

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

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

February 20, 2026

My name is Judy Karasik and I reside at 2016 Luzerne Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20910. I have lived in Silver Spring since 2001 and, earlier, resided in Chevy Chase from 1958 to 1971. I am a registered voter and American citizen.

I write to express my strong support for HB0155, which demands that law enforcement *not* wear masks (with the practical exceptions noted in the language of the bill).

The horror and terror that we have seen with ICE enforcers both here and elsewhere is seen most clearly in their use of masks, disguising themselves to ensure total lack of accountability. In addition -- and this is a problem unfortunately *not* addressed in HB0155 -- these enforcers do not identify themselves by name, number, and agency -- unlike local and state police.

Residents are grabbed on the street and in their homes and whisked away by groups of anonymous strongmen. Secret police. *This is America?*

In addition, how can the public know if these people are real police officers or criminals impersonating police officers? Criminal impersonation of law enforcement officers is a rising trend, as we became acutely aware last year with the murder of a Minnesota lawmaker and her husband and the shooting of another and his wife by an individual dressed as a police officer.

This practice is incompatible with the standards of our democracy. In addition, it naturally and inevitably increases the public's suspicion of all law enforcement professionals, weakening the community ties that responsible state and local police work so hard to establish and maintain.

HB0155 properly demands that law enforcement *not* wear masks. However, **for every reason described above, the bill should also require that all security forces operating in the state should *clearly identify themselves by name, number, and agency.***

Maryland law must make clear that masked, unidentified individuals with guns are operating outside the law. HB0155 is a step in the right direction toward achieving these goals. Thank you for your consideration.