions is a meaningful, concrete public safety measure that ensures all residents — including immigrants, refugees, and communities of color — are treated with dignity, respect, and the assurance that those enforcing laws can be held accountable.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 1.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ongisa Ichile-Mckenzie".

Ongisa Ichile-Mckenzie  
Director, Southern Marylanders for Racial Equality

**SB1.pdf**

Uploaded by: Patricia Lesley

Position: FAV

Patricia Lesley  
15410 Bond Mill Rd, Laurel, MD 20707  
District 21

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB1, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings

January 20, 2025

TO: Chair William C. Smith, Jr. & the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
FROM: Patricia Lesley

Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee, my name is Patricia, I live in Laurel, Maryland, and I am writing to support SB 0001, Prohibition on Face Coverings.

As the news gets worse in this country, and we hear reports of ICE coming to Maryland to continue spreading fear and breaking up families, it is important to make sure we can someday hold them accountable. It's also important to make sure we can actually identify police and other government employees both for their own protection to ensure bad actors cannot pretend to be a federal official without repercussions.

Please let Maryland be a safer place for all of us than elsewhere in our country. Prohibiting masked law enforcement is one small step towards ensuring the people wearing those badges are discharging their duties faithfully. I urge you to support SB 0001 and help ensure that Maryland's law enforcement is being held to the highest standards of conduct.

## **Testimony on SB 1 – Favorable.pdf**

Uploaded by: Paul Holmes

Position: FAV

Hearing Date: Thursday, 1/22 at 1:00 p.m.

Paul Holmes

Silver Spring, MD 20901

**Testimony on SB 1 – Favorable**

**Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings**

**To:** Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

**From:** Paul Holmes

My name is Paul Holmes. I am a resident of District 19 and I am pleased to submit this testimony in support of Senate Bill 1 (SB 1), which prohibits law enforcement officers, including federal agents, from wearing face coverings—such as masks, gaiters, or balaclavas—while performing public duties in Maryland, with reasonable exceptions.

In a free and democratic society, law enforcement officers operating in public spaces must be identifiable. The use of masks, particularly by federal agencies, creates a "paramount" or "secret police" atmosphere that erodes trust, accountability, and safety. When officers are unidentifiable, it becomes impossible for citizens to verify their authority or hold them accountable for potential misconduct.

I have witnessed with concern the increased usage of masks by law enforcement, including Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents, during public arrests. These actions are often jarring to the public, foster fear, and can be mistaken for criminal impersonation of law enforcement.

SB 1 addresses these issues by:

- **Prioritizing Accountability:** Mandating that officers show their faces promotes transparency, ensuring that misconduct is not hidden behind tactical masks.
- **Increasing Trust:** When law enforcement acts in our communities, residents should know who is interacting with them, fostering a safer, more transparent environment.
- **Providing Necessary Exceptions:** The bill rightly allows for exceptions for undercover operations and necessary tactical gear in high-risk situations.

Allowing law enforcement to hide their identities in public directly undermines public trust. This bill ensures that policing remains open and accountable to the people of Maryland. For these reasons, **I respectfully urge a favorable report on SB 1 Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings.**



**SB1\_MSEA\_Lemle\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Paul Lemle

Position: FAV

**SUPPORT**  
**Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**  
**Senate Bill 1**

**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**  
**January 22, 2026**

**Paul Lemle**  
**President**

The Maryland State Education Association supports Senate Bill 1, which requires the development of a model policy prohibiting the use of face coverings by any law enforcement officer operating in the state of Maryland.

MSEA represents 76,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools and community colleges, teaching and supporting our almost 900,000 K-12 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA represents more than 40 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

Senate Bill 1 is part of a number of legislative initiatives that MSEA is supporting this session to lend our voice to protect students in schools and their communities. There has been a dangerous escalation of authoritarian tactics that threaten safety, civil liberties, and the democratic values across the country. The use of masked and unmarked law enforcement agents has increased in the last 12 months as part of the authoritarian actions of the Trump Administration to occupy American cities and advance unjust law enforcement actions with little regard for due process and equal protection. Communities are being traumatized, requiring states like Maryland to resist assaults on our civil liberties through legislative action such as this bill.

Educators have a moral and professional responsibility to keep all students safe, primarily in school, and also to advocate for safe communities for our students and their families. We believe the prohibition of masked law enforcement actions is part of creating safer communities and ultimately better learning and living conditions for our students.

**MSEA adds our voice to this critical moment that requires a renewed commitment to civil rights and social justice and urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 1.**

# **FAVORABLE SB0001\_ Paula Casagrande.pdf**

Uploaded by: Paula Casagrande

Position: FAV

**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

# **2026 Ateto Testimony SB0001 .pdf**

Uploaded by: Philip Ateto

Position: FAV

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

My name is Philip Ateto and I am a lifelong Marylander, currently residing in Annapolis, in Anne Arundel County. I am writing in support of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings

It is important to me that ICE and all law enforcement in the state are required to show their faces as it is a crucial part of accountability and trust with law enforcement in our communities. How are residents and lawmakers supposed to hold law enforcement accountable for violations of people's rights and policies using photos and videos if their face is not visible, in addition to clear markings that identify their agency and badge number?

It is important for public safety that ICE officers can be identified. Without visible identification and uniform standards, fear and public distrust in law enforcement increases. Furthermore, community members are more likely to intervene if they watch someone being attacked or kidnapped by a masked, unmarked group. There's no way to know if someone is simply impersonating an ICE officer which as been happening already, resulting in armed robberies, rapes, and sexual assaults that go unreported and further erode community trust in law enforcement.

Our county sheriff values transparency and the community has benefited from this. We should not be allowing armed individuals with masks to intimidate and frighten communities with impunity.

I urge you to vote in favor of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings for transparency and safety.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

**SB0001-Testimony-RArmendariz.pdf**

Uploaded by: Rebecca Armendariz

Position: FAV

## **Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable**

### **SB 0001 – 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:

My name is Rebecca Armendariz, MSW, LCSW-C; I'm a resident of Baltimore County and a clinical social worker. I am writing in support of SB 0001 – Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings.

The increase in ICE activity in our state is a direct result of the authoritarian takeover of the U.S. federal government. ICE officers are modern slave catchers, kidnapping people of color on sight without any concern for the law or Constitution. We in Maryland must use every possible resource and pull every lever of power that we can to prevent more of our neighbors from ICE/DHS detention. Maryland must ban ICE officers from wearing face coverings as part of this great task.

Law enforcement officers must be visibly identifiable: their faces, names, and badge numbers. Studies show officers with face coverings act more brutally. With face coverings, law enforcement officers are more easily impersonated.

For these dangerous and violent reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report on SB 0001.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



Rebecca Armendariz, MSW, LCSW-C

**SB001.pdf**

Uploaded by: Rebecca Turner

Position: FAV

**Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable**

**SB0001 - 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,

My name is Rebecca M.Turner and I am a resident of La Plata Maryland. I am writing in support of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings

My belief is that no agent of the government should be unknown to the people that they serve. Masks are a tool of the secret police.

It is important for public safety that ICE officers can be identified. Without visible identification and uniform standards, fear and public distrust in law enforcement increases. Furthermore, community members are more likely to intervene if they watch someone being attacked or kidnapped by a masked, unmarked group. There's no way to know if someone is simply impersonating an ICE officer.

Our county sheriff values transparency and the community has benefited from this. We should not be allowing armed individuals with masks to intimidate and frighten communities with impunity.

I urge you to vote in favor of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings for transparency and safety.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Turner

# **Eckel FAV SB1\_HB155 - ban LE face covering .pdf**

Uploaded by: Rianna Eckel

Position: FAV

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

My name is Rianna Eckel, I live in district 43A, and I am a member of Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore. Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, is an all-volunteer organization working to move white folks as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. We are also working in collaboration with CASA. **I am writing in support of SB1 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings.**

In the State of Maryland, we expect the law enforcement officers who serve our communities to openly identify themselves as such when doing their jobs. Law enforcement agencies have policies requiring officers to wear uniforms or other identifying markers in most circumstances, and we even have a law - Criminal Procedure Article 2-109 - which requires a police officer to identify him or herself by name, agency, and badge number when approaching a citizen for a traffic stop or other investigation.

Throughout 2025, we saw copious news coverage of federal law enforcement actions conducted by officers wearing street clothes and balaclavas. The fact that incidents of police impersonation have been on the rise in Maryland and nationally is not a coincidence: when it becomes impossible to determine who is a legitimate law enforcement officer, criminals can more plausibly claim to be police by simply putting on a mask, no fake uniform or badge required. Even the FBI has recognized the danger, circulating a bulletin to law enforcement agencies in October 2025 that warned criminals were taking advantage of routine mask-wearing by law enforcement to disguise themselves as ICE agents.<sup>1</sup> This confusion also makes routine law enforcement operations more dangerous. Initial contact between officer and civilian is often the most uncertain and dangerous moment in a law enforcement encounter, and ensuring that everyone is on the same page about what is happening can help prevent rash and dangerous decisions.

SB1 would require the creation of a model masking policy banning the routine use of full face masks to conceal the identity of law enforcement officers, and require law enforcement agencies operating in Maryland to adopt that policy or its equivalent. Officers would still be permitted to wear necessary tactical and safety equipment, and full face masks could be authorized under specific, defined circumstances. But use of this policy would reinforce a clear distinction between officers conducting enforcement actions, and criminals hiding their faces to masquerade as law enforcement, making everyone safer. It is for these reasons that **I am encouraging you to issue a favorable report on SB1, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Rianna Eckel  
2300 Hunter St, Baltimore MD 21218  
Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore



**Showing Up for Racial Justice**

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<sup>1</sup> Cameron, Dell & Haskins, Caroline, "FBI warns of criminals posing as ICE, urges agents to ID themselves." WIRED Magazine, Nov. 4, 2025. <https://www.wired.com/story/fbi-warns-of-criminals-posing-as-ice-urges-agents-to-id-themselves/>

# **Testimony in support of SB0001 - Public Safety - L**

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

SB0001\_RichardKaplowitz\_FA  
01/22/2026

Richard Keith Kaplowitz  
Frederick, MD 21703-7134

**TESTIMONY ON SB#0001 - POSITION: FAVORABLE**  
**Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**

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

**FROM:** Richard Keith Kaplowitz

**My name is Richard Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of/ SB#/0001, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**

This bill will protect Maryland residents from multiple issues that arise when law enforcement or persons falsely claiming that status conduct themselves while masked. The bill accomplishes this by requiring the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission to develop a model policy prohibiting the use of a face covering in the performance of duty; requiring a law enforcement agency to adopt a policy consistent with the model policy developed by the Commission; and prohibiting a certain law enforcement officer from wearing a certain face covering while in the performance of duty in the State, except when actively engaged in an undercover operation.

As reported by the Center for American Progress

This is the new, frightening image of U.S. immigration enforcement under President Donald Trump: violence, covered faces, and unknown agency affiliations. These images signal a troubling move “away from [democratic controls](#),” where officers are visible and accountable to the communities they serve, and toward [militarization](#) that serves to instill fear and stifle dissent.<sup>1</sup>

In a column in Maryland Matters on August 6, 2025 Karl Bickel, who retired from the Department of Justice, noted

The wearing of masks by ICE agents has had a chilling effect on communities where agents have conducted raids, particularly when naturalized and native-born citizens have been caught up in their net. The intentional fear that is generated by ICE agents is damaging to local law enforcement. It erodes the police/community trust necessary for state and local law enforcement to effectively do its job.<sup>2</sup>

PBS reported on how wearing masks creates opportunities for imposters to conduct crimes.<sup>3</sup> This bill provides a solution to the problems created when law enforcement is masked.

