



Testimony on HB 155 - Favorable

HB 155 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings

House Judiciary Committee

February 24, 2026

Dear Honorable Chair Bartlett, and Members of the Committee,

Doctors for Camp Closure Maryland chapter offers favorable testimony in support of HB155 - 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 focused 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 HB 155.

Kate Sugarman, MD

Doctors for Camp Closure co leader

Potomac MD