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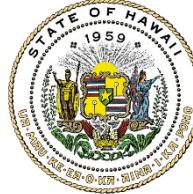
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STATE OF HAWAII OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

February 3, 2026

SB 2203: RELATING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT

Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard and Members of the Committee on Judiciary:

The Office of the Public Defender (OPD) **supports SB 2203** which establishes the offense of use of a mask or personal disguise by a law enforcement officer, subject to clearly defined and reasonable exceptions.

OPD represents individuals in cases that arise directly from law enforcement interactions and see firsthand the importance of officers being readily identifiable when engaging with the public. At those moments, clarity, legitimacy, and transparency in law enforcement interactions are essential to maintaining public trust, ensuring constitutional protections, and preventing unnecessary fear, confusion, or escalation.

Clear identification of law enforcement officers during public interactions is a foundational principle of democratic policing. The inability to distinguish legitimate officers from impersonators presents risks to public safety and implicates fundamental civil liberties. Limiting the use of facial coverings by law enforcement to narrowly defined circumstances appropriately advances transparency and accountability while maintaining necessary operational safeguards.

SB 2203 does not impose a blanket prohibition but strikes an appropriate and careful balance. It sensibly exempts undercover operations, motorcycle safety requirements, medical-grade masks, protective gear necessary for specialized units, and emergency or environmental safety equipment. These exceptions reflect an

understanding of operational realities while preserving the core principle that officers engaging with the public should generally be identifiable.

Hawai'i is not alone in considering legislation to ensure that law enforcement officers are readily identifiable when interacting with the public as multiple states have introduced similar measures.

Notably, California passed the “No Secret Police Act” (SB 627) in 2025,¹ and Washington,² New York,³ and Massachusetts⁴ have introduced similar legislation.

For these reasons, the Office of the Public Defender **supports** SB 2203.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

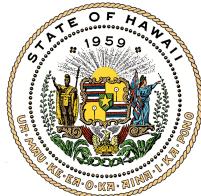
¹ https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260SB627

² <https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=5855&Year=2025&Initiative=false>

³ <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2025/S8462>

⁴ <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/194/SD3607/BillHistory>

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



LATE

SYLVIA LUKE
LT GOVERNOR
KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA

MIKE LAMBERT
Director

ERNEST J. ROBELLO
Deputy Director
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STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT
Ka 'Oihana Ho'okō Kānāwai
715 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

JARED K. REDULLA
Deputy Director
Law Enforcement

**TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 2203
RELATING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT**

Before the Senate Committee on
JUDICIARY

Tuesday, February 3, 2026, 9:00 AM

State Capitol Conference Room 016 & Videoconference

Testifiers: Jared Redulla

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the Committee:

The Department of Law Enforcement (DLE) offers comments on Senate Bill 2203. This bill seeks to establish the offense of a law enforcement officer using a mask or personal disguise. While the DLE acknowledges the importance of transparency in law enforcement operations, this bill raises significant concerns regarding officer safety, operational effectiveness, and the execution of legitimate law enforcement functions.

DLE recognizes the Legislature's interest in promoting accountability and public trust in law enforcement. However, the Department notes that law enforcement officers may, in limited and legitimate circumstances, need to wear masks or use personal disguises to safely and effectively perform their duties. These circumstances can include undercover operations, protection of confidential informants, crowd control situations, hazardous materials or biological exposure incidents, and other specialized operations where officer safety and operational integrity are paramount.

Department of Law Enforcement Testimony on
SB2203 Relating to LAW ENFORCEMENT
Page 2

DLE is concerned that addressing the use of masks or disguises through criminal statutes may unintentionally interfere with lawful and necessary law enforcement activities and create uncertainty for officers operating in dynamic, high-risk environments.

The Department believes that questions regarding appropriate or inappropriate concealment of identity by law enforcement officers are more appropriately addressed through professional standards, policy guidance, and disciplinary oversight rather than criminal penalties. In particular, DLE notes that the Law Enforcement Standards Board is the appropriate body to establish standards of conduct, investigate violations, and impose discipline when warranted, ensuring accountability while preserving operational flexibility and officer safety.

DLE respectfully offers these comments for the Legislature's consideration. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this bill.

**DEPARTMENT OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO HO'OPI'I
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

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STEVEN S. ALM
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY
LOIO HO'OPI'I

THOMAS J. BRADY
FIRST DEPUTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY
HOPE MUA LOIO HO'OPI'I



LATE

**THE HONORABLE KARL RHOADS, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2026
State of Hawai'i**

February 2, 2026

RE: S.B. 2203; RELATING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT.

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and County of Honolulu submits the following comment on S.B. 2203.

S.B. 2203 prohibits law enforcement officers from wearing masks or personal disguises when carrying out official duties. The bill exempts motorcycle helmets, medical-grade masks, and other forms of protective gear.

In response to increased immigration enforcement, California became the first state to enact a mask ban for federal and local officers.¹ The Department of Justice sued in response, seeking a court order that the ban was unenforceable against federal agents.²

Under the Supremacy Clause,³ states cannot directly regulate the actions of the federal government.⁴ Because the Tenth Amendment⁵ reserves the general police power to the states, state criminal law ordinarily harmonizes with federal supremacy. But when a state seeks to criminally punish a federal officer for acts undertaken in the course of federal duty, the danger of state intrusion on federal interests is especially grave.⁶

¹ See S.B. 627, 2025 Assembly, Reg. Sess. (Cal. 2025), available at https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260SB627. See also NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO (online), *California Bans Masks Meant to Hide Law Enforcement Officers' Identities*, available at <https://www.npr.org/2025/09/20/nx-s1-5548532/newsom-trump-masked-ice-agents>.

² Complaint, *United States v. California*, No. 2:25-cv-10999 (C.D. Cal. 2025), available at <https://www.justice.gov/opa/media/1418431/dl?inline>.

³ U.S. CONST. art. VI, cl. 2.

⁴ *United States v. Washington*, 596 U.S. 832, 838 (2022). See also *McCulloch v. Maryland*, 17 U.S. (4 Wheat) 316, 436 (1819).

⁵ U.S. CONST., amend. X.

⁶ See Seth P. Waxman & Trevor W. Morrison, *What Kind of Immunity? Federal Officers, State Criminal Law, and the Supremacy Clause*, 112 YALE L.J. 2195, 2230 (noting that where "a State attempts to impose criminal sanctions

Most federal courts use a two-part test to determine whether a state court may validly prosecute a federal agent for facial violation of a state criminal law. The test examines whether (1) the federal agent was performing an act authorized by federal law and (2) the federal agent did any more than was necessary and proper to perform the authorized act.⁷

No federal law categorically prohibits agents from masking, but by the same token, no statute specifically authorizes it either. The Department of Homeland Security currently leaves masking to the discretion of individual officers.⁸ Judicial analysis of the authorization prong would likely depend on whether masking serves an official purpose or a personal preference.

A finding that a federal officer's actions were necessary and proper would incorporate both subjective and objective analysis. The officer must demonstrate actual belief that the action was necessary and proper. That belief must also be objectively reasonable. Given the doctrinal uncertainty here, the outcome of any litigation would depend on the precise factual background.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

on a federal officer for actions taken in discharge of his federal duties, the risk of state interference with federal interests is particularly acute.”).

