



**Testimony in SUPPORT of *Bill 5-26, Police - Mask or Facial Coverings – Prohibited*
The Unmask ICE Act
March 3, 2026**

The Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington (JCRC) serves as the public affairs and community relations arm of the Jewish community. We represent over 100 Jewish social service agencies, synagogues, and schools throughout Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. The JCRC is strongly committed to cultivating a society based on freedom, justice, equity, and pluralism. We work throughout the region to advocate for our nonprofits that serve the most vulnerable on a non-sectarian basis and to campaign for important policy interests on behalf of the Jewish community and all residents of Montgomery County.

The JCRC supports Bill 5-26, the Unmask ICE Act, which prohibits masking by all law enforcement operating in Montgomery County, with exceptions for public health and key operational needs. Our agency understands the importance of balancing the security of the County with individuals' due process rights. It is critical for law enforcement to keep its residents safe, but we also must remain a warm and welcoming community while we do so. To be effective, local police need to garner the public's trust and not instill fear.

Supporting immigrants has always been a priority for the JCRC, especially since we, the Jewish people, have been immigrants. We know all too well what it feels like to be vulnerable and to be attacked for who we are. Today, our immigrant community is under attack -- Parents go to work, but don't come home, or worse, they are torn away from their children while dropping them off at school. We are witnessing an unprecedented level of inhumanity and cruelty as anonymous officers wearing face coverings appear in our communities.

The JCRC will always speak up for its allies when they face hardship and injustice. The Unmask ICE Act tells immigrants that we are here for them – to stand up for their rights, to see that they receive due process, and to fight for their dignity and respect. The JCRC is committed to ensuring that Maryland remains an inclusive, compassionate and caring community where everyone feels safe and not subject to arrests by law enforcement hiding their identities and tearing apart communities. For these reasons, we support Bill 5-26.