**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB0001.**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/masked-and-unidentifiable-the-risks-of-federal-law-enforcement-operating-without-identification/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://marylandmatters.org/2025/08/06/getting-in-front-of-the-police-masking-controversy/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/rise-of-ice-agents-wearing-masks-creates-opportunity-for-imposters-to-conduct-crimes>

# **Testimony SB-1.pdf**

Uploaded by: Robert Oerter

Position: FAV

My name is Robert Oerter. I live in Hyattsville, MD, and I want to provide testimony in support of SB-1 and HB-0155 regarding the prohibition on masks for law enforcement officers.

Accountability is crucial for any law enforcement agency. Law enforcement officers have great power over citizens. If there are no restrictions, if there is no accountability, then the system is ripe for abuses. When abuses occur it can be difficult or impossible for them to be held accountable if they are masked.

Masks also create fear in the community. A law officer in uniform is intimidating, a law officer wearing a mask is even more so. Fear discourages cooperation with law enforcement.

Masks may even encourage law enforcement to violate their own codes and policies. We all know from experience that people who are very polite when standing in line will behave badly when in the anonymity of their car, and people who will express polite disagreement when talking face to face will sneer and curse in the anonymity of the internet. Anonymity breeds contempt.

The horrific events we have been witnessing in Minneapolis and other cities show that when there is no accountability, law enforcement officers may overstep the bounds of their duty to the endangerment of the community.

Masks make it all too easy for criminals to impersonate law enforcement. Someone can wear camouflage and pull on a mask, and they will be able to commit any crime without fear of being identified later. The fear and intimidation already mentioned will make this all the easier.

Please pass these bills to help keep our community safe.

**SB1 .pdf**

Uploaded by: Ruth White

Position: FAV

SB0001 - FAV  
Ruth White  
D13, Columbia MD 21045

## Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable

**SB0001**–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,

My name is Ruth White and I live in District 13 in Howard County Maryland. I am writing in support of **SB0001**–Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings

SB0001 requires the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission to develop a statewide model policy prohibiting law enforcement officers from wearing face coverings while performing their duties, except when actively engaged in an undercover operation. This legislation promotes transparency, accountability, and trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

I am a lifelong Maryland resident, a mother, and grandmother, and widow of a veteran who also retired from a major national security agency, a committed patriot who cared about the rule of law. I am offering thoughts and prayers for the important decisions you will be making this session on immigration. There are local and national reports of criminals imitating the ICE masking to commit crimes. It is important to me as a mother and grandmother in Maryland to be able to identify and trust police at all levels.

The ICE masking I see pictures of in the news everyday terrifies me - reminding me of the work of special police forces used by a host of autocratic repressive governments my husband abhorred, and in our movies like Star Wars. Intended to instill fear. I want the police to be easily identified so I can trust them and know they are clearly accountable. Public trust of the police makes us all safer.

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

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Ruth White

**SB1 .pdf**

Uploaded by: Ruth White

Position: FAV

SB0001 - FAV  
Ruth White  
D13, Columbia MD 21045

## Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable

**SB0001**–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,

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

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Ruth White

# **FAVORABLE SB0001 - Public Safety Testimony\_Sabrina**

Uploaded by: Sabrina Williams

Position: FAV

**Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable**  
**SB0001 - 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,

My name is **Sabrina Williams**, and I am a resident of Frederick County, Maryland. I am writing in support of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings

It is important for public safety that ICE officers can be identified. Without visible identification and uniform standards, fear and public distrust in law enforcement increases. Furthermore, community members are more likely to intervene if they watch someone being attacked or kidnapped by a masked, unmarked group. There's no way to know if someone is simply impersonating an ICE officer.

Our county sheriff values transparency and the community has benefited from this. We should not be allowing armed individuals with masks to intimidate and frighten communities with impunity.

I urge you to vote in favor of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings for transparency and safety.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

# **FAVORABLE SB0001-Samantha Hodge-Williams.pdf**

Uploaded by: Samantha Hodge-Williams

Position: FAV

**Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable**  
**SB0001 - 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,

My name is Samantha Hodge-Williams, and I am a resident of Garrett County, Maryland. I am writing in support of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings

It is important for our public safety that ICE officers can be identified. Without visible identification and uniform standards, fear and public distrust in law enforcement increases. Furthermore, community members are more likely to intervene if they watch someone being attacked or kidnapped by a masked, unmarked group. There's no way to know if someone is simply impersonating an ICE officer.

Our county sheriff values transparency and the community has benefited from this. Every day, law enforcement officers wear uniforms and bodycams to fulfill duties serving communities with hiding their faces or identity. Unidentified ICE officers who typically do not notify local law enforcement of their whereabouts, are more likely to cause tragic friendly fire incidents, where one officer accidentally shoots another. We should not be allowing armed individuals with masks to be held to a different standard and rules than local officers, intimidating and frightening communities with impunity.

I urge you to vote in favor of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings for transparency and safety.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

# **sean lesley - sb0001 testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Sean Lesley

Position: FAV

Sean Lesley  
15410 Bond Mill Rd  
Laurel, MD 20707  
District 21

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 0001, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers -  
Prohibition on Face Coverings

January 20th, 2026

TO: Chair William C. Smith, Jr. & the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
FROM: Sean Lesley

Good morning! Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee, my name is Sean, I live in Laurel, Maryland, and I am writing to support SB 0001, Prohibition on Face Coverings.

Trust in public servants and civic institutions, like our local police and fire departments, is part of what has always made America great. However, that trust is a two-way street - both parties have to keep up their end of the bargain to keep this trust from eroding. Face coverings and masks on police, outside of SWAT situations, represent a dire blow to that bargain and both my ability and desire to trust both any individual officer and the institution as a whole.

Passage of this law would considerably assuage my fears that the excesses seen elsewhere in our country will come here to Maryland.

Please let Maryland be a safer place for all of us than elsewhere in our country. Prohibiting masked law enforcement is one small step towards ensuring the people wearing those badges are discharging their duties faithfully. I urge you to support SB 0001 and help ensure that Maryland's law enforcement keep up their end of the bargain and can continue to justly serve our great state.

## **SB 1 - Favorable.pdf**

Uploaded by: Shamoya Gardiner

Position: FAV

**ZEKE COHEN**  
*Council President*



100 Holiday Street, Suite 400  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202  
410-396-4804 • Fax 410-539-0647  
[council.president@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:council.president@baltimorecity.gov)

## BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21202

January 22, 2026

Honorable Chair Smith and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings committee,

I write to you in support of **Senate Bill 1 Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings**. This legislation is timely and responsive to the concerns held by many residents of Baltimore City.

Recent waves of federal immigration law enforcement are characterized by a pervasive lack of accountability: unmarked cars roll into neighborhoods, carrying masked, armed, and anonymous agents. Increasingly, these federal agents are given carte blanche to violate established law-enforcement norms and flout due process. The past several months alone, there have been notable increases in mass racial profiling; refusal of agents to identify themselves to the public; disappearing of the documented and undocumented alike; and--tragically—the normalized use of lethal force.

Here in Baltimore City, we are determined to afford a good quality of life to our residents. Thanks to the collaboration of many local and state leaders (including but not limited to Mayor Scott, Commissioner Worley, State's Attorney Bates, and Director Mavronis), Baltimore ended 2025 with fewer than half the homicides we experienced just two years prior. However, public safety is more than a declining murder rate—it requires trust in those enforcing the law to be accountable.

There is good, winning work happening in our city, but it will pale against a backdrop in which federal agents continue to be permitted to snatch residents from our streets without so much as needing to identify themselves.

**I urge the committee to vote favorably on this bill.** Please contact my office with any further questions.

CC: Shamoya Gardiner, Deputy Chief of Staff and Legislative Director

# **CASA\_FAV\_SB1.pdf**

Uploaded by: Shana Khader

Position: FAV



## Testimony in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 1

SB 1 – Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

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

CASA is pleased to offer **favorable testimony in support of SB 1 - Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings.**

CASA is a national organization building power and improving the quality of life in working-class Black, Latino/a/e, Afro-descendent, Indigenous, and Immigrant communities.

With a membership of over 189,000 members, CASA creates change with its power-building model blending human services, community organizing, and advocacy to serve the full spectrum of the needs, dreams, and aspirations of members. For nearly forty years, CASA has employed grassroots community organizing to bring our communities closer together and fight for justice, while simultaneously providing vital services to communities across the state and beyond.

### **A. Masked law enforcement terrorizes communities and breaks public trust.**

As one federal district court recently explained, “ICE goes masked for a single reason—to terrorize Americans into quiescence.”<sup>1</sup> The recent experiences of community members across Maryland illustrate the terror this practice has wreaked on our communities, and will continue to wreak if unchecked.

CASA operates a hotline through which community members can report ICE enforcement actions they have witnessed or experienced. In the last six months of 2025 alone, CASA received over 2,000 calls to the hotline, with many calls notably referencing enforcement actions carried out by masked men.

For example, just this month, CASA received a call on our raid tip hotline from a young person near the Eastern Shore whose father had been attacked and detained. He reported that a group of six masked men tackled his father to the ground before his eyes. His father was taken away, and the caller did not know where his father was being taken.

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<sup>1</sup> Findings of Fact and Rulings of Law, Pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 52(A), Am. Assoc. of Univ. Professors v. Rubio, No. 25-CV-19685, Dkt. No. 261, at 98 (D. Mass. Sep. 30, 2025), <https://www.courtlistener.com/docket/69784731/261/american-association-of-university-professors-v-rubio/>.

Last week in Silver Spring, four men in masks and hooded sweatshirts emerged from unmarked vehicles and tackled a man on the sidewalk, using a taser on him so that he collapsed to the ground.

In October, CASA received a call from a distressed mother in Hyattsville explaining that she, her husband, and her children made a stop while driving. While they were stopped, three unmarked vehicles approached their vehicle, and a group of masked men emerged. Her husband was taken by these masked men in front of her children.

The public reasonably expects law enforcement to be identifiable. When a community member is taken by masked individuals in unmarked vehicles at gunpoint, they and their families have no way of knowing who is taking them, where they are going, or why. In addition to instilling fear, the practice erodes the trust of community members in law enforcement and in our legal system.

**B. Masked law enforcement puts vulnerable communities at heightened risk of serious crime.**

Masked law enforcement puts already vulnerable communities at heightened risk of serious crime. Right now, plainclothes, masked individuals are attacking individuals on our public streets and throwing them into unmarked vehicles.

Predictably, there have now been multiple documented instances of criminals impersonating ICE and kidnapping or assaulting unsuspecting victims.<sup>2</sup> These instances are likely to continue so long as the practice goes unchecked.

**C. Masking is not necessary to legitimate routine law enforcement.**

Masking is not necessary to carry out enforcement operations. In fact, ICE has been carrying out their duties *unmasked* for decades.

In the narrow circumstances where some sort of face covering may be legitimately necessary to a law enforcement officer's carrying out of their duties (if, for example, hazardous chemicals are present), the bill provides exceptions.

CASA members and the community with whom we work closely would greatly benefit from this bill. While requiring law enforcement to operate unmasked is just one step necessary to protect our communities, it is a crucial step toward mitigating fear and restoring community trust. **For these reasons, CASA urges the committee to provide a favorable report on SB 1.**

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<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Lisa Desjardins & Andrew Corkery, *Rise of ICE Agents Wearing Masks Creates Opportunity for Imposters to Conduct Crimes*, PBS News (July 27, 2025, at 17:35 ET), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/rise-of-ice-agents-wearing-masks-creates-opportunity-for-imposters-to-conduct-crimes>; Artemis Moshtaghian, Gloria Pazmino & Nick Valencia, *Multiple ICE Impersonation Arrests Made During Nationwide Immigration Crackdown*, CNN (Feb. 5, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/02/04/us/ice-impersonators-on-the-rise-arrests-made-as-authorities-issue-national-warning>.