⁷ See, e.g., *Texas v. Kleinert*, 855 F.3d 305, 314–15 (5th Cir. 2017); *Kentucky v. Long*, 837 F.2d 727, 744 (6th Cir. 1988); *Morgan v. California*, 743 F.2d 728, 731 (9th Cir. 1984). See also *New York v. Tanella*, 374 F.3d 141, 147 (2d Cir. 2004) (“To meet this standard, two conditions must be satisfied: (1) the actor must subjectively believe that his action is justified; and (2) that belief must be objectively reasonable.”).

⁸ Ben Szalinski, *DHS Secretary Kristi Noem Defends ICE Tactics in Second Illinois Visit*, St. Louis Pub. Radio (Aug. 8, 2025, at 16:12 CDT), <https://www.stlpr.org/government-politics-issues/2025-08-08/homeland-security-kristi-noem-ice-tactics-illinois/>.

HONOLULU POLICE DEPARTMENT
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MAYOR
MEIA



RADE K. VANIC
INTERIM CHIEF
KAHU MĀKA'I KŪIKAWA

AARON TAKASAKI-YOUNG
RYAN T. NISHIBUN
INTERIM DEPUTY CHIEFS
NĀ HOPE LUNA NUI MĀKA'I KŪIKAWA

OUR REFERENCE MH-GK

February 2, 2026

The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
and Members
Committee on Judiciary
State Senate
415 South Beretania Street, Room 016
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Rhoads:

SUBJECT: Senate Bill No. 2203, Relating to Law Enforcement

I am Major Manuel Hernandez of District 3 ('Aiea/Pearl City/Waipahu) of the Honolulu Police Department (HPD), City and County of Honolulu.

The HPD opposes Senate Bill No. 2203, Relating to Law Enforcement.

Although the bill allows undercover mask use, it does not take into account related police activities in which protecting the identity of officers on scene is key to operations. An example of such activity would be our support unit personnel who are at the scenes of narcotics, gambling, or morals operations and may not necessarily be currently assigned as undercover officers but assist in such roles and duties related to undercover work. In addition, HPD policy prohibits mask usage except for covert work.

Further, this bill seeks to address the prevention of the use of masks by federal law enforcement agents. However, it may open Hawai'i up to issues with the Supremacy Clause of the United States Constitution. Currently, there is ongoing litigation with states (California as an example) that have enacted similar laws and are currently being sued by the federal government.

The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
and Members
February 2, 2026
Page 2

Subsequently, we may face the same legal challenge, placing the HPD in the precarious situation of enforcing state law and facing federal litigation and subsequent liability.

The HPD urges you to oppose Senate Bill No. 2203, Relating to Law Enforcement.

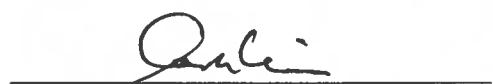
Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Manuel Hernandez, Major
District 3

APPROVED:



Rade K. Vanic
Interim Chief of Police

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

P.O. Box 37158, Honolulu, HI 96837-0158

Phone/E-Mail: [\(808\) 927-1214](tel:(808)927-1214) / kat.caphi@gmail.com

Today's Inmate; Tomorrow's Neighbor



COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair

Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

Tuesday, February 3, 2026

9:00 am

Room 016 and VIDEOCONFERENCE

STRONG SUPPORT FOR SB 2442 - FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard and Members of the Committee!

My name is Kat Brady and I am the Coordinator of Community Alliance on Prisons, a community initiative promoting smart justice policies in Hawai`i for more than two decades. This testimony is respectfully offered on behalf of the 3,654 Hawai`i individuals living behind bars¹ and under the “care and custody” of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation on January 26, 2026. We are always mindful that 799 – 43% of Hawai`i’s imprisoned male population are serving their sentences abroad -- thousands of miles away from their loved ones, their homes and, for the disproportionate number of incarcerated Kanaka Maoli, far, far from their ancestral lands.

Community Alliance on Prisons appreciates the opportunity to testify in **strong support of SB 2442** that funds community-based organizations’ contracts for services regarding access to justice for victims of domestic violence, court-involved youth, individuals navigating civil legal processes, and other vulnerable populations who depend on programs connected to the judiciary for safety, stability, and support. We are members of the True Cost Coalition and we are proud of the organizations such as Legal Aid, Volunteer Legal Services, immigrant rights,

¹ **DCR Weekly Population Report, January 26, 2026**

[Pop-Reports-Weekly-2026-01-26.pdf](https://www.hdcr.hawaii.gov/Pop-Reports-Weekly-2026-01-26.pdf)

and community-based organizations that provide access to justice for individuals navigating civil legal processes, and other vulnerable populations who depend on programs connected to the Judiciary for safety, stability, and support.

While funding for these worthy organizations has remained stagnant, the need for these services has been increasing. Imagine if these community heroes had to shut their doors – what would happen to some of our most vulnerable neighbors? Hawaii needs these organizations, especially now with the federal attack on immigrants.

In these troubling times, we need to protect our neighbors. Please find the funding to keep hope alive for so many people in Hawaii nei.

Mahalo for allowing us to share our thoughts.

February 1, 2026

RE: Testimony in Support of SB2203

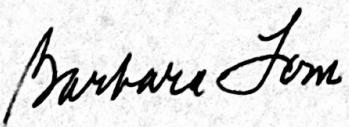
My name is Barbara Tom and I am the Director of the Waipahu Safe Haven Immigrant/Migrant Resource Center. Our center works with many migrants and immigrants, and I am writing to support this bill to protect their democratic rights as contributing residents of Hawaii without the fear of being arrested by anyone who cannot be identified.

Please support this bill as a protection to the rights of all residents in Hawaii.

Mahalo for your consideration and for supporting SB2203

Barbara Tom
Director

Waipahu Safe Haven Immigrant/Migrant Resource Center

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara Tom". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Barbara" on the top line and "Tom" on the bottom line.



SENATE BILL 2203, RELATING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT

FEBRUARY 3, 2026 · JDC HEARING

POSITION: Support with amendments.

RATIONALE: The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus supports and requests amendments for SB 2203, which establishes the offense of use of a mask or personal disguise by a law enforcement officer.

In 2025, immigration enforcement policies have intensified significantly. On January 20, 2025, the President signed Executive Order 14159, titled *“Protecting The American People Against Invasion,”* which expanded expedited removal processes, empowered increased deportations without court hearings, and threatened to withhold federal funding from sanctuary jurisdictions. These changes removed longstanding federal limits on enforcement in sensitive locations such as schools, hospitals, and places of worship, heightening fear and uncertainty among immigrant families and children.

Federal immigration enforcement actions have become more visible and aggressive. In September 2025, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) launched an enforcement surge in Massachusetts, involving increased arrests and operations without clear end dates, prompting public concern and local political response. In addition, a federally documented incident in January 2026 in Clifton Park, New York involved the detention of adults and school-age children in their home by ICE agents without a judicial warrant, raising constitutional concerns about Fourth

Amendment protections against unreasonable search and seizure and undue intrusion into family and private spaces.

Nationally, local educators and school administrators are reporting the real-world impact of intensified immigration enforcement in educational communities. A recent survey of more than 600 U.S. high school principals found that ICE raids and related climate pressures have caused a “culture of fear” resulting in declines in attendance, increased bullying of immigrant students, and stress among students whose families face enforcement actions. Many principals reported that immigrant parents and guardians left their communities during the school year, directly impacting children’s learning and stability.

