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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 0155, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers -  
Prohibition on Face Coverings

2/24/2026

TO: Chair J. Sandy Bartlett & Members of the House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Ayla Hurley

Members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Ayla Hurley, I live in Columbia, Maryland, and I am writing to support HB 0155, Prohibition on Face Coverings, and to change the effective date of this law to July - or sooner, whenever possible.

In our state, we strive to hold criminals accountable. That should include when the crimes are committed by the very people meant to prevent them. That cannot be done if law enforcement hides behind a mask. If anyone walked into a bank with a mask on and a gun drawn, everyone there might assume their lives were in danger. Yet some members of law enforcement would walk masked in public with a gun drawn, and expect to be trusted.

As a lifelong Marylander, struggling to deal with the day to day injustices of the leaders of our country, masked law enforcement of any kind is simply terrifying. It's dystopian. It evokes the historical imagery of cops moonlighting as members of the Ku Klux Klan. I'm scared - I have to imagine that my neighbors whose first language isn't English are even more afraid. When people are afraid, they may act in ways that are impulsive, or make a tense situation worse. We don't need more tense situations between ourselves and law enforcement officers.

Please let Maryland be a safer place for all of us than elsewhere in our country. Prohibiting masked law enforcement is one small step towards ensuring the people wearing those badges are discharging their duties faithfully. I urge you to support HB 0155 and help ensure that Maryland's law enforcement is being held to the highest standards of conduct.