# **SB001 Support Letter.pdf**

Uploaded by: Shannon Nicholson

Position: FAV

Good Day:

I strongly support, and urge the Committee to move forward on SB001, banning the use of face coverings for law enforcement officials during their official work. In my field, the people that I serve have a codified right to know my name, title, contact info – and my supervisors. My industry also requires Grievance and Appeals protocols and processes. Many Americans have rules in place that dictate performance, measures and accountability in their workplaces and sectors.

I expect the Commission that is created by this legislation would clearly define, “limited and exceptional circumstances” otherwise masked enforcement will face the penalties outline. If a face mask is required – the Law Enforcement Officer should have their name, badge number or other identification directly, and their agency name or logo.

I want to live in a state and community where I know and trust the authorities overseeing my safety. This can only happen if the law enforcement agency’s demonstrate commitment to transparency, accountability, and public trust. This legislation will help to create healthy and participatory communities.

I strongly urge approval of SB001.

Thank you for your service to our state and consideration on this matter.

Shannon Nicholson

# **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 0001.pdf**

Uploaded by: Shannon Taylor

Position: FAV

Shannon Taylor  
912 Kent Ave  
Catonsville, Maryland 21228

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 0001, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers -  
Prohibition on Face Coverings**

2026-01-22

TO: Chair William C. Smith, Jr. & the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
FROM: Shannon Taylor

Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee, my name is Shannon Taylor, and I'm a community member from Catonsville, MD. I am writing to support SB 0001, Prohibition on Face Coverings.

Allowing officers to cover their face sows fear and distrust in the community. When masked strangers come to tear you from your community, they are not held accountable due to this allowed anonymity. We all have a right to seek accountability for law enforcement that breaks laws and abuses power in our presence. Passing this bill will be a great first step in bringing back the trust, and safety to our communities in Maryland.

I urge you to support SB 0001 and help ensure that Maryland's law enforcement is being held to the highest standards of conduct.

# **SB 1 FAV - WDC Testimony - 19 Jan 2026.pdf**

Uploaded by: Shelby Harper

Position: FAV



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

# WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

P.O. Box 34047, Bethesda, MD 20827

[www.womensdemocraticclub.org](http://www.womensdemocraticclub.org)

**Bill SB 1 Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**  
Judicial Proceedings Committee, January 22, 2026  
**SUPPORT**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club** (WDC) for the 2026 legislative session. Founded in 1956, WDC is one of Maryland's largest and most active Democratic clubs with hundreds of politically active members, including many elected officials. WDC is known for its advocacy for law and policy to improve the lives of women and their families.

WDC urges swift passage of **SB 1 Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**. WDC believes it is critical that Maryland advance legislation that prohibits federal immigration officers and agents from wearing masks that conceal their identity and that requires them to show their identification and agency-identifying insignia. This legislation is necessary to protect the public, ensure accountability, and preserve the reputation and effectiveness of law enforcement at every level of government. It makes Maryland families safer.

For the past year, we have been bombarded with images and videos of masked, armed federal law enforcement officers, terrorizing our nation's communities. They are often dressed in plain clothes and travel in unmarked vehicles. They snatch people from streets, apartments, stores, and restaurants. They arrest and detain people – U.S. citizens and non-citizens alike -- based on nothing but skin color, as demonstrated by ICE and Border Patrol stopping and detaining citizens of Native American tribes in Minneapolis and along the southern border. ICE and Border Patrol aren't going after criminals; they are brutalizing anyone who they perceive to be in their way, including journalists and peaceful protesters. Border Patrol even tear gassed students on a high school campus. A masked ICE officer shot and killed an unarmed woman – a poet, wife, and mother -- in broad daylight, on a street near her child's school.

We have watched with alarm as ICE and Border Patrol have brutalized and terrorized the people of Los Angeles, Chicago, Memphis, and Minneapolis. Heavily armed, masked men without clear identification have inflicted violence and fear on Maryland residents, including an incident near a Silver Spring middle school, a confrontation against a Montgomery County Council member in Adelphi, and targeted attacks in Silver Spring and Takoma Park.

A prohibition on federal immigration officers and agents from wearing face coverings that conceal their identity and a requirement that they show their identification and agency-identifying insignia protects the public safety by affording transparency and accountability. It encourages public trust and deters federal law enforcement from engaging in the violation of rights, including First Amendment, Fourth Amendment, and due process.

WDC applauds Senator Augustine and all co-sponsors for introducing legislation to protect Maryland residents from the reign of terror inflicted by ICE and Border Patrol.

**We ask for your support for SB 1 and strongly urge swift passage.**

Cynthia Rubenstein  
WDC President

Shelby Settles Harper  
WDC Immigration Subcommittee

Kate Stein  
WDC Advocacy Chair

# **For SB 0001.pdf**

Uploaded by: Silvia Golombek

Position: FAV

Dear Senator Augustine and Members of the Committee,

I am Silvia Blitzer Golombek and live in Lutherville, in Baltimore County. Please, I urge you to vote FOR SB 0001 – Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement – Prohibition.

I support SB 0001 because having grown up under the Argentinian fascist dictatorship, I experienced the fear of being searched, separated, or suspected in case I thought differently. Because I had to change aspects of my daily life for fear they put me at risk. Because I stopped exercising my constitutional rights because they were no longer protected.

And now as a naturalized US citizen, I am reliving what I thought I had left behind: I worry about speaking Spanish in public; I carefully assess what civic activities I can safely participate in; above all, the presence of masked ICE agents “disappearing” individuals off the streets - people who like me, contribute daily to the welfare of their communities and families – stirs terrible memories and visceral emotions.

Please, I respectfully urge you to do the right thing and act “the American way”, and vote enacting policies that protect your neighbors from abuse and fear so that we can all continue to build thriving communities. Please vote FOR SB 0001.

Thank you.

# **SB 0001 testimony .pdf**

Uploaded by: Sonja Fisher

Position: FAV

# Sonja Lane Fisher

January 20, 2026

## **Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable SB 0001 – Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee meeting, January 22, 2026

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

My name is Sonja Fisher, and I am a resident of Frederick City, in Frederick County, Maryland. I am writing in support of SB 0001 – Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings

Policing in Maryland should be conducted in a transparent and ethical manner at all times. Policing is built on trust, and officers are bound to protect and serve. These ends are impossible to achieve when officers are masked, which is meant specifically to shield individual officers from accountability. Masked forces are by nature prone to violence and lawlessness. Therefore, police, in their normal course of duties, should be in recognizable uniforms with clear badging, and masks should be prohibited.

Crowd control, traffic stops, and patrolling, are normal duties and should be covered by the policy. However, in light of current events, a key aspect of this policy should be to prohibit masking in any circumstances in which state or local police are partnering with any federal entities.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report on SB 0001, and if there is a way to speed up the approval and implementation process, I urge the committee to do so.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

*Sonja Fisher*

# **1.20.2026 SB0001 OPD Favorable.pdf**

Uploaded by: Stephanie Wolf

Position: FAV



**NATASHA DARTIGUE**

PUBLIC DEFENDER

**KEITH LOTRIDGE**

DEPUTY PUBLIC DEFENDER

**HANNIBAL KEMERER**

CHIEF OF STAFF

**ELIZABETH HILLIARD**

DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

## **POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION**

**BILL: SB0001 Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**

**FROM: Maryland Office of the Public Defender**

**POSITION: Favorable**

**DATE: January 22, 2026**

---

The Maryland Office of the Public Defender respectfully requests that the Committee issue a favorable report on SB1, limiting the use of masks by law enforcement agents operating in Maryland.

Over the last year, the use of full face masks by federal law enforcement officers engaged in immigration enforcement has become widespread, often paired with a highly militarized style of dress and equipment, and an unprecedented disregard for the 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment. The terror and desperation that this style of aggressive, militarized enforcement has caused is not conducive to safe and peaceful communities. Masked anonymity for law enforcement agents encourages a sense of impunity and separation, rather than encouraging connection and deescalation; masks thereby increase the risks to everyone involved. Prohibiting the use of masks by law enforcement in most circumstances is one common-sense step towards promoting accountability and ultimately fostering safer and more humane interactions between law enforcement agents and Maryland residents.

This bill is useful not only in its applicability to the federal agents, but also in its broad applicability to Maryland law enforcement. If Maryland law enforcement agencies wish to continue to build trust across the state in order to do their work effectively, they must distance themselves clearly and decisively from their counterparts engaged in federal immigration enforcement. Prohibiting the use of masks, which have become associated with some of the worst abuses by immigration authorities, is one powerful way to assert that Maryland's law enforcement officers are not faceless outsiders who answer to no one, but rather identifiable human beings, members of the

communities that they police, who carry out their duties while remaining accountable to the system and the people that they serve.

**For these reasons, the Maryland Office of the Public Defender urges this Committee to issue a favorable report on SB0001.**

Submitted by: Maryland Office of the Public Defender, Government Relations Division.

Authored by: Stephanie Wolf, Director of Immigration Services, [stephanie.wolf@maryland.gov](mailto:stephanie.wolf@maryland.gov).

**SB1 SSJC fav.pdf**

Uploaded by: Susaanti Follingstad

Position: FAV



## 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**.

Susaanti Follingstad  
Silver Spring Justice Coalition Steering Committee  
Rockville MD 20851

# **SB001 Masking\_Testimony by Peace Action Montgomery**

Uploaded by: Susan Kerin

Position: FAV



**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.

Susan Kerin Chair  
Peace Action Montgomery  
[susan@peaceactionmontgomery.org](mailto:susan@peaceactionmontgomery.org)

# **Takoma Park 2026 - SB 1 FAV - Prohibition on Face**

Uploaded by: Talisha Searcy

Position: FAV



# CITY TAKOMA OF PARK MARYLAND

## Support Senate Bill 1 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face

Coverings

Senate Judicial Proceedings, January 22, 2026

The City of Takoma Park supports and urges favorable consideration of this bill. Senate Bill 1 calls for the development and implementation of a state policy that prohibits law enforcement officers from local, state, or federal government agencies from wearing face coverings that conceal or obscure their identity. However, the bill also allows for carefully delineated exceptions necessary to enable law enforcement agents to do their jobs in specific circumstances.

The City of Takoma Park is a municipality of almost 18,000 people living within 2.4 square miles in Montgomery County, along the Washington, D.C. border. We are a highly diverse community and approximately a third of our residents were born outside of the U.S. Our city has worked diligently to build trust between our local police department and our immigrant community so that residents feel comfortable reporting crime and calling on our local police for help.

In the past year, the City of Takoma Park has experienced increased federal immigration enforcement activity. Federal immigration agents are often masked, not wearing any agency insignia or identification, and in unmarked cars. As a result, residents are unable to decipher between authorized federal immigration enforcement officers and a group of armed persons kidnapping community members. This lack of transparency threatens public safety and the well-being of all our residents. More importantly, it destroys residents' trust in local law enforcement.

SB 1 is a key step forward to ensure consistency in law enforcement activities across all levels of government. Marylanders should be able to expect that all law enforcement officers—federal, state, and local—are clearly identifiable and accountable when performing their duties.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." The use of tactics that unnecessarily conceal the identities of federal immigration officers during their duties constitutes an injustice. We support the prompt enactment of this bill into law, and swift action by the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission to develop the necessary implementing policy. Legitimate law enforcement should be able to operate in the open and have nothing to hide.