Education research echoes these findings. A Harvard Education Press blog summarizing research from early 2026 notes that **over 80 percent of educators reported students expressing fear about immigration enforcement**, with corresponding declines in attendance and academic performance. Teachers observed that many students worry about their families’ safety, and some best-performing students have disengaged from school entirely because they see no secure future for themselves.

The prohibition on masked or obscured faces during civil immigration enforcement is a critical public safety safeguard. When armed officers operate in public spaces while concealing their identities, community members cannot readily distinguish between legitimate law enforcement and impersonators. This creates confusion, fear, and vulnerability, particularly in immigrant and mixed-status communities that are already subject to heightened anxiety around enforcement. Law enforcement agencies themselves routinely warn the public about individuals impersonating officers, and masking makes such impersonation far easier. Requiring visible faces helps ensure that residents can assess credibility, comply appropriately with *lawful* orders, and seek help when needed, rather than retreating into fear or uncertainty.

Banning masking also promotes accountability and de-escalation. **Research and decades of policing practice demonstrate that transparency reduces the likelihood of excessive force, misconduct, and escalation.** When officers know they are identifiable to the public, they are more likely to adhere to professional standards, and members of the public are more likely to

remain calm and cooperative. Masked enforcement, by contrast, can feel inherently threatening, especially to children and families, and can retraumatize individuals who have fled violence or authoritarian regimes where secret or masked police were used to intimidate civilians. In school-adjacent and community settings, visible and identifiable officers are essential to maintaining a sense of safety rather than fear.

Other jurisdictions have moved to address similar concerns. In late 2025, **California passed a package of laws that prohibit masked federal immigration agents and require schools and hospitals to bar ICE access to nonpublic areas without a judicial warrant**, making California the first state in the nation to codify such protections. In Illinois, legislators enacted protections in late 2025 that limit assistance to federal immigration enforcement, including provisions barring civil immigration arrests near sensitive locations such as schools and college campuses absent a judicial warrant.

The expansion of enforcement has also sparked local policy responses. For example, the Mayor of Chicago in early 2026 signed an executive order directing city police to investigate any alleged illegal activities by federal immigration agents within the city and ensure accountability, reinforcing the principle that no agency is above the law. For Hawai'i's educational communities, similar protections are vitally important. When families fear apprehension at schools, attendance declines, learning is disrupted, and students' sense of safety deteriorates.

These effects disproportionately harm immigrant students and their peers, undermining equitable access to education and violating the promise of equal protection under the law. Jurisprudence such as *Zadvydas v. Davis* and other decisions affirm that immigration enforcement must conform to constitutional protections, including procedural due process and limits on unreasonable government intrusion.

To further strengthen these public safety goals, **we respectfully request that this measure be amended to require all law enforcement officers conducting enforcement activities to wear clearly visible identification, including name or badge number and agency affiliation.** Identification requirements are a common best practice in policing and are already standard in many jurisdictions. Requiring visible ID would complement the mask prohibition by ensuring that

individuals can verify an officer's authority, report misconduct when it occurs, and distinguish lawful enforcement from vigilante or fraudulent activity. This amendment would enhance accountability, protect both officers and civilians, and reinforce public trust, all while preserving legitimate law enforcement authority and constitutional protections.

With escalated enforcement actions in 2025 and early 2026, documented degrading impacts on children's educational engagement, and complementary state legislative responses nationwide, this measure is a necessary step to protect immigrant families, uphold constitutional rights, and preserve safe and equitable educational environments for all students in Hawai'i.

Contact: educationcaucusdph@gmail.com · 808-679-7454



FEBRUARY 3, 2026

SENATE BILL 2203

CURRENT REFERRAL: JDC

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Kris Coffield,
President

David Negaard,
Director

Mireille Ellsworth,
Director

Justin Salisbury,
Director

Eileen Roco,
Director

Beatrice DeRego,
Director

Corey Rosenlee,
Director

Amy Zhao,
Policy and Partnerships Strategist

POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

Imua Alliance supports and suggests amendments for SB 2203, relating to law enforcement, which establishes the offense of use of a mask or personal disguise by a law enforcement officer.

Imua Alliance is a Hawai'i-based organization dedicated to ending sexual exploitation and gender violence, and combating all forms of systemic exploitation in our society. We have encountered numerous migrant survivors of sexual exploitation in our work, which is why we strongly support measures that advance community safety and survivor protections by reducing the harmful spillover of immigration enforcement into local institutions people rely on for protection, care, and due process.

An important protection for survivors and immigrant communities is banning the use of masking, face coverings that conceal identity, and other practices that prevent clear identification of immigration agents during enforcement actions. When federal agents operate in camouflage or without visible identification, it creates an atmosphere of fear and confusion that compounds trauma for trafficking survivors, discourages victims from seeking help, and undermines trust in institutions that are meant to offer safety and support.

The sense that agents could be "secret police" operating in neighborhoods, schools, or community spaces deters survivors from accessing critical services, reporting abuse by traffickers, seeking medical care, or engaging with law enforcement on serious crimes, a documented chilling effect that contributes to further exploitation and isolation.

Some states and localities have already moved to increase transparency and accountability in immigration enforcement by limiting masking practices for federal agents. In California's 2025 "No Secret Police Act," the legislature adopted laws that prohibit certain federal and local law

enforcement officers from wearing masks that hide their identities during enforcement operations, requiring clear identification by name or badge number except in narrowly defined safety situations. Additionally, proposals in cities like Denver have considered face-mask prohibitions for ICE agents as part of efforts to ensure that immigration enforcement does not resemble clandestine operations in community spaces.

At the federal level, bills like the No Anonymity in Immigration Enforcement Act of 2025 (H.R. 4004) would similarly require ICE agents to be identifiable during enforcement activities absent exigent circumstances, underscoring a growing bipartisan concern about transparency and accountability in immigration enforcement.

A ban of masking by law enforcement must be considered as part of our state's overall movement to defend against aggressive ICE enforcement operations, which endanger our community and are especially concerning for victims of exploitation, many of whom are trafficked migrants.

Trafficking survivors are uniquely harmed by escalating ICE raids and related abuses. For survivors of labor and sex trafficking, contact with law enforcement, courts, schools, hospitals, and service providers is already difficult due to trauma, language barriers, isolation, threats from traffickers, and fear of retaliation. When aggressive immigration enforcement expands—especially raids and “at large” arrests—survivors are less likely to report trafficking, cooperate with investigations, seek protective orders, access emergency shelter, or obtain medical care because they fear that asking for help could expose them or their family members to detention or removal. This directly benefits traffickers, who commonly use immigration status as a tool of coercion (“If you go to the police, you’ll be deported”). In short: when ICE presence and surveillance intensify, traffickers gain leverage, and survivor safety declines.

Recent reporting underscores how quickly enforcement tactics can scale and how that creates broader community fear. For example, national coverage in early 2026 described heightened enforcement operations and resulting backlash after fatal incidents involving federal agents in Minnesota—events that have amplified fear and mistrust, especially among immigrants and mixed-status families. Separately, investigative reporting described a nationwide “skip tracing” surveillance initiative launched in late 2025 to locate large numbers of immigrants using contractors and technology, raising civil liberties concerns that matter deeply for trafficking survivors trying to stay safe from both exploiters and abusers.

2025–2026 data show a growing share of ICE targets have no criminal history. This measure is also necessary because current enforcement patterns increasingly sweep in people without criminal convictions.

