

Testimony in Support of HB 155
Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings
Judiciary Committee
February 20, 2026

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

My name is Anna Britton and I am a resident of Severna Park, Maryland. I am writing in support of HB 155, which would prohibit face coverings for law enforcement officers with necessary exceptions.

HB 155 would increase public safety for Marylanders. The increased presence of masked ICE agents around the country has emboldened criminals to impersonate ICE, five incidents of which were detailed by the FBI in an October 17 memo.¹ The FBI recognizes this increasing risk to public safety and encourages law enforcement to adequately identify themselves.

HB 155 would create a path to accountability for law enforcement misconduct. We have all seen, or are painfully aware, of the videos of ICE and Border Patrol agents killing Renee Good and Alex Pretti in Minnesota. We also know that ICE agents shot Tiago Alexandre Sousa-Martins in Glen Burnie on Christmas Eve of last year. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) lied about the Glen Burnie shooting, and changed their story only after Anne Arundel County police publicly contradicted their statements.² DHS has also refused to cooperate with state investigations into the Minneapolis shootings and the FBI only opened a civil rights probe into the shooting of Pretti after immense public pressure. Accountability will clearly not come swiftly or easily, so we must use every tool at our disposal to increase the chances for accountability in the future.

HB 155 would deter future incidents of misconduct. We know that identification matters, and thus this bill would be an effective deterrent, because DHS has resisted identifying the agents

¹<https://propertyofthepeople.org/document-detail/?doc-id=26364028>

²<https://www.aacounty.org/police-department/about-us/news/anne-arundel-county-police-department-clarification-december-24>

involved in these and other shootings, and Secretary Noem even pressured the media, after Jonathan Ross had been identified as Good's shooter, to stop using his name.³

HB 155 would strengthen community cohesion and trust as well as trust in local law enforcement. Distrust of any one law enforcement agency affects the public perception of all law enforcement officers. But this bill will not just deter criminal impersonation of law enforcement and criminal behavior by law enforcement agents. It will also show Marylanders that their neighbors and state government support them and see all human beings as valuable members of society deserving of respect and accountability.

None of the members of this chamber do their jobs in masks despite the very real threats to all public servants. All law enforcement should be held to the same standard. No government agents, especially those trusted with the authority to use deadly force when necessary, should be able to operate in secrecy and with apparent impunity. **I urge a favorable report on HB 155.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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³https://www.huffpost.com/entry/kristi-noem-dont-say-ice-agent-jonathan-ross-name_n_696d0428e4b0dbbab17412af