City Contact: Talisha Searcy, Mayor  
[talishas@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:talishas@takomaparkmd.gov)

# **SB1\_HB155 - ban LE face covering .docx.pdf**

Uploaded by: Tamara Todd

Position: FAV

Dear Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of individuals working to move white folks as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. We are also working in collaboration with CASA. I am a resident of **District 10**. I am **testifying in support of SB1 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**.

In the State of Maryland, we expect the law enforcement officers who serve our communities to openly identify themselves as such when doing their jobs. Law enforcement agencies have policies requiring officers to wear uniforms or other identifying markers in most circumstances, and we even have a law - Criminal Procedure Article 2-109 - which requires a police officer to identify him or herself by name, agency, and badge number when approaching a citizen for a traffic stop or other investigation.

Throughout 2025, we saw copious news coverage of federal law enforcement actions conducted by officers wearing street clothes and balaclavas. The fact that incidents of police impersonation have been on the rise in Maryland and nationally is not a coincidence: when it becomes impossible to determine who is a legitimate law enforcement officer, criminals can more plausibly claim to be police by simply putting on a mask, no fake uniform or badge required. Even the FBI has recognized the danger, circulating a bulletin to law enforcement agencies in October 2025 that warned criminals were taking advantage of routine mask-wearing by law enforcement to disguise themselves as ICE agents.<sup>1</sup> This confusion also makes routine law enforcement operations more dangerous. Initial contact between officer and civilian is often the most uncertain and dangerous moment in a law enforcement encounter, and ensuring that everyone is on the same page about what is happening can help prevent rash and dangerous decisions.

SB1 would require the creation of a model masking policy banning the routine use of full face masks to conceal the identity of law enforcement officers, and require law enforcement agencies operating in Maryland to adopt that policy or its equivalent. Officers would still be permitted to wear necessary tactical and safety equipment, and full face masks could be authorized under specific, defined circumstances. But use of this policy would reinforce a clear distinction between officers conducting enforcement actions, and criminals hiding their faces to masquerade as law enforcement, making everyone safer. It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of SB1, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,  
**Tamara Todd**  
**221 Northway Rd, Reisterstown MD 21136**  
Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore



**Showing Up for Racial Justice**

<sup>1</sup> Cameron, Dell & Haskins, Caroline, "FBI warns of criminals posing as ICE, urges agents to ID themselves." WIRED Magazine, Nov. 4, 2025.

<https://www.wired.com/story/fbi-warns-of-criminals-posing-as-ice-urges-agents-to-id-themselves/>

## **Testimony on SB0001.pdf**

Uploaded by: Tatiana Santos

Position: FAV

**Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable**

**SB0001 - 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,

My name is Tatiana Santos, and I am a resident of Frederick, Maryland. I am writing in support of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings.

When I report into work, I do not wear a mask to hide my identity. If a colleague or customer I interact with has any issues with my actions, they will be able to clearly identify who I am. Heck, I'll even give them my name. When you are confident that your actions are not harmful and your behavior towards fellow human beings is not deplorable, you know that there is no reason to hide behind a mask.

You know who does hide behind masks? Bank robbers, rapists, and other criminals who have the intent of escaping punishment for their actions. ICE isn't made safer by wearing masks. They are actually creating less safe conditions because the public isn't able to differentiate federal law enforcement from any other criminal who might don a mask.

That's why it is important for public safety that ICE officers can be identified. Without visible identification and uniform standards, fear and public distrust in law enforcement increases. Furthermore, community members are more likely to intervene if they watch someone being attacked or kidnapped by a masked, unmarked group. There's no way to know if someone is an ICE officer or if they are impersonating an ICE officer.

Our local law enforcement officers are easily identifiable. We should not be allowing armed individuals with masks to intimidate and frighten communities with impunity.

I urge you to vote in favor of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings for transparency and safety.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

**SB1\_HB155 - ban LE face covering\_TH.pdf**

Uploaded by: Theresa M. Hoffman

Position: FAV

Dear **Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,**

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of individuals working to move white folks as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. We are also working in collaboration with CASA. I am a resident of District 43b. **I am testifying in support of SB1 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings.**

In the State of Maryland, we expect the law enforcement officers who serve our communities to openly identify themselves as such when doing their jobs. Law enforcement agencies have policies requiring officers to wear uniforms or other identifying markers in most circumstances, and we even have a law - Criminal Procedure Article 2-109 - which requires a police officer to identify him or herself by name, agency, and badge number when approaching a citizen for a traffic stop or other investigation.

Throughout 2025, we saw copious news coverage of federal law enforcement actions conducted by officers wearing street clothes and balaclavas. The fact that incidents of police impersonation have been on the rise in Maryland and nationally is not a coincidence: when it becomes impossible to determine who is a legitimate law enforcement officer, criminals can more plausibly claim to be police by simply putting on a mask, no fake uniform or badge required. Even the FBI has recognized the danger, circulating a bulletin to law enforcement agencies in October 2025 that warned criminals were taking advantage of routine mask-wearing by law enforcement to disguise themselves as ICE agents.<sup>1</sup> This confusion also makes routine law enforcement operations more dangerous. Initial contact between officer and civilian is often the most uncertain and dangerous moment in a law enforcement encounter, and ensuring that everyone is on the same page about what is happening can help prevent rash and dangerous decisions. As the sibling of a retired officer, I am deeply concerned about making sure such encounters are orderly and safe for both officers and civilians.

SB1 would require the creation of a model masking policy banning the routine use of full face masks to conceal the identity of law enforcement officers, and require law enforcement agencies operating in Maryland to adopt that policy or its equivalent. Officers would still be permitted to wear necessary tactical and safety equipment, and full face masks could be authorized under specific, defined circumstances. But use of this policy would reinforce a clear distinction between officers conducting enforcement actions, and criminals hiding their faces to masquerade as law enforcement, making everyone safer. It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of SB1, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Theresa M. Hoffman  
803 Seaword Rd., Towson, MD 21286  
Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore



**Showing Up for Racial Justice**

<sup>1</sup> Cameron, Dell & Haskins, Caroline, "FBI warns of criminals posing as ICE, urges agents to ID themselves." WIRED Magazine, Nov. 4, 2025. <https://www.wired.com/story/fbi-warns-of-criminals-posing-as-ice-urges-agents-to-id-themselves/>

# **FAVORABLE SB0001\_Tiffany Wandy.pdf**

Uploaded by: Tiffany Wandy

Position: FAV

**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 Tiffany Wandy, and I am a resident of Churchville, Maryland. I am writing in support of SB0001/HB0155, Public Safety – Law Enforcement – Prohibition on Face Covering.

I care deeply about this issue because trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve is foundational to public safety. Federal agents operate in our neighborhoods, interact with our neighbors, coworkers, and family members, and wield extraordinary authority. With that authority comes a responsibility to be identifiable, accountable, and subject to the same standards of transparency expected of all public servants. When that trust erodes, it does not just harm individuals directly affected by enforcement actions — it weakens the sense of safety and stability for entire 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, 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.

In our communities, the presence of masked federal agents has made people more fearful of engaging with any authority — even in emergencies. Individuals are less likely to seek help, report crimes, or cooperate as witnesses when they cannot distinguish legitimate law enforcement from bad actors. This atmosphere of uncertainty does not make Maryland safer; it makes everyone more vulnerable. Accountability begins with identification, and visible identification is essential for lawful oversight and public confidence.

Seeing images of residents and workers being grabbed by masked, armed men and taken away to unknown locations evokes the appearance of secret police — something that feels profoundly out of place in Maryland and in the United States. Prohibiting the use of face coverings by ICE and CBP agents, except in narrowly defined circumstances, would meaningfully reduce fear, deter impersonation, and help restore trust that federal agents are acting within the bounds of the law and can be held accountable when they do not.

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

Thank you for your time, consideration, and service to the people of Maryland.

# **FAVORABLE SB0001\_TracieUlmes.pdf**

Uploaded by: Tracie Ulmes

Position: FAV

## **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 SB0001, 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 SB0001.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Tracie Ulmes

Joppa, MD

# **SWASC - SB1-26 - FAV Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: UM SWASC

Position: FAV



## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 1

### Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings

*Judicial Proceeding*

January 22, 2026

**Social Work Advocates for Social Change strongly supports SB 1**, which requires the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission to develop a model policy to prohibit the use of a face covering by law enforcement officers in the course of duty, and requires that law enforcement agencies operating in Maryland shall adopt a policy consistent with this model.

**Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers wearing face coverings have been operating in Maryland in rising numbers over the past 12 months.** As indicated by the Governor's Office for Immigrant Affairs data, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of ICE personnel and intensity of their actions in the community: the total number of ICE arrests statewide nearly tripled in 2025 – with the number of weekly arrests increasingly significantly in recent months. The monthly number of immigration-related arrests in 2025 compared to 2024 has increased more than threefold in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Montgomery County; in Prince George's Country, the average monthly arrests have multiplied by over 600% during this period.<sup>i</sup>

**Law enforcement officers concealing their identity breaks community trust and undermines community safety.** It is the duty of public servants to maintain transparency and accountability, and experts argue the increasingly widespread use of masks by law enforcement “symbolized the drift of law enforcement away from democratic controls.”<sup>ii</sup> ICE’s lack of clear identification as public servants when conducting operations inhibits accountability for harmful actions if excessive use of force were to occur. The use of masks by ICE agents undermines the legitimacy of law enforcement, which makes policing more difficult and dangerous, for both community members and other officers may mistake them. It also leaves community members vulnerable to civilians impersonating ICE agents with the intent to commit crimes.<sup>iii</sup>

**The Maryland General Assembly has recognized that effective law enforcement requires trust and accountability**, and, in 2021, passed the Maryland Police Accountability Act. Maryland must continue to build a relationship of trust and transparency between law enforcement and our community members. Maryland State Attorney General Anthony Brown’s October 2025 guidance to state agencies when working with federal agents clarifies key standards and protocols for Maryland officers, such as using body cameras and identifying themselves when making stops. SB 1’s mask ban for law enforcement officers is consistent with the other protocols stated in the guidance and does not differ in scope and relevance. **At a moment when federal leadership is emboldening ICE to act with impunity, it is imperative that Maryland leaders continue to set clear expectations for the conduct of law enforcement in our state.**



For more information, please contact

Jazz Bellard or VL Buzdygon

[umswasc@gmail.com](mailto:umswasc@gmail.com)

SB 1's exceptions for medical masks, safety gear for environmental protections, and face coverings specifically for undercover work ensure that both the safety of law enforcement officers and the communities they serve are upheld. As rising social workers, we are committed to protecting the dignity and safety of our community members.

**Social Work Advocates for Social Change urges a favorable report on SB 1. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.**

*Social Work Advocates for Social Change is a coalition of MSW students at the University of Maryland School of Social Work that seeks to promote equity and justice through public policy, and to engage the communities impacted by public policy in the policymaking process.*

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<sup>i</sup> Essaheb, K. (Jan 12, 2025). Immigration: Enforcement trends [Presentation]. Maryland Association of Nonprofits Legislative Preview.

<sup>ii</sup> Levin, S. (June 25, 2025). The alarming rise of US officers hiding behind masks: "a police state". *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/jun/25/immigration-officers-wearing-masks>

<sup>iii</sup> Preston, A. (August 28, 2025). Masked and unidentifiable: the risks of federal law enforcement operating without identification. Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/masked-and-unidentifiable-the-risks-of-federal-law-enforcement-operating-without-identification/>

# **FAVORABLE SB0001-Valerie Hodge-Williams.pdf**

Uploaded by: Val Hodge-Williams

Position: FAV

**Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable**  
**SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face**  
**Coverings**

**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

**January 22, 2026**

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

My name is Valerie Hodge-Williams, and I am a resident of Garrett County, Maryland. I am writing in support of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings

Every day, our local Sheriff's officers wear identifying uniforms and bodycams to serve and protect our community. They know that transparency, accountability, and community trust are essential in their work. If ICE officers are masked and indistinguishable from vigilantes, we are all less safe. Individuals are more likely to refuse to comply, escalating situations unnecessarily. Onlookers are more likely intervene if they watch someone being attacked or kidnapped by a masked, unmarked group. There's no way to know if someone is simply impersonating an ICE officer. Furthermore, there's increased risk of "blue-on-blue" incidents, when a officer accidentally shooting another officer, with unidentifiable agents.

