

HB0172_RichardKaplowitz_FAV

02/24/2026

Richard Keith Kaplowitz

Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON HB#0172- POSITION: FAVORABLE

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#0172, 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 U.S. Senators Duckworth and Durbin:

*Duckworth, Durbin Demand ICE and CBP Enforce Body Camera Requirements in Compliance with Federal Order - The Senators’ demand follows reports of ICE releasing misleading accounts of recent immigration enforcement operations in Chicagoland*¹

“Regular use of BWCs provides an extra layer of safety for both law enforcement officers and the public they serve and helps to increase trust between the two,” continued the lawmakers. “Such incidents underscore the importance of BWC footage, which plays a vital role in promoting responsible law enforcement tactics and verifying DHS accounts against facts on the ground and, ultimately, is in the best interest of agents, officials and individuals involved in use of force incidents.”

Regular use of BWCs provides an extra layer of safety for both law enforcement officers and the public they serve and helps to increase trust between the two. Despite that, CBP has yet to provide the public or Congress with information about Border Patrol agents’ rate of activation of BWCs at other enforcement operations involving U.S. Border Patrol ... incidents underscore the importance of BWC footage, which plays a vital role in promoting responsible law enforcement tactics and verifying DHS accounts against facts on the ground and, ultimately, is in the best interest of agents, officials and individuals involved in use of force incidents.

The failure of ICE agents to activate body-worn cameras (BWCs) creates significant risks, including reduced accountability for alleged civil rights violations, unverified use-of-force incidents, and erosion of public trust. Without footage, investigating misconduct becomes difficult, and oversight of sensitive operations like home raids is diminished.²

¹ <https://www.duckworth.senate.gov/news/press-releases/duckworth-durbin-demand-ice-and-cbp-enforce-body-camera-requirements-in-compliance-with-federal-order#:~:text=of%20the%20incident.-,Regular%20use%20of%20BWCs%20provides%20an%20extra%20layer%20of%20safety,in%20use%20of%20force%20in,cidents.>

² Google AI Search “dangers from ICE not having activated body worn cameras”

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Maryland can and should combat this disregard of the use of these body-worn cameras by passing this bill including a certain municipal enforcement officer in the definition of "law enforcement officer" for purposes of a certain exception to prohibitions against wiretapping and electronic surveillance relating to the use of body-worn cameras; authorizing a municipality to adopt an ordinance or a resolution authorizing an official who is authorized to act as an enforcement officer to utilize a body-worn camera; and requiring that a certain municipality publish its policy for the issuance and use of body-worn cameras by enforcement officers.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB#0172.