- TRAC (Syracuse University) reports that 73.6% of people held in ICE detention had no criminal conviction as of November 30, 2025.
- A January 2026 analysis reported the number of detained individuals with no convictions or pending charges rose sharply—from 3,165 in February 2025 to 25,193 in January 2026, based on ICE data summarized by an independent fact-checking review.
- Reuters reported that since January 20, 2025, 27% of ICE arrests involved individuals without other criminal charges or convictions (as of March 2025), contradicting claims that enforcement is narrowly focused on serious offenders.

When enforcement expands beyond serious public safety threats, the predictable result is broader community fear, precisely the environment in which trafficking thrives.

Constitutional and legal foundations support state and local limits on immigration enforcement entanglement. This measure is consistent with well-established constitutional principles and case law recognizing that states and localities cannot be compelled to administer or enforce federal regulatory programs.

- Under the anti-commandeering doctrine, the federal government generally may not require state/local officials to carry out federal enforcement. This principle is grounded in Supreme Court precedent including *Printz v. United States* (1997) and later reaffirmations of anti-commandeering limits.
- Courts have also reinforced that immigration enforcement is a federal domain and that state action must be carefully cabined, often cited in debates about state/federal boundaries in immigration enforcement (e.g., *Arizona v. United States* (2012)).

Put simply: Hawai'i can protect public safety while maintaining clear boundaries that prevent immigration enforcement from chilling access to services and justice for survivors.

Similar approaches exist across the U.S. Many jurisdictions have adopted policies to limit state/local participation in federal civil immigration enforcement—often described as “sanctuary” policies—precisely because community safety depends on residents’ willingness to report crimes and seek help. The Congressional Research Service summarizes that such jurisdictions typically limit assistance with federal civil immigration enforcement.

Examples include statewide frameworks like the California Values Act, SB 54 (restricting use of state/local resources for immigration enforcement in many circumstances) and TRUST-style limits on detention and cooperation, which have been widely adopted in various forms across states and cities. More recently, proposals and ordinances in places like New York

State and New York City have continued this trend, seeking to curtail deputization agreements and ICE footprint in local facilities.

For trafficking survivors, the ability to safely access shelters, clinics, schools, and the courts can be the difference between escape and continued exploitation. This measure helps ensure that survivors can seek help without fear that the act of reporting abuse will trigger detention, family separation, or deportation. That improves cooperation with law enforcement against traffickers, strengthens prosecutions, and supports safer communities statewide.

That said, we urge your committee to amend this measure to also require that law enforcement display identification to further limit fear-inducing tactics that disproportionately harm survivors of trafficking and other vulnerable immigrants. Clear identification promotes accountability, helps ensure that people are able to exercise their constitutional rights, and strengthens survivors' ability to access help without fear or intimidation.

With aloha,

Kris Coffield

President, Imua Alliance



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB2203 - RELATING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT

Senate Committee on Judiciary

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair

Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

February 2, 2026

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee:

The Legal Clinic (TLC) supports SB2203, which promotes transparency, accountability, and trust in law enforcement by prohibiting officers from wearing masks while on duty and interacting with the public, subject to clear and appropriate exceptions.

TLC is a nonprofit organization that works to advance justice for immigrants in Hawai'i through immigration legal services, community education, and policy advocacy. We co-lead the steering committee of the Campaign for Immigrant Justice alongside the Hawai'i Coalition for Immigrant Rights and the American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai'i. Fairness, due process, and safety for all Hawai'i residents are core values of our work.

SB2203 affirms a fundamental principle of policing in a democratic society: law enforcement officers exercising authority over the public should be readily identifiable and operate with openness and accountability. For the communities TLC serves – many of whom are immigrants, survivors of crime, or individuals with limited English proficiency – clear identification of law enforcement is especially critical to safety and trust. Officers who obscure their identities without a clear operational necessity can create fear, confusion, and distrust.

Over the past year, we have witnessed countless examples of masked federal agents conducting immigration enforcement raids that have undermined public confidence and sown terror in communities across the country. Moreover, a string of serious crimes committed by masked impersonators, including robberies, kidnappings, and assaults, recently prompted even the Federal Bureau of Investigation to issue a bulletin urging actual immigration enforcement agents to clearly identify themselves.

SB2203 appropriately responds to growing concern about masked enforcement actions while providing reasonable exceptions to ensure officer safety and effectiveness. Transparency is a prerequisite for public trust, and a cornerstone of responsible policing. SB2203 reflects Hawai'i values of openness and respect for human dignity, and we urge your support.

Sincerely,

Christina Sablan

Community & Policy Advocate



Committee: Senate Committee on Judiciary
Hearing Date/Time: Tuesday, February 3, 2026, at 9:00 AM
Place: Conference Room 016 & Videoconference
Re: **Testimony of the ACLU of Hawai'i in SUPPORT of, and offering amendments to SB2203: Relating to Law Enforcement**

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members:

The American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai'i (ACLU-HI) writes in **support of SB2203**, which establishes the offense of use of a mask or personal disguise by a law enforcement officer. **We respectfully request this bill be amended to include a requirement that officers also wear identification.**

In Minnesota and throughout the continent, we have witnessed President Trump's growing police force employ secret tactics, including ordering masked law enforcement agencies and military troops into cities. Federal agents are taking our immigrant neighbors. In Hawai'i, we have seen this occur in Kaua'i, for example.¹ Immigration enforcement has spiked in Hawai'i as compared to previous years: between January 20, 2025 and October 15, 2025, detainees nearly doubled, administrative arrests more than tripled, and detention stays nearly tripled, as compared to the same period in 2024.² We know that throughout the country, most people being held in detention have not been convicted of a crime.³

We are all less safe when masked agents are in our streets. Troops and secretive armed federal police in our streets create fear, making people afraid to show up to work, send their children to school, or go to the doctor. When people fear law enforcement, they are less likely to report crimes, seek help, or cooperate with law enforcement.⁴ We need

¹ Leonard, Matthew. (2026, January 6). *Hawai'i ICE Arrests and Detentions in 2025 Spiked From Year Before*. Honolulu Civil Beat. <https://www.civilbeat.org/2026/01/hawaii-ice-arrests-detentions-2025-far-exceed-2024/>

² Hausman, David. 2025. "U.S. Immigration Enforcement Data." *Calif. L. Rev. Online* 16 (13).

³ *Id.*

⁴ Elisa Jácome, The effect of immigration enforcement on crime reporting: Evidence from Dallas, *Journal of Urban Economics*, Volume 128, 2022, 103395, ISSN 0094-1190, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jue.2021.103395>; Wong, T.K., Shklyan, K., Isorena, A., & Peng, S. (2019). The

to ensure that law enforcement agents are transparent, accountable, and trustworthy. We support that mask bans should apply to *all* law enforcement operating in the state—not just federal law enforcement.

The lack of identification makes it difficult for ordinary people, local law enforcement, and public officials to differentiate genuine law enforcement actions from impersonators exploiting the situation to harm our community members. It also makes it difficult to identify who is behind operations that may employ aggressive tactics, result in constitutional violations, or cause community harm. **We therefore request that the measure be amended to also cover the failure to display proper identification.**

While Hawai‘i’s police departments may not typically engage in the practice of extreme masking, we believe that this legislation is necessary to ensuring community safety. It is our kuleana to protect our neighbors’ rights to live without fear.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Mandy Fernandes
Policy Director
ACLU of Hawai‘i

The mission of the ACLU of Hawai‘i is to protect the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the U.S. and State Constitutions. The ACLU of Hawai‘i fulfills this through legislative, litigation, and public education programs statewide. The ACLU of Hawai‘i is a non-partisan and private non-profit organization that provides its services at no cost to the public and does not accept government funds. The ACLU of Hawai‘i has been serving Hawai‘i for over 50 years.

impact of interior immigration enforcement on the day-to-day behaviors of undocumented immigrants. *US Immigration Policy Center*, 1-27.