In other communities, there's been more vigilantes and dangerous impersonations since masked ICE raids escalated (as reported by the Nonpartisan Center for American Progress <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/masked-and-unidentifiable-the-risks-of-federal-law-enforcement-operating-without-identification/>).

Unmasking improves public safety for residents as well as local officers.

I urge you to vote in favor of SB0001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings for transparency and safety.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

# **CM Will Jawando Testimony in Support of SB 1 Jan.**

Uploaded by: Will Jawando

Position: FAV



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL**  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

WILL JAWANDO  
COUNCILMEMBER AT-LARGE  
CHAIR, EDUCATION & CULTURE COMMITTEE  
PLANNING, HOUSING, AND PARKS COMMITTEE

January 20, 2026

Montgomery County Councilmember Will Jawando  
Testimony Supporting SB 1 (Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings)  
January 20, 2026

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

I am writing to share my strong support for SB 1 (Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings), which was cross-filed with HB 155, and to share with you information regarding a related bill I introduced today with strong support in the Montgomery County Council. It is my hope and expectation that both the state and county bills will pass and help to protect our residents in a time of increasing lawlessness from masked federal immigration enforcement agents.

As you know, throughout history, masks have been used in American law enforcement to shield the wearer from accountability, and used for terror, impunity, and anonymity for violence. Unfortunately, we are now watching history repeating itself before our eyes, as federal immigration enforcement terrorizes communities throughout the United States, including in Montgomery County and other parts of Maryland. The actions of ICE we are witnessing are not about enforcing laws or making our communities safer, but about causing fear through violence and intimidation. We must reject these practices, stand up for our residents and the rule of law, and safeguard our communities as much as possible.

In collaboration with colleagues and with significant community support, I was proud to introduce Bill 5-26, the Unmask ICE Act, in Montgomery County.<sup>1</sup> This bill prohibits any law enforcement officer, federal, state, or local, from wearing a mask while interacting with the public in Montgomery County. The

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<sup>1</sup> For more information about the Unmask ICE Act, please see: [https://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view\\_id=169&event\\_id=16687&meta\\_id=209248](https://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=169&event_id=16687&meta_id=209248). For your information, the County Values Act, an important piece of complementary legislation, was also introduced today by my colleague Councilmember Kristin Mink: [https://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view\\_id=169&event\\_id=16687&meta\\_id=209244](https://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=169&event_id=16687&meta_id=209244)

legislation includes commonsense exceptions for medical masks, SWAT operations, and emergency situations.

The introduction of this county legislation demonstrates the urgent local need for the protections outlined in SB 1. We cannot wait for federal action or hope that voluntary compliance will protect our residents. By passing SB 1, Maryland would establish a clear statewide standard that reinforces local efforts like ours and ensures consistent protection across all jurisdictions. Our county's strong support for this reform shows there is political will for this change, and I urge you to give SB 1 a favorable report so that Maryland can lead the nation on this critical public safety and accountability issue.

As our local law enforcement recognizes, safety requires trust and trust requires transparency. Our community is calling on us to do more to protect them in these uncertain and worrisome times, and we must listen, work together, and move forward with courage to protect our communities.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony, and I would be happy to discuss the state or county legislative proposals with you if that would be helpful. You may contact me at [councilmember.jawando@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:councilmember.jawando@montgomerycountymd.gov).

Sincerely,



Will Jawando

**SB0001\_TogetherWeWillHarfordCountyIndivisible\_FAV.**

Uploaded by: Ydelka Schrock

Position: FAV

January 22, 2026

Ydelka A. Schrock  
Aberdeen Proving Ground, 21005

**TESTIMONY ON SB0001 – IN SUPPORT**

**Public Safety – Law Enforcement – Prohibition on Face Covering**

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

**FROM:** Ydelka A. Schrock

My name is Ydelka A. Schrock. I am a resident of Harford County District 34A. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB0001, Public Safety – Law Enforcement – Prohibition on Face Covering, on behalf of Together We Will Harford County Indivisible (TWW). TWW is an inclusive and diverse group of 500 regular members, with over 1,000 followers on social media, working together to create a just community that empowers individuals to participate in our democracy and stand up for social, racial, and economic justice to create a place where all can thrive.

The success of the United States comes, from our longstanding tradition of encouraging people seeking a better life to leave everything they know and contribute to our Country. Immigrants both documented and undocumented have played a crucial role in enriching our economy, fostering innovation, and enhancing the cultural diversity which plays a vital role in the societal development of the United States. Now they are being scapegoated and demonized.

In America we continue to see images of our neighbors being grabbed off the streets by masked, armed men, and taken away to unknown locations bearing a fearsome resemblance to the oppressive tactics of authoritarian regimes, not a democratic one. ICE and CBP agents who wear masks and fail to wear identification, instill fear and distrust in the community and exhibit a lack of accountability when their actions become aggressively violent. Transparency and accountability are essential, and law enforcement should serve openly and honestly, not in secrecy or deception.

Our greatness comes from the coalescence of the multigenerational immigrants from all over the world that reside in this country. Just as police show their faces during an arrest, ICE and CBP agents should be required to clearly identify themselves and have their faces visible.

On behalf of TWW, I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB0001.

**SB0001\_YdelkaSchrock\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Ydelka Schrock

Position: FAV

January 22, 2026

Ydelka A. Schrock  
Aberdeen Proving Ground, 21005

**TESTIMONY ON SB0001 – IN SUPPORT**

**Public Safety – Law Enforcement – Prohibition on Face Covering**

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

**FROM:** Ydelka A. Schrock

My name is Ydelka A. Schrock. I am a resident of Harford County District 34A. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB0001, Public Safety – Law Enforcement – Prohibition on Face Covering. I am a parent, neighbor, immigrant, and Military Veteran. I believe in standing up for democracy, social, racial, and economic justice.

I was inspired to serve this country because I believed in the fundamental rights that the government was created to protect not harm its citizenry. Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, I thought were foundational to the Identity of America and its democracy. I believed and still believe that the United States can be a place where all can thrive.

The rights that I vowed to protect are now being violated by agencies who swore to do the same. In America today, we are accosted by images of our neighbors being grabbed off the streets by masked armed men, taken to locations unknown and at times disappeared. This fearsome tactic seems more reminiscent of oppressive authoritarian regimes, than the America I love. ICE and CBP agents who wear masks and fail to identify themselves only instill fear and distrust in our communities.

Transparency and accountability are essential, and law enforcement should serve openly and honestly, not in secrecy or deception. Just as police show their faces during an arrest, ICE and CBP agents should be required to clearly identify themselves and have their faces visible when conducting their duties.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB0001.

# **Candle Testimony SB1 Mask Ban Bill.pdf**

Uploaded by: Birgit Sharp

Position: FWA



## Testimony of CANDLE - Favorable with amendments

Regarding SB 1, Public Safety - Prohibition on Face Coverings

Submitted by Birgit Sharp on 1/20/2026

This testimony is being submitted on behalf of CANDLE\*. We support enacting SB1, which would prohibit the use of face coverings by law enforcement officers under certain conditions. To strengthen the effectiveness of the legislation we respectfully recommend amending the bill to clarify the criteria used to enforce those restrictions.

In our view, Maryland urgently needs to restrict the use of face coverings by all law enforcement officers for several reasons. Masking by officers harms the community by:

- **impeding accountability and transparency:** When agents are unidentifiable, it is difficult to hold them accountable for misconduct or civil rights violations, which is a core tenet of law enforcement in a democracy;
- **undermining public trust:** Masked, unidentifiable agents operating in public spaces can appear as "secret police" or a "paramilitary force," which erodes community trust and hinders cooperation between law enforcement and residents;
- **increasing public safety risks and impersonation:** The presence of unidentifiable officers makes it difficult for community members or other law enforcement to determine their legitimacy, leading to potentially dangerous escalations. There have been reports of criminals impersonating masked federal agents to commit crimes such as kidnapping, robbery, and sexual assault;
- **hindering local law enforcement operations:** Because the general public cannot always distinguish between federal agents and local police, the actions of unidentifiable ICE agents, for example, can negatively affect the community's trust in local law enforcement, making their jobs more difficult; and
- **increasing psychological intimidation:** Masking is often viewed as a tactic to instill fear and confusion both in those being interrogated and in community members.

While we support the bill, we are concerned about ambiguities in the guidelines for developing model policies on the use of face coverings. Specifically:

- under proposed subsection (P)(2)(II)(3), face coverings should not be permitted on the basis of "generalized and undifferentiated fears and apprehensions" about the safety of law enforcement officers (see page 2, lines 23-25)
- the words "generalized" and "undifferentiated" could be interpreted in ways contrary to the public interest. For instance, ICE officials could simply say that immigrants, bystanders, or protesters—as a class—create a "differentiated" fear and thus assert that the restrictions are inapplicable to their work.

To address our concerns, we recommend striking (P)(2)(II)(3) and inserting text stating that face coverings cannot be justified for purposes other than those itemized in the bill unless the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission reviews and approves a request for an exemption to address unanticipated exigent circumstances that necessitate the use of face coverings for a limited period of time. The Commission should report to the General Assembly on any exceptions granted under this provision.

candle.shines25@gmail.com

\* Candle is the Community Action Network for Democracy, Liberties and Equality, based in Anne Arundel and Calvert counties. Our membership is close to 150 people.

# **SB001TestimonyJan202026.pdf**

Uploaded by: Henry Barru

Position: FWA

**SB0001**

**Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**

Testimony before Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, January 20, 2026

**Position: Favorable with amendment**

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Committee, my name is Henry Barru and I live in SD 12 in Glen Burnie. I write today to provide testimony in support of SB0001, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings. I thank Senator Augustine for his leadership in sponsoring this important bill.

My interest in this legislation is simple: I do not want the fear, chaos and death that have attended ICE/CBP operations in Minneapolis and elsewhere to be repeated here in Maryland.

The risk of this happening is real and imminent. We have already had an ICE-involved shooting in Glen Burnie on December 24, 2025, and the agency has offered accounts of the incident that do not square with the facts. ICE and CBP nationwide are operating without transparency or accountability, and the administration's leadership is not reining them in. To the contrary, leadership seems to be encouraging a culture of secrecy and impunity. This (predictably) is leading to tragic and deadly results. It's up to us to provide restraint.

Law enforcement officers do not wear masks. Masks are worn by criminals, or secret police and paramilitary organizations that are involved in grossly criminal behavior. Masks promote secrecy and undermine accountability. They also make it easier for bad actors to impersonate law enforcement, which increases risk for law officers and the public alike.

My suggested amendment relates to Section 4B (page 4 line 10) which exempts LE officers "actively engaged in an undercover operation". This section should be removed entirely. It will create a gigantic loophole whereby ICE and CBP will simply call any or all of their operations "undercover" to give themselves permission to wear masks. Further, it's difficult to envision an undercover operation where masks are actually needed.

To put it bluntly, we have seen these agencies willing to say whatever advances their agenda, truth be damned. They have lost their presumption of good faith. Our legislation should reflect that unpleasant fact.

