

Testimony Against SB0001

Honorable Delegates

Please enter an unfavorable decision about SB0001.

Note: Citations are from the original bill and I did not have time to see if they were changed after debate.

I am opposed to

- Requiring the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission (MPTSC) to develop a model policy prohibiting the use of a face covering by a law enforcement officer in the course of duty.
- prohibiting a law enforcement officer from wearing a face covering while in the performance of duty in the State, except as authorized in a policy adopted by a law enforcement agency pursuant to the bill

This bill is a solution in search of a problem. This is an over-reaction to Federal law enforcement officers wearing masks while making arrests of alleged illegal aliens. Federal officers began wearing masks because people who are against the arrest of illegals began photographing these officers. They then posted their pictures along with their addresses and sometimes with pictures of their houses and family members. Essentially, this was a veiled threat for someone to take action against these law enforcement officers and/or their families.

On Page 2, lines 22-24 [under Section 3-207, subsection P (2) (II) 3], the bill dismisses this real threat with the phrase

That generalized and undifferentiated fear and apprehension about law enforcement officer safety is not sufficient to justify the use of face coverings.

What a callous disregard for officer safety. It may just seem to be a federal problem now, but could it become a problem at the state and local level in the near future?

Because of this over reaction, the sponsors of this bill want to create an entire new policy that is primarily directed against federal law enforcement, but will affect all law enforcement officers throughout the state. I am not aware of any state, local or city law enforcement officers using a mask to hide their identity while making an arrest.

On Page 4, line 7 [Section 3-535 (A) (3) (IV) the bill affects all law enforcement agencies including the federal government. Thus, a proposed ban on face coverings would apply to federal law enforcement officers doing their duty in Maryland.

I am not a constitutional expert, but I believe the supremacy clause of the Constitution should preclude enforcement of this bill against federal law enforcement officers. If I am correct, then the sponsors of this bill are making police jurisdictions throughout the state develop policy and training regarding the use of face coverings, when they were not being used at all in a vain attempt to prevent federal law enforcement from using face coverings in Maryland.

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What a gigantic waste of time and energy.

Please enter an unfavorable decision about SB0001.

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