



Testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 1415

HB 1415 – Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Identification

House Judiciary Committee

March 10, 2026

Dear Honorable Chair Bartlett, Vice-Chair Davis, and Members of the Committee,

We Are CASA (formerly, “CASA”) is pleased to offer **favorable testimony** in **support of HB 1415 - Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Identification.**

We Are CASA is a national organization building power and improving the quality of life in working-class Black, Latino/a/e, Afro-descendent, Indigenous, and Immigrant communities.

With a membership of over 189,000 members, We Are CASA creates change with its power-building model blending human services, community organizing, and advocacy to serve the full spectrum of the needs, dreams, and aspirations of members. For nearly forty years, We Are CASA has employed grassroots community organizing to bring our communities closer together and fight for justice, while simultaneously providing vital services to communities across the state and beyond.

ICE has shown us it believes it is above the law; Maryland must take action to protect our communities from its abuses. We Are CASA’s members and their communities are under attack by ICE. Through our broad and deep community contacts, including We Are CASA’s hotline where community members can report ICE activity, We Are CASA hears stories of ICE’s abuses. Many of these notably include families accosted by unidentifiable law enforcement. For example:

- In December 2025, We Are CASA received a call on our raid tip hotline from a young person near the Eastern Shore whose father had been attacked and detained. He reported that a group of six masked men tackled his father to the ground before his eyes. His father was taken away, and the caller did not know where his father was being taken.
- In January 2026, in Silver Spring, four men in masks and hooded sweatshirts emerged from unmarked vehicles and tackled a man on the sidewalk, using a taser on him so that he collapsed to the ground.

- In October 2025, We Are CASA received a call from a distressed mother in Hyattsville explaining that she, her husband, and her children made a stop while driving. While they were stopped, three unmarked vehicles approached their vehicle, and a group of masked men emerged. Her husband was taken by these masked men in front of her children.

Incidents like these happen daily, and against a backdrop of ICE killing people on the streets and in custody. Indeed, 2025 was ICE's deadliest year, with a rash of deaths in ICE custody.¹

Anonymous officers undermine public trust and put our communities at risk. The public reasonably expects law enforcement to be identifiable. When officers operate in plain clothes and without identification, the public does not trust them: 72% of people are less likely to trust individuals claiming to be law enforcement, and 68% of people believe it is harder to report misconduct.²

When a community member is taken by plainclothes officers without identification at gunpoint, they and their families have no way of knowing who is taking them, where they are going, or why. In addition to instilling fear, the practice erodes the trust of community members in law enforcement and in our legal system.

Plainclothes unidentifiable officers also increase the risk of crime by impersonators. Right now, plainclothes individuals are attacking community members on our public streets and throwing them into unmarked vehicles. Predictably, there have now been multiple documented instances of criminals impersonating ICE and kidnapping or assaulting unsuspecting victims.³ As a result of these impersonators, the FBI has urged that law enforcement officers should “[e]nsure law enforcement personnel adequately identify themselves during operations.”⁴

While requiring law enforcement to wear identification is just one step necessary to protect our communities, it is a crucial step toward holding ICE accountable and restoring community trust. **We Are CASA urges the committee to provide a favorable report on HB 1415.**

¹ Maanvi Singh *et al.*, “2025 was ICE’s deadliest year in two decades. Here are the 32 people who died in custody,” THE GUARDIAN, Jan. 4, 2026,

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/ng-interactive/2026/jan/04/ice-2025-deaths-timeline>.

² US Immigration Policy Center, “Accountability, and Oversight of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE): Public Safety Benefits of Unmasking, Body-Worn Cameras, and Identification,” Feb. 10, 2026 (“USIPC Report”).

³ See, e.g., Lisa Desjardins & Andrew Corkery, Rise of ICE Agents Wearing Masks Creates Opportunity for Imposters to Conduct Crimes, PBS News (July 27, 2025, at 17:35 ET), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/rise-of-ice-agents-wearing-masks-creates-opportunity-for-imposters-to-conduct-crimes>; Artemis Moshtaghian, Gloria Pazmino & Nick Valencia, Multiple ICE Impersonation Arrests Made During Nationwide Immigration Crackdown, CNN (Feb. 5, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/02/04/us/ice-impersonators-on-the-rise-arrests-made-as-authorities-issue-national-warning>.

⁴ Office of Partner Engagement, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Public Safety Awareness Report dated Oct. 17, 2025.