This legislation alone will not restore transparency and accountability to ICE and CBP. But it is an important step in the right direction. **I respectfully urge a favorable committee report, with the above amendment.**

Henry Barru

Glen Burnie, MD

# **J Horvath SB1 testimony MD Sen JPR Comm 1.22.26.pd**

Uploaded by: jane horvath

Position: FWA

Testimony of Jane Horvath  
Prince George's County Resident  
State and Local Work Group Lead  
Indivisible Route 1 Corridor Chapter

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## General Comments

I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in favor of SB 1 which would ban the use of face coverings by any law enforcement officers and agents operating in Maryland, even if they do not operate under the aegis of Maryland state, county, or local law enforcement. Law enforcement officers, when operating in Maryland, are subject to our State laws on a whole variety of issues that do not run counter to the U.S. Constitution, nor federal agency laws and regulations. While I focus on SB1 in this testimony, I support the other immigration legislation before the Committee today.

Banning law enforcement face masks in all but certain situations – as specified in the bill – is important. There has been extensive national coverage since late spring of 2025 of de-identified, masked federal agents operating without accountability. Criminals would have to work hard to avoid seeing the coverage.

Masks create fear and uncertainty – as intended. Masks hide identity – as intended. When law enforcement at any level masks up, it creates fear and uncertainty in whole communities. Criminality thrives on fear and uncertainty of victims. Criminality thrives when law enforcement can be impersonated and also be completely de-identified with a face covering and fake credentials, or no credentials at all.

There is increasing concern among law enforcement agencies around the country about the growing threat of officer or agency impersonation.<sup>i</sup> Even the FBI is concerned; the media has widely reported on a leaked memo from the FBI to the federal Department of Homeland Security (DHS), asking DHS to change or limit immigration agent use of masks and to require agents to present valid agent identification<sup>ii</sup> *because agent impersonators are committing crimes.*<sup>iii</sup> But the masking and impersonation is not limited to Immigration and Customs Enforcement or Border Control. State or local police are being impersonated as well, many now with the use of masks. A simple web search produced three media reports of crimes in Maryland perpetrated by law enforcement impersonators in the last two years. These are not victimless crimes. (See the list of media reports at the end of this testimony).

- Masked law enforcement makes communities unsafe when people are uncertain that an officer is legitimate.
- Masking harms legitimate law enforcement when community trust in police erodes as a result of impersonators or masked officials.

Except for circumstances delineated in the legislation, when a law enforcement officer covers their face to limit identification, it can create the perception that the officer is trying to limit personal accountability. This perception (or reality) can create real problems in the interaction between the officer and the community.

Masking facilitates criminality and we need not facilitate criminality and community fear. A ban on masking will not solve all impersonation, but it can stop the current trend of using masks. A ban will give individuals a quick first tool in spotting a fraud.

# Technical Issues

I would also like to suggest a few important changes to the legislation that could make the bill stronger in the event of a legal challenge by the federal government or other states.

## Item 1 Requiring out-of-state law enforcement agencies to have formal policies that comport with Maryland policy

3-207(P) (3): A LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT

OFFICERS OPERATING IN THE STATE SHALL ADOPT A POLICY CONSISTENT WITH THE  
MODEL POLICY DEVELOPED BY THE COMMISSION UNDER PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS  
SUBSECTION.

I suggest that the above provision be deleted from the bill or modified so that the law cannot be read to require out of state agencies to adopt policies created by the Maryland Commission. Can this policy adoption provision be limited to in-State agencies while the overall law on masking applies to any law enforcement agent operating in our State? If the intent is to require specific policy adoption, that might be challenged by the federal government as a violation of the Supremacy Clause. Obligating law enforcement agencies of other states to adopt Maryland policies may be able to be challenged by those states akin to how states can use the Commerce Clause to challenge each other's commercial/market policies. There may be less of a legal complication if the bill applied to all law enforcement *agents* operating in-State.

## Item 2 Use of the terms “tactical mask” and “tactical operations”

- The bill includes “tactical mask” in the definition of the type of face mask that is broadly *not permitted*. [3-535 (A)(2)(II)].
  - A tactical mask is generally considered to include all uses otherwise listed in 3-535(A)(2)(III)(1-7) and (9), which *are permissible* face masks when used as specified in SB1.
- Item 3-535(A)(2)(III)(8) permits “protective gear worn during *tactical operations* for purposes of physical safety”.
- But a tactical mask is not allowed when “...generalized and undifferentiated fear and apprehension about law enforcement officer safety is not sufficient to justify the use of face coverings” [3-207(P)(2)(II)(3)].

The definition of tactical is both quite vague and quite broad (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/tactical#dictionary-entry-1>). Could Maryland prevail in federal court with its definition of a tactical operation relative to a DHS definition of a tactical operation? If a Maryland definition limiting ‘tactical operation’ did not hold up in court, tactical masks would be permitted almost anywhere in almost any situation defined by the federal government.

Since tactical mask is any or all of the permitted coverings already separately listed in items (1)-(7) and (9), item (8) seems superfluous and could therefore be deleted. Deleting permission for a tactical mask

to be used in a tactical operation removes from the proposed law, a loophole (and a source of federal/state conflict). The only item that would be otherwise missing from permissive uses that is not captured by items (1)-(7) and (9) is a helmet when used for a purpose in addition to riding a motorcycle (Item 5 on the list). With these changes, all permissible uses of and permissible types of face coverings are clear and not subject to debate about the definition of tactical.

## How SB 1 Differs from the California No Vigilantes Act (CA SB 627)

The 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Federal District Court recently finished a hearing about the legality of the California anti-masking law, CA SB 627. MD SB1 is different from the California law in some important respects that can mitigate the success of a federal challenge.

- MD SB1 applies to *all* State and local law enforcement agencies in addition to out of state agents operating in our State. CA SB 627 does not apply to state-level law enforcement agencies or agents, which the federal government challenges as discriminatory. MD SB1 is not discriminatory to the federal government.
- The federal government charges that CA SB627 regulates the actions of federal departments and agencies by requiring that all federal law enforcement entities must adopt agency policies that comport with the California masking law. MD SB1 has a similar requirement ***but*** that provision could be removed from our legislation or otherwise modified to eliminate a federal challenge on that basis. Our law could be oriented to law enforcement agents rather than agencies to avoid confusion and legal challenge on this point.

## Use-Of-Force Standards and Loper Bright v Raimondo US Supreme Court Decision

In general, federal law enforcement agencies, such as the FBI, have use-of-force rules, guidance, and training similar to state and local use-of-force rules, guidance, and training. DHS Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Border Patrol agencies stand out for having much lower standards, guidance, and training. We are seeing in real time around the country that lower standards result in unnecessary injury and death, civil rights violations, chaos, and community upheaval.

There are myriad federal court decisions that have done extensive damage law enforcement accountability and thus to our civil rights over recent decades. DHS policy and practice make this erosion even more significant; citizens are unfairly treated by federal agents and have less and less recourse in the courts. Recourse for states and localities attempting to rein in federal law enforcement excesses is also hobbled.

To the best of my knowledge, what states and localities have not tried to use against increasingly lawless but heavily armed DHS agents and agencies is the US Supreme Court decision of Loper Bright Enterprises v Raimondo (2024). The decision threw out decades of jurisprudence where the courts

deferred to federal agency expertise to interpret and implement laws. The Loper Bright decision establishes a new schema in which the Courts will decide the appropriate interpretation of law when the implementing agency interpretation is challenged.

Loper Bright has generally concerned issues related to administrative rules affecting commerce. The question is whether it can be used to challenge DHS administrative rules and guidance for immigration enforcement.

Clearly there is a rather wide range of interpretation across federal law enforcement agencies on the use of force. Most federal agents are not allowed to regularly shoot people sitting in their cars, most agents are not allowed to arrest and murder immigrants with no criminal violations. DHS seems to misunderstand the legal difference between hardened criminals who are immigrants (the ‘worst of the worst’ as stated in their mission) and

- mothers of small children,
- small children,
- US citizens,
- migrants with legal standing to be in the US, and
- migrants with misdemeanor violations of specific immigration law.

Actual immigrants with criminal conviction are only 5% of those detained, deported, shot, or murdered by DHS agents. This level and scope of incompetence in following the agency’s *stated* mission and the venality of agency agent action is not found at anything near this level in other federal law enforcement agencies nor in state and local law enforcement. This is an interesting result given that all federal, state, and local law enforcement are subject to the US Constitution and the same federal laws.

It is reasonable to assess that there is ambiguity somewhere in the Constitution or federal law that leads to wildly different interpretations of what federal agents are allowed to do. This ambiguity, combined with an utter lack of generally recognized legal expertise in the DHS, and generally acknowledged insufficient agent training/oversight/accountability, produce these failed but dangerous DHS enforcement results.

Almost by definition, the disparity in results among federal law enforcement agencies means there is ambiguity in interpretation of civil rights laws which relate to use of force rules, habeas corpus law, immigration law, laws governing agent identification, not to mention operational standards that do or do not allow agents to operate as large bands of roving outlaws. DHS should be challenged.

It may be worthwhile to request that Maryland Attorney General’s Office conduct a detailed analysis of how Loper Bright might be of use to challenge the growing ambiguity of DHS interpretation of laws and the resulting degradation of federal law enforcement policy and practice in some of our federal agencies while not in other agencies. The apparent ambiguity in our laws and citizen rights is leading to deadly and other life-altering results for growing numbers of people residing in the U.S. I believe it is worthwhile to at least examine if the expertise and legal actions of the Department of Homeland Security can be challenged based on Loper Bright. This may be a stretch or not feasible at all, but I implore the General Assembly and our Executive Branch to make any and all efforts to find ways to constrain the rapid growth

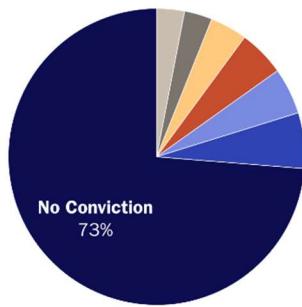
of federal executive branch power and lawlessness with goal to protect Maryland residents, civil society, and our democracy.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and your efforts on behalf of Maryland residents.

**Only 5 percent of individuals booked into ICE detention had a violent criminal conviction**

ICE book-ins into custody, FY 2026, Oct 1 - Nov 15, 2025

■ Property ■ Vice ■ Other ■ Violent ■ Immigration ■ Traffic ■ No Conviction



Source: Immigration and Customs Enforcement, "ICE Initial Book-Ins by Criminality and MSC: FY2025 YTD," November 15, 2025. See Appendix Table A for classifications.  
Convictions include convictions at any time, not just during the period listed.

CATO  
INSTITUTE

## Citations and Notes

<https://www.wired.com/story/fbi-warns-of-criminals-posing-as-ice-urges-agents-to-id-themselves/> (NY restaurant incident mentioned is unique to the other NY incidents below)

[https://democrats-](https://democrats-homeland.house.gov/imo/media/doc/251112_letter_to_noem_and_patel_re_fbi_memo_urging_ice_id.pdf)

[homeland.house.gov/imo/media/doc/251112\\_letter\\_to\\_noem\\_and\\_patel\\_re\\_fbi\\_memo\\_urging\\_ice\\_id.pdf](https://democrats-homeland.house.gov/imo/media/doc/251112_letter_to_noem_and_patel_re_fbi_memo_urging_ice_id.pdf)

### MD Incidents:

- <https://www.wusa9.com/article/news/crime/fake-ice-agent-sexually-assaults-woman/65-4889aaf6-3b80-45e5-b073-53e36608a98a>
- <https://news.maryland.gov/msp/2025/04/22/maryland-state-police-charge-baltimore-man-with-impersonating-a-police-officer/>
- <https://wjla.com/news/local/prince-georges-county-impersonating-police-officer-jonathan-michael-davis-guns-badges-handcuffs-tactical-vests-found-laurel-bowie-road-beltsville-maryland-arrest-charges>

CA examples: <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2025-11-06/fbi-alerts-police-agencies-about-masked-criminals-posing-as-ice-recommends-they-show-id>

VA incident: <https://www.vpm.org/news/2025-04-23/albemarle-courthouse-ice-raid-nicholas-reppucci-teodoro-dominguez-rodriguez>

NC Incident: <https://www.wral.com/news/local/raleigh-police-arrest-man-impersonating-officer-sexual-assault-jan-2025/> (mentioned in WIRED article)

## NY Incidents:

- <https://abcnews.go.com/US/attempted-rapist-told-victim-ice-agent-police-sources/story?id=118741709>
- Another incident in a NYC restaurant is mentioned in the WIRED article with no link.

