

HB0155_RichardKaplowitz_FWA

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Richard Keith Kaplowitz

Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON HB#0155- POSITION: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings

TO: Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis, and members of the Judiciary Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#0155, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings

This bill is Maryland's forceful response to the illegal and constitutional actions of DHS and ICE. As reported by the Centers for American Progress - *Masked and Unidentifiable: The Risks of Federal Law Enforcement Operating Without Identification - Since taking office, the Trump administration has undermined public safety and law enforcement accountability by supporting the dangerous practice of obscuring the identity of ICE and other federal officers.*¹

In recent months, federal U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and other federal law enforcement officers—roaming the streets in plainclothes, masked, and sometimes armed—have stoked fear in communities nationwide... Enforcement actions by masked or unidentifiable officers, which have even included the arrests of [elected officials](#) and [other U.S. citizens](#), are part of a broader effort to keep up with arbitrary and cruel immigration [arrest quotas](#) set by the Trump administration. As a result, today, ICE is operating in ways akin to the actions of [secret police forces](#), tasked with carrying out Trump's political agenda. These practices have stoked fear in communities across the country and raised serious questions about the safety and legitimacy of their operations under the Trump administration.

This is the new, frightening image of U.S. immigration enforcement under the Trump administration: violence, covered faces, and unknown agency affiliations.

Maryland can and should combat this dangerous paradigm by passing this bill 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.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable with amendments report on HB#0155.

¹ <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/masked-and-unidentifiable-the-risks-of-federal-law-enforcement-operating-without-identification/#:~:text=The%20inability%20to%20determine%20whether,quell%20opposition%20to%20their%20agenda.>