LATE

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 1:19:15 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amelia Sofos	Testifying for College Democrats of Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee members,

The College Democrats of Hawai‘i strongly supports SB 2203, which establishes the offense of use of a mask or personal disguise by a law enforcement officer.

In 2025 we saw an over 200% increase in ICE arrests in Hawai‘i compared to the same period of time in 2024. As college students we are particularly concerned with the recent targeting of Pacific Islanders. Our major universities report Pacific Islanders making up between 15% to over 30% of their student bodies.

With this concern for our campus communities, we believe the prohibition of masks or obscured faces during civil law enforcement is a critical step to safeguarding our campus communities, immigrant families, and facilitating a safe environment for learning.



LATE

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Sen. Karl Rhoads, Chair

Sen. Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

HEARING:

Tuesday, February 3, 2026 at 9:00 AM

Conference Room 016 & Videoconference

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT - RE: SB 2203 RELATING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee,

Roots Reborn strongly **supports** SB2203 which establishes the offense of use of a mask or personal disguise by a law enforcement officer.

Roots Reborn is a grassroots, multicultural immigrant-justice and disaster-response organization serving migrant and immigrant communities on Maui and beyond. Born out of the August 2023 wildfires, we immediately stepped in to move aid, navigate systems alongside families, and build the trusted relationships that still anchor our work today. What began as wildfire response has grown into essential infrastructure for immigrant communities facing overlapping crises—from recovery and housing instability to shifting federal policies, increased enforcement, and rising fear.

The trust we have built has given us proximity to hear stories that rarely reach these chambers. Families who survived the fires, who lost homes, who are still piecing their lives together, now live with the additional terror of being separated from their children, their spouses, their neighbors. Many are afraid to go to work or school, or even to seek necessary medical care. For fire survivors already navigating grief, displacement, and rebuilding, this new crisis lands on top of everything else. Recovery becomes impossible when fear is constant.

Since December 2024, we have been meeting this new man-made disaster head-on. Roots Reborn is a founding coalition member of El Pueblo en Acción Maui (EPA Maui)—“The People in Action Maui”—a rapid response network and tipline made up of allied organizations and concerned community members. We exist because we believe an informed, calm community is a safer community.



Through this coalition, we have:

- Distributed over 3,500 flyers on constitutional rights
- Trained more than 700 community members through Know Your Rights workshops
- Delivered over 50 trainings to healthcare providers, social service organizations, business owners, faith communities, educators, and labor union leaders
- Processed more than 450 calls and texts through our tipline from community members concerned about federal enforcement activity
- Trained over 50 volunteer observers in verification, de-escalation, and peaceful documentation

SB 2203 creates a new misdemeanor offense for the use of a mask or personal disguise by a law enforcement officer in the performance of their duties. There are limited exceptions to account for masking or hiding identity for health reasons, undercover work and certain circumstances involving safety of the officer.

For months we have seen video evidence of aggressive, heavily armed, masked federal agents subjecting people to excessive force, with no identifying tag or badge, refusing to identify themselves while violating people's constitutional rights to peaceably observe and document their behavior, unlawfully smashing car windows to drag people from their vehicles, and committing unjustified killings. Masked and unidentified federal agents acting in this way is unprecedented. The tactic heightens fear in the public and interferes with accountability for misconduct by the officers. On Maui, we are witnessing community members afraid to go to work and children unable to go to school. We have heard stories from health care providers of patients to obtain necessary health care, and from faith leaders that people feel unable to attend religious services due to fear of a confrontation by unmasked and unidentified federal agents. There are concerns that trust in law enforcement of all kinds, even our local police departments, has eroded as a result of the actions of masked federal agents. Coalition member organizations have been called upon to address the potential harms to victims of violent crime, especially women and children subjected to domestic violence, who are now afraid to ask for help from the local law enforcement officers who have a duty to protect them.

Senate Bill 2203 is a limited, focused means to achieve greater transparency and provide a means of accountability for any injury or harm which may be inflicted on the people of Hawaii by federal law enforcement. It is a small step to returning law enforcement in Hawaii to public scrutiny and legal accountability. I urge you to **support SB 2203** and to vote to pass it out of this committee.

Mahalo nui,

Veronica Mendoza
Maui Roots Reborn, Founding Executive Director
EPA Maui, Founding Coalition Member

SB-2203

Submitted on: 1/31/2026 11:49:36 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lily Troy MD	Testifying for Maui Indivisible member	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support no mask by law enforcement

Submitted by Irwin Jiang

Hawai'i currently demonstrates comparatively strong public safety outcomes without relying on an unusually large police force. In 2024, Hawai'i's violent crime rate was approximately 39% lower than the national average, and overall crime has trended downward in recent years (USAfacts, 2024). At the same time, available federal data indicate that Hawai'i's officer-to-population ratio has historically been moderate and roughly in line with national averages, rather than exceptionally high, suggesting efficiency in outcomes relative to staffing levels (Federal Bureau of Investigation, Police Employee Data).

Community norms emphasizing kinship, familiarity, and cooperation have likely contributed to these outcomes. Hawai'i's crime profile reflects comparatively lower rates of violent crime than many mainland states, particularly in categories that often involve armed stranger-on-stranger encounters (USAfacts, 2024). Research consistently shows that community cooperation with law enforcement plays a critical role in preventing violence and supporting public safety, and that such cooperation is fostered when officers maintain strong reputational legitimacy within the communities they serve (National Research Council, 2004).

Disguises for law enforcement run counter to established principles of police legitimacy. Research in criminology and social psychology shows that public trust in law enforcement is built through transparency, fairness, and recognizable authority, rather than anonymity or coercion (Tyler, 2006; Tyler, 2011).

Police officers tend to exercise greater effective authority when they are known and recognized within their communities. A randomized field experiment published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* found that even a single positive, non-enforcement interaction with a uniformed officer significantly increased public trust and willingness to cooperate with police, with effects lasting weeks (Peyton et al., 2019).

This legitimacy translates into concrete public safety benefits, including greater willingness to de-escalate conflicts, share information, cooperate with investigations, and voluntarily comply with lawful authority. National research syntheses by the Department of Justice emphasize that these forms of voluntary cooperation are central to effective and safe policing outcomes.

Citations:

- Tyler, T. R. (2006). *Why People Obey the Law*. Princeton University Press.
- Tyler, T. R. (2011). *Trust and legitimacy: Policing in the USA*. *Policing: An International Journal*.
- Peyton, K., Sierra-Arévalo, M., & Rand, D. G. (2019). *A field experiment on community policing and police legitimacy*. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)*.

- National Research Council (2004).
Fairness and Effectiveness in Policing.
- U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office).
Procedural Justice and Police Legitimacy.
- USAFacts (2024). *What is the crime rate in the U.S.? Hawai'i.* (Compiled from FBI UCR data.)
- Federal Bureau of Investigation. *Police Employee Data.* Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program.