FL Incident: <https://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/national-international/florida-woman-poses-as-ice-agent-to-kidnap-ex-boyfriends-wife-police-say/3686003/> (mentioned in WIRED article)

TX Incident: <https://www.foxnews.com/us/2-men-claiming-police-shot-killed-homeowner-authorities-say>  
(masked, fake police, trying to gain access to a home)

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<sup>i</sup> *Badges of Deceit: Why Police Impersonation is a Growing National Security Risk: How extremists have exploited police identity to gain access, sow chaos, and erode trust in the state.* July 15, 2025, **Counter Extremism Project**

*The 'deeply troubling' trend of law enforcement impersonation* June 24, 2025. **MN Public Radio**

"Law enforcement agencies across the country are sounding the alarm after a series of troubling cases involving criminals impersonating police officers have surfaced." September 10, 2025, **Law Enforcement Today**

*ICE Raids Are Breeding Dangerous Imitators and Social Division.* December 28, 2025. **Harvard Political Review**

"*Getting in front of the police masking controversy.*" Karl Bickel August 6, 2025. **Maryland Matters. Former Frederick County Sheriff**

<sup>ii</sup> Federal law does not require nor incentivize the use of face coverings for immigration agents. Federal law requires agents to identify themselves as soon as possible.

<sup>iii</sup> WIRED magazine. <https://www.wired.com/story/fbi-warns-of-criminals-posing-as-ice-urges-agents-to-id-themselves/>

## **IBCTestimony\_SB0001 (2).pdf**

Uploaded by: Jennifer Blalock

Position: FWA

**Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable with Amendments**  
**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,

Indivisible Baltimore County respectfully submits this testimony **in support of Senate Bill 1**, with the recommendation that the bill be amended to ensure **no exception permits law enforcement officers to wear face coverings while performing official duties, including during undercover operations**.

Indivisible Baltimore County is a progressive, grassroots civic engagement organization committed to peaceful action, accountable government, and policies that protect the rights and dignity of all people. Our support for SB 1 is grounded in the principle that **transparency and accountability are essential to public safety and community trust**.

SB 1 strengthens that trust by prohibiting law enforcement officers from wearing face coverings while on duty. Masking by law enforcement can create fear, confusion, and a perception of unaccountability—particularly in communities that have experienced disproportionate enforcement. The public has a right to know when they are interacting with law enforcement, and officers exercising state authority should be clearly identifiable at all times.

We are especially concerned that an exception for “undercover operations,” if retained, could be interpreted broadly and used to justify masking during immigration enforcement activities, including joint operations involving federal immigration authorities such as ICE. Such an exception would undermine the bill’s purpose and weaken public confidence.

For these reasons, Indivisible Baltimore County supports **SB 1 with amendment** and urges a **favorable report as amended**.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and leadership.

**Jennifer Blalock**

**Steering Committee representative for Indivisible Baltimore County**

# **260120 SB0001 Testimony - Potyraj.pdf**

Uploaded by: Thomas Potyraj

Position: FWA

**Committee: Judicial Proceedings**

**Testimony on: SB0001**

**Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**

**Organization: Thomas Potyraj (self)**

**Position: Favorable**

**Hearing Date: January 22, 2026**

Chairman Smith and Members of the Committee:

My name is Thomas Potyraj. I am a resident of Catonsville. I support SB0001 prohibiting face coverings on law enforcement officers, with an amendment.

I believe that face coverings undermine trust between law enforcement officers and the citizens that they serve. They suggest that enforcement officers are not part of the community, and discourage cooperation. Therefore, I approve of their prohibition.

I am concerned about section (4)(B) that states that the prohibition does not apply to a law enforcement officer actively engaged in an undercover operation. Could ICE claim that the entirety of its activities were undercover operations? If so, then the prohibition would not apply for any ICE activities. I would therefore recommend that section (4)(B) be removed from the bill.

Therefore, I support SB0001 with the amendment that section (4)(B) be removed.

# **2026 SB0001 Testimony against 2026-01-20.pdf**

Uploaded by: Alan Lang

Position: UNF

# Testimony Against SB0001

Honorable Senators

Please enter an unfavorable decision about SB0001.

I am opposed to

- Requiring the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission (MPTSC) to develop a model policy prohibiting the use of a face covering by a law enforcement officer in the course of duty.
- prohibiting a law enforcement officer from wearing a face covering while in the performance of duty in the State, except as authorized in a policy adopted by a law enforcement agency pursuant to the bill

This bill is a solution in search of a problem. This is an over-reaction to Federal law enforcement officers wearing masks while making arrests of alleged illegal aliens. Federal officers began wearing masks because people who are against the arrest of illegals began photographing these officers. They then posted their pictures along with their addresses and sometimes with pictures of their houses and family members. Essentially, this was a veiled threat for someone to take action against these law enforcement officers and/or their families.

On Page 2, lines 22-24 [under Section 3-207, subsection P (2) (II) 3], the bill dismisses this real threat with the phrase

That generalized and undifferentiated fear and apprehension about law enforcement officer safety is not sufficient to justify the use of face coverings.

What a callous disregard for officer safety. It may just seem to be a federal problem now, but could it become a problem at the state and local level in the near future?

Because of this over reaction, the sponsors of this bill want to create an entire new policy that is primarily directed against federal law enforcement, but will affect all law enforcement officers throughout the state. I am not aware of any state, local or city law enforcement officers using a mask to their identity while making an arrest.

On Page 4, line 7 [Section 3-535 (A) (3) (IV) the bill affects all law enforcement agencies including the federal government. Thus, proposed ban on face coverings would apply to federal law enforcement officers doing their duty in Maryland.

I am not a constitutional expert, but I believe the supremacy clause of the Constitution should preclude enforcement of this bill against federal law enforcement officers. If I am correct, then the sponsors of this bill are making police jurisdictions throughout the state develop policy and training regarding the use of face coverings, when they were not being used at all in a vain attempt to prevent federal law enforcement from using face coverings in Maryland.

What a gigantic waste of time and energy.

## Testimony Against SB0001

Please enter an unfavorable decision about SB0001.

Alan Lang  
45 Marys Mount Road  
Harwood, Maryland 20776  
Legislative District 30B  
410-336-9745  
[Alanlang1@verizon.net](mailto:Alanlang1@verizon.net)

January 20, 2026

# **Oppose SB1.pdf**

Uploaded by: Mark Meyerovich

Position: UNF

# Oppose SB1

Senator Smith, Chair  
and the members of Judicial Proceedings Committee

## **PUBLIC SAFETY – LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS – PROHIBITION ON FACE COVERINGS**

### **Position: UNFAVORABLE**

I respectfully submit this testimony in opposition to *SB0001 / HB155*, which seeks to prohibit law enforcement officers from wearing certain “*face coverings*” while performing their duties in Maryland. While public safety is a legitimate concern, the language of this bill is overbroad, ambiguous, and invites arbitrary application, raising constitutional and practical problems.

---

### **1. The Bill’s Definition of “Face Covering” Is Overbroad and Vague**

Under Section 3–535 of the bill, the term “*face covering*” is defined as:

*“any opaque mask, garment, helmet, headgear, or other item that conceals or obscures the face... including a balaclava, ski mask, neck gaiter, or tactical mask.”*

This definition pulls together a wide range of things that people wear for very different purposes. Visually, conceptually, and in real-world use these items can look remarkably similar and are often used interchangeably. For example:





4

In everyday life, people might wear:

- a **neck gaiter** when cold,
- a **balaclava** while motorcycling or skiing,
- a **tactical mask** for occupational safety,
- a **ski mask** as part of cold weather gear.

All can conceal the face, but context matters. Grouping these together without clear limits invites discretionary enforcement.

## 2. The Bill Treats Functionally Similar Items Differently

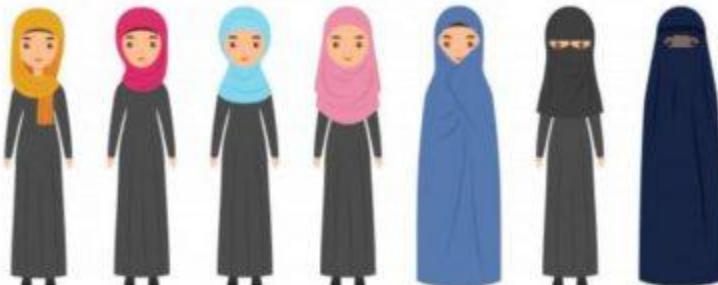
The bill's exceptions carve out certain items (e.g., *medical-grade or surgical masks, clear face shields, religious garments, protective gear*), but this distinction is not inherently obvious to a neutral observer. For example:

## HINGED DESIGN

VERSATILE WEAR OPTIONS FROM  
NECK GAITER TO SKI MASK

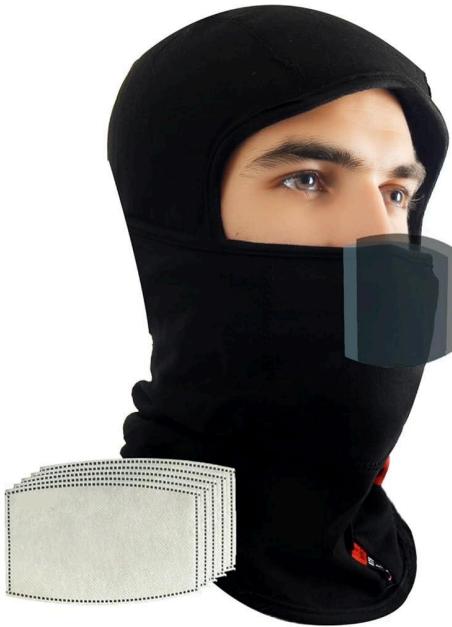


### Types of Islamic Veils



Shayla      Hijab      Hijab Amira      Khimar      Chador      Niqab      Burqa

Face coverings worn for safety purposes can look very much like *tactical masks* but are used to protect workers:



- **Balaclava-style safety masks** — used in cold-weather work, chimney or roofing jobs, and industrial settings.
- **Flame-resistant balaclava/ppe** — protects skin and face from heat, sparks, or chemicals.

The line between a medical mask and simple cloth covering, or between an opaque buffalo-plaid winter face covering and a tactical balaclava, can be subtle. Ambiguous language like “opaque” or “conceals” invites subjective judgments by officers or reviewers, increasing the risk of unequal enforcement.

### 3. The Bill Dictates Personal Appearance and Policing Tactics

Prohibiting officers from wearing items that obscure their face raises separate concerns:

- **Operational Safety:** Officers may need face coverings for legitimate safety reasons (e.g., chemical exposure scenarios, riot control, unknown threat environments).
- **Constitutional Rights:** Limiting attire tied to identity or expression could implicate free speech and equal protection, especially if the rule is applied differently in different jurisdictions or contexts.

