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Legislative District 22
Prince George's County

Judiciary Committee

Chair, Public Safety Subcommittee

Chair, Prince George's
County House Delegation



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 24, 2026

The Honorable J. Sandy Bartlett
Chair of the House Judiciary Committee
100 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

House Bill 155

Good afternoon, Chair Bartlett, Vice-Chair Davis, and the members of the House Judiciary Committee. I am Delegate Nicole Williams, and I will be testifying in favor of House Bill 155, also known as **Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**. This bill would require that the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission develop a model policy prohibiting the use of a facial covering in the performance of their duties and require that law enforcement agencies adopt policies consistent with the model policy developed by the Commission. The intent of this legislation is to prohibit certain law enforcement officers from wearing facial coverings while in the performance of their duties in the State, except when actively engaged in an undercover operation.

This legislation seeks to improve transparency, accountability, and public safety by reaffirming the public trust in law enforcement agents. In municipalities and jurisdictions across the State, community-oriented policing is the foundation of a strong relationship between law enforcement and the public. In order for this relationship to continue to thrive, there must be a clear way to identify law enforcement officers to ensure that those who they serve feel safe in their own communities.

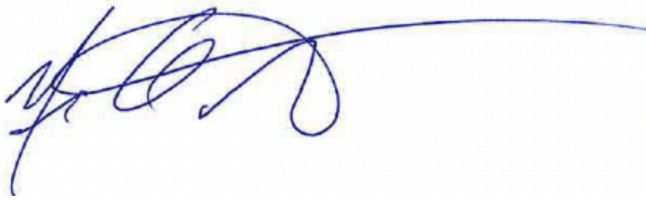
In recent months, we have seen a frightening rise in unidentifiable law enforcement agents carrying out arrests and other duties in our communities. There are numerous examples of agents wearing ski masks, balaclavas, and other forms of face coverings as a means of keeping themselves from being identified and ultimately inhibiting accountability. A member of the public who is approached by an unidentifiable law enforcement agent may refuse to follow orders out of a belief that the agent is not who they claim to be. Additionally, bystanders

witnessing an arrest taking place where the law enforcement agent is unidentifiable may not know if what is taking place is lawful or not, further increasing the chance of escalation.

This legislation also aims to protect law enforcement officers themselves. When an officer is clearly identifiable, both other officers and the public know that the individual is an authority and can be trusted to be acting in the public interest. Bystanders witnessing an interaction between an unidentifiable law enforcement officer and a member of the public may act or get involved, putting both parties in danger. This legislation protects officers by minimizing the chance for confusion and miscommunication during interactions between them and the public.

House Bill 155 is a measure to improve public safety, accountability, transparency, and trust in our law enforcement agencies. For these reasons, I urge this committee to give a favorable report on House Bill 155.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nicole Williams', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Delegate Nicole A. Williams, Esq.