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District 14

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB155, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers -
Prohibition on Face Coverings
February 24, 2026

Dear Chair Williams, and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

I respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of House Bill 0155, a commonsense public safety measure that strengthens transparency, accountability, and community trust in law enforcement.

When law enforcement officers interact with the public, clear visibility of the officer's face helps community members identify who is enforcing the law and fosters trust in policing. Officers who are easily recognized are more accountable to the communities they serve, and residents feel safer engaging with officers they can see and identify. As we have unfortunately seen in other parts of the country, in jurisdictions where officers operate anonymously behind masks, community fear and suspicion can grow, undermining legitimacy.

Masked enforcement creates confusion about who is a legitimate officer, increasing the risk of criminal impersonation of law enforcement, which endangers the public and officers alike. Clear identification protects communities, institutions, and officers from dangerous misunderstandings.

This bill aligns with those values by ensuring that law enforcement officers are identifiable and cannot hide behind masks in law enforcement interactions.

In sum, HB 0155 represents a commonsense, balanced approach to promoting transparency, protecting public confidence, and preserving officer effectiveness where appropriate. Please let Maryland be a safer place for all of us. Prohibiting masked law enforcement is one small step towards ensuring the people wearing those badges are discharging their duties faithfully. I urge the Committee to support this bill.

Respectfully submitted,
Farnaz Edwards