Law enforcement agencies already draft operational policies under careful review, training, and community oversight. Mandating uniform dress restrictions from Annapolis removes local discretion without evidence that current practices are broken.

## 4. The Bill's Justification Is Poorly Linked to Actual Public Safety Needs

The bill's stated intent is to promote transparency and public trust by discouraging officers from concealing their faces. However:

1. Transparency can be achieved through **identification badges, body cameras, and training**, not by banning legitimate protective gear.
2. Maryland already has laws regarding **criminal impersonation, harassment, and intimidation** that address improper concealment of identity in the commission of a crime.

The legislature should be cautious about crafting new criminal or regulatory provisions around *how someone's gear looks* when the same goals can be pursued through less intrusive means.

## 5. The Bill Could Be Misapplied and Infringe on Rights

By specifying what *cannot* be worn — while leaving broad room for interpretation — this bill invites:

- **Arbitrary enforcement** depending on local attitudes and individual officers' judgments.
- **Chilling effects** on lawful behavior, including officers' own safety judgments.
- **Underinclusive protection** for similarly situated individuals whose coverings aren't enumerated but perform the same function.

Courts have long held that laws which regulate appearance or expressive conduct must be clear, narrowly tailored, and justified by compelling state interests. This bill does not meet those standards.

## Conclusion

For these reasons — its vague and overbroad definitions, its potential for arbitrary enforcement, and its questionable necessity — I urge the committee to **vote against SB0001 / HB155**. If the legislature wishes to address legitimate concerns about anonymity or accountability in policing, it should pursue narrowly tailored reforms that respect constitutional rights and operational realities.

Thank you for consideration,  
Mark Meyerovich  
Gaithersburg, MD  
District 15

# **MCPA-MSA - SB 1 Public Safety - Law Enforcement Of**

Uploaded by: Samira Jackson

Position: UNF



# Maryland Chiefs of Police Association

# Maryland Sheriffs' Association



## MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr., Chair and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Darren Popkin, Executive Director, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee  
Andrea Mansfield, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee  
Samira Jackson, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee

DATE: January 22, 2026

RE: **SB 1 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers Prohibition on Face Coverings**

POSITION: **OPPOSE**

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) **OPPOSE** SB 1, which requires the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission (MPTSC) to develop and adopt a model policy prohibiting the use of face coverings by any law enforcement officer while performing duties in Maryland. Each law enforcement agency operating in the State is required to adopt a policy consistent with the model policy.

While we appreciate the intent of SB 1, the legislation would restrict officers' ability to use face coverings in circumstances where they are critical for safety, operational integrity, and public health. Many law enforcement roles depend on protecting officer identity during gang, narcotics, or sensitive intelligence investigations. Removing this ability increases the risk that officers or their families become identifiable targets for retaliation or intimidation in the community. Criminal organizations and repeat violent offenders routinely collect information on officers involved in their cases. Restricting identity protection undermines officer safety and impairs the investigative work the public expects.

SB 1 also does not adequately account for the operational and environmental contexts in which face coverings are necessary. Tactical teams, fugitive task forces, and undercover or plainclothes personnel rely on facial protection to preserve the integrity of arrests, surveillance, and sensitive operations. Face coverings are also integrated into protective gear such as helmets, goggles, and respirators used during responses involving chemicals, smoke, airborne debris, or hazardous materials. During disease outbreaks and in close-contact settings with medically vulnerable individuals, face coverings protect both officers and the public. Harsh weather conditions, such as extreme cold or wind, also require facial protection to safely perform outdoor duties. We agree that public trust is essential to policing and we are committed to policies that strengthen transparency and accountability.

We are particularly concerned with the punishment structure in SB 1. A violation would constitute a misdemeanor punishable by up to two years of imprisonment or a \$2,000 fine, require an officer to waive all immunity in any related civil action, and be classified as police misconduct under Maryland law. These penalties are disproportionate and risk creating a chilling effect on reasonable, good-faith decision-making in fast-moving and dangerous situations.

Should the Committee wish to move forward with legislation restricting the use of face coverings, MCPA and MSA strongly suggest the MPTSC establish the policy, the circumstances in which face coverings can and cannot be used, and its applicability. That would avoid the prescriptive nature of the bill and provide an opportunity to develop a workable policy. MCPA and MSA also encourage deleting the penalty provisions in the bill. Officers are already disciplined for violating policies.

For these reasons, MCPA and MSA **OPPOSE SB 1** and urges an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report.

# **Statement Opposing Legislation to Prohibit Law Enf**

Uploaded by: Shari Rendall

Position: UNF



January 20, 2026

The Honorable William Smith  
Chairman  
Judicial Proceedings Committee  
2 East Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairman Smith and other distinguished members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is Shari Rendall, and I am the Director of State and Local Engagement at the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR). FAIR is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization of concerned individuals fighting for immigration policy that is in America's best interest.

FAIR advocates for immigration policies that reduce the harmful impact of illegal immigration on national security, public safety, the economy, jobs, education, healthcare and the environment. Founded in 1979, FAIR has more than three million members and supporters nationwide, including approximately 12,300 in Maryland. On behalf of our members and supporters, I am writing to express FAIR's opposition to Senate Bill (SB) 1.

If enacted, SB 1 would prohibit a law enforcement officer from wearing a mask, which would violate the Supremacy Clause by attempting to regulate federal agencies and forcing them to adopt certain policies.

Moreover, this legislation demonizes law enforcement officers who are simply trying to protect their identities and keep themselves and their families safe by stating that a generalized and undifferentiated fear and apprehension about safety is insufficient to justify wearing a mask.

Finally, SB 1 interferes with ICE officers' abilities to operate safely at a time when ICE law enforcement officers face a more than 1,300 percent increase in assaults, a 3,200 percent increase in vehicular attacks against them, and an 8,000 percent increase in death threats. The bill simply sows division and hatred of immigration officials.

Ironically, while this bill will forbid immigration enforcement officials from wearing masks to protect themselves, anti-ICE protesters are regularly depicted in photographs wearing masks.

For the aforementioned reasons, FAIR opposes SB 1 and urges the Committee to vote unfavorably on this measure. Thank you for the opportunity to provide my input. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if I may be of assistance. I may be reached by email at [srendall@fairus.org](mailto:srendall@fairus.org) or by phone at 202-328-7004.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shari Rendall". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Shari" on the first line and "Rendall" on the second line.

Shari Rendall

# **SB0001\_HB0155\_ Public Safety - Law Enforcement Of**

Uploaded by: Trudy Tibbals

Position: UNF

**SB0001/HB0155:** Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings: Please VOTE AGAINST this bill.

Dear Judicial Proceedings Committee and Judiciary Committee:

I respectfully request that you vote to **oppose SB0001/HB0155 – Public Safety: Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings.**

While transparency and accountability in law enforcement are critically important, this bill would have the unintended consequence of **compromising officer safety and undermining effective policing**. In many circumstances, face coverings are essential tools that protect officers from physical harm, retaliation, and long-term health risks.

Law enforcement officers often wear face coverings during crowd-control situations, protests, tactical operations, undercover assignments, or when responding to credible threats. Requiring officers to expose their identities in volatile or hostile environments increases the risk of **targeted retaliation against officers and their families**, both during and after an incident. This risk is not hypothetical and has been documented nationwide. Officers **must** be able to protect their identities to preserve operational integrity and prevent criminal actors from identifying, intimidating, or retaliating against them.

From a **public safety standpoint**, courts have consistently recognized that the government has a compelling interest in protecting the safety of law enforcement personnel. Policies that unnecessarily heighten risk may **expose the state to liability** if officers are harmed as a foreseeable result of mandated exposure.

Additionally, face coverings may be necessary for **health and safety reasons**, including protection from airborne hazards, chemical agents, smoke, infectious diseases, or environmental debris. A blanket prohibition fails to account for these realities and limits officers' ability to adapt to dangerous or unpredictable conditions.

Accountability should be achieved through **constitutionally sound**, proven measures such as body-worn cameras, clear identification numbers, internal oversight, and civilian review mechanisms—not by exposing officers to unnecessary danger. These tools promote transparency without exposing officers to heightened danger or restricting operational discretion in the field.

**SB0001/HB0155** prioritizes a one-size-fits-all mandate over nuanced, lawful public safety practices and risks unintended legal and safety consequences. It also risks discouraging qualified individuals from entering or remaining in law enforcement at a time when recruitment and retention are already significant challenges.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to **vote against SB0001/HB0155**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Trudy Tibbals

**SB1\_INFO.pdf**

Uploaded by: Donna Edwards

Position: INFO



# MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

Affiliated with the National AFL-CIO

**Donna S. Edwards**  
President

**Samuel Epps, IV**  
Secretary-Treasurer

410.280.2233

410.280.2956

7 School Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401-2096

## SB 1 – Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Face Coverings

### Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

January 22, 2026

INFORMATIONAL

**Donna S. Edwards**  
President

Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide informational testimony on SB 1 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings. This legislation would establish a statewide prohibition on certain face coverings for all law enforcement officers operating in the state while on duty. This issue is complex and raises various questions regarding transparency, accountability, civil liberties, and officer safety. In this testimony, I aim to outline these complexities for the committee's consideration.

As evidenced by our state law, identification is a cornerstone of accountable policing. When officers hide their faces during routine interactions, the public loses their ability to know who is exercising their authority, report misconduct, or build trust in their law enforcement institutions. However, this is not just about identity, but about anonymity. Concealed identities can undermine public trust, but there are circumstances where police anonymity is necessary to protect officers from targeted threats. This bill must strike a balance between these challenges without eroding transparency or legitimate safety measures.

In a broader context, this topic also intersects with concerns about surveillance by law enforcement agencies. Federal Agencies, such as the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), have a known history of monitoring protestors, raising First Amendment implications. Any policy regulating face coverings must not infringe on the rights of private citizens, including protestors who choose to cover their faces to protect them against government surveillance and retaliation. While SB 1 only applies to law enforcement officers, making the distinction is important for how individuals will interpret the law.

The bill also attempts to address officer safety directly by outlining a number of exceptions when law enforcement officers are authorized to wear face coverings. These include medical masks, tactical gear, religious garments, and other equipment permitted by workplace safety laws. These exceptions acknowledge that officer safety is a priority and not just a concern, and that they face hazardous situations every day where protective gear





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410.280.2233

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is essential. The challenge lies in determining where legitimate safety needs end and where unnecessary concealment begins.

To resolve this, the legislation requires the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission to develop model policy that affirms its commitment to transparency while also keeping officer safety at the forefront. This approach recognizes that officer safety is real by ensuring that policy is clearly defined, consistently applied, and limited to circumstances where it is genuinely needed.

The question of jurisdiction also creates another layer to this issue. While SB 1 broadly defines “law enforcement agency” to include federal agencies operating in Maryland, the Supremacy Clause of the U.S. Constitution limits the state’s authority over federal personnel. Maryland may set expectations for how federal officers operate in the state, but it cannot impose criminal liability on federal officers whose actions are governed by federal law or operational policy. Although the bill signals Maryland’s commitment to transparency, its enforceability over ICE agents and other federal law enforcement personnel is limited.

Finally, the bill’s definition of “face covering” is clear and explicitly excludes religious garments. However, it is important to note that arguments used to oppose religious face coverings in public spaces have been linked to terrorism, citing that masked individuals can facilitate terrorism or violent crimes by hiding their identity. Individuals point to cases in which mass perpetrators were not identified, and that is now being used to defend ICE and other federal agencies that have used face coverings while on duty. While the bill draws a line between the two, there must be clear communication with the public about the bill’s intent and that the distinction between private religious expression and state authority is maintained.



[unions@mddclabor.org](mailto:unions@mddclabor.org)



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