

HB1415 - SUPPORT
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HB 1415 – Public Safety – Law Enforcement Officers – Identification

House Judiciary Committee
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Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis, and Members of the Committee:

My name is William Mascioli. I've lived in Silver Spring for forty years. Last year, a group of my neighbors and I, aghast at the outrages and threats to our democracy posed by the Trump administration, formed North Woodside Civil Resistance. I'm writing to express my strong support for HB1415, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Identification.

What is going on in our country grows more shocking every day; it gets difficult to avoid succumbing to the onslaught, but it is crystal clear that we need to stand up in opposition to the unbridled military aggression, suppression of dissent, scapegoating of vulnerable groups, and literal, truly nauseating, celebration of violence.

Unaccountable law enforcement is the essence of a police state. At a bare minimum, this body should insist that those empowered to detain individuals in our state publicly identify themselves. There is no room for masked, unidentifiable gunmen doing the government's bidding in a democracy.

Nor is there room for a secret police in a democracy. HB1415 is a necessary complement to HB0155, which demands that law enforcement not wear masks. HB1415 simply requires that law enforcement officers—other than those engaged in undercover operations—wear clearly visible identification indicating their agency or department, last name, and badge or other identification number. In a democratic society, all security forces should be unmasked and should *clearly identify themselves by name, number, and agency*.

In addition to the troubling lack of accountability that unidentified officers represent, they also constitute a grave danger to public security. Criminal impersonation of law enforcement officers is a rising trend, as we became acutely aware last year when an individual dressed as a police officer murdered a Minnesota lawmaker and her husband and fired upon another lawmaker and his wife.

Public safety is best served when individuals can more quickly and clearly verify officers' identity. *Maryland law must make clear that masked, unidentified individuals with guns are operating outside the law.* I believe that HB1415, in conjunction with HB0155, is a vital step in the right direction

toward achieving these goals. Accordingly, I urge a favorable report and thank you for your consideration.