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 3:42:09 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nandita Sharma	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of SB2203. It is absolutely crucial that the HI state legislature enshrine into law the right of all people in Hawai‘i to deal with law enforcement agents of any level of government that are identifiable and therefore accountable to the people whom they serve.

This is not an abstract argument. Currently, masked, unidentified federal agents are actively stopping people, making arrests, placing people into detention, and, in horrific cases, killing people in states across the United States. This is very real and actual people are very frightened, which is precisely the point.

It should not be possible for law enforcement to be used to intimidate and frighten the people they serve. Passing this legislation will provide some relief to people in HI. We will know that our legislators are responsible - and courageous - enough to be proactive and stop this from happening here.

I urge you to take this as seriously as those of us who are worried about the use of law enforcement agents as political weapons against those who dissent from the actions of governments.

This is both the right thing to do and the thing that will protect our constitutionally protected rights. Failure to do so is a mistake of historic proportions.

LATE

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 11:44:18 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
maile nakano	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

No secret police!

Show aloha

SB-2203

Submitted on: 1/30/2026 7:57:18 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacob Wiencek	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee members,

Recent national tragedies have made the point of this legislation clear. It is unfortunately necessary. I urge the committee to **SUPPORT** this bill.

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 9:52:49 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gaye Chan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair and Committee Members, What ICE/CBP are doing across the US is nothing short of frightening even if they were not masked. Masking, and other facial covering, makes their presence exponentially worse.

I strongly support SB 2203. Implementing a law that prohibits law enforcement from wearing masks during operations is fundamentally about **accountability and public trust**. When law enforcement officers conceal their identities, it creates a "black box" environment where the risk of civil rights violations increases significantly. Identification is the cornerstone of due process; if an individual cannot identify an officer who has engaged in misconduct or excessive force, the legal path to recourse is effectively severed. Allowing agents to mask also increases the potential of anyone impersonating them. Please support this bill to protect us in Hawai‘i.

SB-2203

Submitted on: 1/30/2026 8:09:25 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tim Huycke	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB2203.

SB-2203

Submitted on: 1/30/2026 8:11:59 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lorna Holmes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please quickly pass this very vital measure. It is anathema to a free society to have law enforcement going around masked; this makes them no more than thugs in the private army of the president, and that is a recipe for dictatorship. No masks, observe due process, no summary execution. Until that happens, no one is safe.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Dr. Lorna Holmes, Honolulu 96826

SB-2203

Submitted on: 1/30/2026 8:39:59 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kanani Kai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this Bill,

Mahalo,

Kanani Kai

Member Hawaii Indivisible

SB-2203

Submitted on: 1/30/2026 8:43:29 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy D Moser	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you

SB-2203

Submitted on: 1/30/2026 9:39:57 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jody Weidemann	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

No masks on thugs and goons acting as federal agents!

SB-2203

Submitted on: 1/30/2026 10:00:50 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kiana Lee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello, I am writing in strong support of SB2203 both in the capacity of an individual citizen of Hawaii as well as a member of the Indivisible Hawaii State Network.

Many of us have seen the footage of federal agents kidnapping, assaulting, and murdering people in broad daylight. Nearly all of them are seen concealing their faces with masks with no IDs or badges. This anonymity empowers these individuals to act with impunity, sowing chaos and fear in local communities with no fear of accountability. This also more easily allows impersonators to don federal agent costumes and commit crimes (as reported by CNN and other news outlets throughout last year).

Law enforcement agents acting in good faith and for the greater public good do not need to conceal their identities. Senate Bill 2203 is an important step needed to protect our communities from abuses by federal agents such as the ones seen in other states.

I am in wholehearted support of most of this bill, though I do think there needs to be some stipulations placed on Section 2 (4)(a) to prevent officers from simply wearing medical/N95 masks all of the time.

Thank you,

Kiana L.

SB-2203

Submitted on: 1/31/2026 7:43:55 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jane Aquino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawaii needs to stand up to Lawless Trump ICE. NO MASKING. No collaboration with local police. I am an INDIVISIBLE Hawaii member.

SB-2203

Submitted on: 1/31/2026 7:51:11 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
lynne matusow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please accept this as testimony in strong support of SB2203. It has been difficult to watch Trump's thugs in action in Minnesota and elsewhere. This is America, not Russia, or Iran, or any of the other countries which relish in police brutality. Our governor and legislature must stand up to them, tell them this is not acceptable. Please move this bill forward on a fast track before we have no more freedoms. Thank you to my Senator, Karl Rhoads, and the others who introduced this bill.

SB-2203

Submitted on: 1/31/2026 9:04:20 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amber Kanehailua	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB2203. I believe it is important for the public to be able to identify easily law enforcement officers. I also believe it helps keep transparency and accountability. Thank you.

SB-2203

Submitted on: 1/31/2026 9:24:44 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nathan Leo Braulick	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo,

Nathan Leo Braulick

96826

SB-2203

Submitted on: 1/31/2026 9:29:13 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kayla Marie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this measure

SB-2203

Submitted on: 1/31/2026 3:54:44 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
JANE TOLLEFSRUD	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support the "no mask" rule for law enforcement personel. THANK YOU!

SB-2203

Submitted on: 1/31/2026 11:24:20 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vivian S. Toellner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support bill SB2203. Put making it only a misdemeanor is really not a tough enough message.

SB-2203

Submitted on: 1/31/2026 11:38:22 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Roger Hamada	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB2203.

Disguising a person's identity, whether through using dark glasses, anonymous writing, masking, or other means, tends to disinhibit that person's behavior. I think this is particularly dangerous in individuals who are permitted by society and trained to use deadly force and to wield and use firearms and other weapons. Requiring clear personal identification by law enforcement personnel promotes their taking responsibility for their actions.

Thank you.

SB-2203

Submitted on: 1/31/2026 12:46:18 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Younghée Overly	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for hearing this measure.

Younghée Overly,

a member of Indivisible Hawaii.

SB-2203

Submitted on: 1/31/2026 12:48:19 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mona Eisa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the committee,

My name is Mona Eisa and I am a 10 year resident of Kaimuki, here on Oahu. I am writing you today in strong support of SB2203 as it relates to law enforcement wearing masks. Specifically, ICE and CBP agents. Having masked, unidentified agents roaming the streets, kidnapping and quite literally murdering people, causes alarming amounts of fear within our communities. Under the current circumstances, people do not feel safe with ICE and federal law enforcement. People that are supposed to be "protecting" us, should not be hiding behind masks with no way to be identified. This is state sanctioned terror that is being funded with our tax dollars. Not to mention, this leaves room for "bad actors," who may (and have) intimidated ICE agents and kidnapped/harmed civilians. I am urging you, both as a constituent, and as a human being, please vote in support of SB2203 and ban the use of masks for federal agents and law enforcement . Mahalo for your time and I hope you will do what is right.

With aloha,

Mona Eisa, Honolulu, HI

SB-2203

Submitted on: 1/31/2026 1:29:42 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Doris Segal Matsunaga	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB2203. It is essential that Hawaii protect residents from confusion when dealing with law enforcement and from the violations of 1st amendment rights by ICE in our home state.

SB-2203

Submitted on: 1/31/2026 2:37:18 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Diaz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

1/31/26 RE: support for SB 2203

Aloha JDC Committee,

I support SB2203 to prohibit law enforcement officers from wearing masks.

Please pass SB2203 to improve law enforcement, fair conduct, and accountability.

Mahalo,

Lisa Diaz

Indivisible Kona member

76-223 Haoa St.

Kailua Kona, HI 96740

SB-2203

Submitted on: 1/31/2026 3:36:40 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Martha Nakajima	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. ICE has become a rogue agency with masked, armed, unidentifiable agents, bearing warrants written by themselves, shoving unsuspecting civilians into unmarked cars, heading to unknown destinations. This is an embryonic Gestapo. ICE, as now composed, is also providing cover for criminals, easily masquerading as ICE, to rob people on the street. This has to stop. Thank you, Martha Nakajima, Honolulu, member of Indivisible

SB-2203

Submitted on: 1/31/2026 4:09:54 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
DeWaine Tollefsrud	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha!

I am writing in strong support of SB2203. This bill creates a new misdemeanor offense for the use of a mask or personal disguise by a law enforcement officer in the performance of their duties. I can see exceptions for medical reasons but to go around masked to protect identity and the risk of being held accountable is reprehensible in its intimidating presentation. ALL enforcement officials should be unmasked! (Except maybe for the Lone Ranger, he is the only armed masked man I wouldn't mind in my neighborhood.)

Mahalo for your time and the opportunity to testify in support of SB2203.

DeWaine Tollefsrud

Kea'au, HI 96749

SB-2203

Submitted on: 1/31/2026 5:17:22 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sarah Corry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB2203 and this one is a real NO BRAINER!!!! When law enforcement wear masks they feel and become LESS accountable for their actions. All police, all law enforcement officers are expected to act in lawful ways, if they act in lawful ways they DONT need to be hidden behind a mask. They must be held accountable for the things they do at work, just as I am accountable for the things I do at work. They must remain unmasked. No mask by law enforcement.

SB-2203

Submitted on: 1/31/2026 9:20:15 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stefany Garcia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of this Bill.

SB-2203

Submitted on: 1/31/2026 10:05:09 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ashley de Coligny	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members:

My name is Ashley de Coligny and I support S.B. 2203, with one suggested amendment. This legislation establishes the offense of use of a mask or personal disguise by a law enforcement officer. To strengthen this measure and prevent abusive secret policing tactics, I respectfully request that this committee add language adding to the offense a failure to display identification.

In Minnesota and throughout the continent, we have witnessed the growing police force that the Trump administration is building employ secret police tactics, including ordering masked law enforcement agencies and military troops into cities. Federal agents are taking our immigrant neighbors. In Hawai‘i, we have seen this occur in Kaua‘i, for example.

We are all less safe when masked agents are in our streets. When people fear law enforcement, they are less likely to report crimes, seek help, or cooperate with law enforcement. We need to ensure that law enforcement agents are transparent, accountable, and trustworthy.

The lack of identification makes it difficult for ordinary people, local law enforcement, and public officials to differentiate genuine law enforcement actions from impersonators exploiting the situation to harm our community members. It also makes it difficult to identify who is behind operations that may employ aggressive tactics, result in constitutional violations, or cause community harm. I therefore respectfully request that the Committee also add to this offense the failure of an officer to prominently display identification.

While Hawai‘i’s police departments may not engage in a practice of extreme masking, we believe that this legislation is necessary to ensuring community safety. It is our kuleana to protect our neighbors’ rights to live without fear.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2203

Submitted on: 1/31/2026 10:20:37 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jill Lahmann	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Identification must be mandatory for any agents operating on behalf of the government.

SB-2203

Submitted on: 1/31/2026 10:34:30 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
pahnelopi mckenzie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support SB2203

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 12:02:36 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janice Hayashi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, as a very concerned Hawaii resident and senior citizen, it distresses me that ICE agents are allowed to cover their faces. That should not be allowed here, or anywhere else, as it prevents "accountability" and that is what we need right now in the face of violent, cruel ICE agents using extreme force on protesters. We need to know WHO these people are, Hawaii is such a small state and we need accountability NOW against ICE. thank you.

Eileen Cain
720 Mahi'ai St., Apt. E
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96826-5635
eileencain808@gmail.com
February 1, 2026

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair, and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary
Hawai'i State Legislature

Aloha, Senators,

I am writing this testimony in support of SB2203, "Relating to Law Enforcement."

Arrests and Due Process: Arresting officers in Hawai'i (and elsewhere) need to be **legally required to identify themselves. Hiding their identity is un-American.** Wearing black masks is no better than the wearing of white hoods by the Ku Klux Klan to hide their identities. **If arresting officers are legitimate, they need to be identified and identifiable.**

Officers cannot be permitted to hide their identity when they make an arrest and then claim that they do so for "privacy." (They only get to have privacy when they're not working.) The gestapo-like tactics that have been used during immigration raids are un-American. We in Hawai'i need to know who is making an arrest and what the charges are, and that the arrest is carried out with a warrant signed by a judge.

Due Process is also guaranteed under the Constitution for everyone. If anyone is denied due process, then everyone could lose their right to due process. We are all at risk. Everyone has a right to legal counsel and a chance to plead their case, just as Donald Trump himself had when he was charged with crimes. He always had due process.

I am haole (caucasian) and have lived in Hawai'i for nearly 50 years; I embrace diversity and oppose white-supremacist behavior that is playing out in the US.

Mahalo,

Eileen Cain,
Mō'ili'ili, Honolulu

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 12:15:53 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noelle Lindenmann	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members:

My name is Noelle Lindenmann and I support S.B. 2203, with one suggested amendment.

This legislation establishes the offense of use of a mask or personal disguise by a law enforcement officer. To strengthen this measure and prevent abusive secret policing tactics, I respectfully request that this committee add language adding to the offense a failure to display identification.

In Minnesota and throughout the continent, we have witnessed the growing police force that the Trump administration is building employ secret police tactics, including ordering masked law enforcement agencies and military troops into cities. Federal agents are taking our immigrant neighbors. In Hawai‘i, we have seen this occur in Kaua‘i and Hawai‘i county, for example.

We are all less safe when masked agents are in our streets. When people fear law enforcement, they are less likely to report crimes, seek help, or cooperate with law enforcement. We need to ensure that law enforcement agents are transparent, accountable, and trustworthy.

The lack of identification makes it difficult for ordinary people, local law enforcement, and public officials to differentiate genuine law enforcement actions from impersonators exploiting the situation to harm our community members. It also makes it difficult to identify who is behind operations that may employ aggressive tactics, result in constitutional violations, or cause community harm. I therefore respectfully request that the Committee also add to this offense the failure of an officer to prominently display identification.

While Hawai‘i’s police departments may not engage in a practice of extreme masking, we believe that this legislation is necessary to ensuring community safety. It is our kuleana to protect our neighbors’ rights to live without fear.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Noelle Lindenmann, Kailua-Kona

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 7:39:05 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mia Lamirand	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members:

My name is Mia Lamirand and I support S.B. 2203, with one suggested amendment. This legislation establishes the offense of use of a mask or personal disguise by a law enforcement officer. To strengthen this measure and prevent abusive secret policing tactics, I respectfully request that this committee add language adding to the offense a failure to display identification.

In Minnesota and throughout the continent, we have witnessed the growing police force that the Trump administration is building employ secret police tactics, including ordering masked law enforcement agencies and military troops into cities. Federal agents are taking our immigrant neighbors.

We are all less safe when masked agents are in our streets. When people fear law enforcement, they are less likely to report crimes, seek help, or cooperate with law enforcement. We need to ensure that law enforcement agents are transparent, accountable, and trustworthy.

The lack of identification makes it difficult for ordinary people, local law enforcement, and public officials to differentiate genuine law enforcement actions from impersonators exploiting the situation to harm our community members. It also makes it difficult to identify who is behind operations that may employ aggressive tactics, result in constitutional violations, or cause community harm. I therefore respectfully request that the Committee also add to this offense the failure of an officer to prominently display identification.

While Hawai'i's police departments may not engage in a practice of extreme masking, I believe that this legislation is necessary to ensuring community safety. It is our responsibility to protect our neighbors' rights to live without fear.

Mia Lamirand

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 7:51:34 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica Kuzmier	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am writing in favor of SB2203 with some reservations. I believe the provision for medical masks is too vague, and could lead to a loophole that can be easily exploited.

Besides that, I believe codifying that it is against state law for law enforcement to be masked is a good idea. I strongly disagree with what I have seen with certain federal law enforcement masked up to the point where they are unidentifiable except for a rough description of demographics. I have always wondered how people would be able to distinguish between them and random criminals intending to do them harm. I certainly believe we should have our own state law on our side to protect our local police officers and our populace at large to require these individuals to be easily identified.

I also believe that they should be carrying identification, just as police officers do, so concerned citizens can write down badge numbers and similar identifying information. There is no reason why when carrying on street operations that are observable by the public as we have seen, that ICE and other federal officers should not be held to the same standards as our local police officers.

Mahalo for taking the time to consider my views.

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 5:11:22 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janet Teare	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please require ALL groups of law enforcement be REQUIRED to Identify themselves as local police do. This will make our citizens safer by knowing these individuals are law enforcement not criminals posing as law enforcement.

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 8:17:44 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lori Luers	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members:

My name is Lori Luers and I support S.B. 2203, with one suggested amendment.

This legislation establishes the offense of use of a mask or personal disguise by a law enforcement officer. To strengthen this measure and prevent abusive secret policing tactics, I respectfully request that this committee add language adding to the offense a failure to display identification.

In Minnesota and throughout the continent, we have witnessed the growing police force that the Trump administration is building employ secret police tactics, including ordering masked law enforcement agencies and military troops into cities. Federal agents are taking our immigrant neighbors. In Hawai‘i, we have seen this occur in Kauai, for example.¹ We are all less safe when masked agents are in our streets. When people fear law enforcement, they are less likely to report crimes, seek help, or cooperate with law enforcement. We need to ensure that law enforcement agents are transparent, accountable, and trustworthy.

The lack of identification makes it difficult for ordinary people, local law enforcement, and public officials to differentiate genuine law enforcement actions from impersonators exploiting the situation to harm our community members. It also makes it difficult to identify who is behind operations that may employ aggressive tactics, result in constitutional violations, or cause community harm. I therefore respectfully request that the Committee also add to this offense the failure of an officer to prominently display identification.

While Hawai‘i’s police departments may not engage in a practice of extreme masking, we believe that this legislation is necessary to ensuring community safety. It is our kuleana to protect our neighbors’ rights to live without fear.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Lori Luers

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 8:27:32 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sarah Barbour	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Law enforcement does not need a disguise to enforce just laws. We have a right to know who is enforcing laws, and establishing identities of persons in any altercation is essential for any dialogue and de-escalation of hostilities. Law enforcement exists to protect and serve ALL people, including those committing alleged crimes. In order to have a peaceful outcome for any interaction, there must be a possibility for communication and dialogue. Disguises immediately escalate any law enforcement interactions because it removes public accountability and a key part of communication and dialogue, which is facial expression. Ergo, making communication more difficult is antithetical to the activities of law enforcement.

Disguise can also encourage brutality by making enforcers feel safer to act without consequences. As evidenced by the entirety of comment sections on the internet, anonymous comments are usually far more extreme than ones connected to identity.

Disguised law enforcement can also cause unnecessary fear. Can a reasonable person tell that these are legitimate police officers? What if instead they are impersonating officers with the intent to kidnap or otherwise commit crimes? If an issue arises with the "officer"'s conduct, what recourse does a person have to report it for investigation?

Any force which needs to disguise itself to do its regular enforcement work is not committed to peaceful enforcement of laws, nor exists to create a safer community.

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 9:01:49 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James E Raymond	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you -- I am a member of Indivisible Windward.

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 9:20:19 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Margery Ziffrin Marlowe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of SB2203 both personally and as a member of the Indivisible Hawaii State Network (IHSN). This bill creates a new misdemeanor offense for the use of a mask or personal disguise by a law enforcement officer in the performance of their duties. There are limited exceptions to account for masking or hiding identity for health reasons, undercover work and certain circumstances involving safety of the officer.

For months we have seen video evidence of aggressive, heavily armed federal agents snatching people off the street, subjecting them to excessive force, and now committing unjustified killings. During nearly all of these events the presumed agents are masked, with no identifying badge or tag. There is really no precedent for this kind of “secret” force in the United States, except the Ku Klux Klan. The tactic heightens fear in the public and interferes with accountability for misconduct by the officers.

Senate Bill 2203 is a limited, focused means to achieve greater transparency and provide a means of accountability for any injury or harm which may be inflicted on the people of Hawaii by federal law enforcement. It is a critical piece of our State’s preparations for dealing with a lawless federal government. It is a small step to returning law enforcement in Hawaii to public scrutiny and legal accountability. I urge you to pass this out of committee, and to work for passage through the legislature.

I do suggest an amendment to Section 2 (4)(a) regarding use of a medical or N95 mask. There needs to be a limitation of the exception to times where there is an airborne public health risk. Otherwise officers could simply wear that type of mask all the time.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important bill.

Margery Ziffrin Marlowe

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 12:33:04 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melody Torres	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in support of SB2203 as a concerned full time member of the Maui community. I believe that law enforcement needs to be transparent and should not hide behind masks for any reason. This creates a safer environment for everyone and ensures accountability from officers. Please consider passing this bill with no ammendments for the safety of our communities.

thank you

melody torres

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 10:02:37 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ron Brown	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am sure others will testify about how masking is part of the criminal Trump administrations effort to terrify us into submitting quietly to his tyrannical rule. Huge demonstrations alone will not stop Trump although they are important in encouraging effective opposition. Research has shown that what works is active action to to a tyrant's actions. This bill throws sand into the machinery of intimidation; a small but essential step in the fight to preserve our democracy from the nightmare future that the Trupm administration trying to create. Please support it.

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 6:43:45 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kiri Classen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I do not support any law enforcement wearing masks or covering their faces to hide their identity.

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 10:47:03 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paul Dahleen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members: My name is Paul Dahleen and I support S.B. 2203, with one suggested amendment. This legislation establishes the offense of use of a mask or personal disguise by a law enforcement officer. To strengthen this measure and prevent abusive secret policing tactics, I respectfully request that this committee add language adding to the offense a failure to display identification.

In Minnesota and throughout the continent, we have witnessed the growing police force that the Trump administration is building employ secret police tactics, including ordering masked law enforcement agencies and military troops into cities. Federal agents are taking our immigrant neighbors.

We need to ensure that law enforcement agents are transparent, accountable, and trustworthy. The lack of identification makes it difficult for ordinary people, local law enforcement, and public officials to differentiate genuine law enforcement actions from impersonators exploiting the situation to harm our community members. It also makes it difficult to identify who is behind operations that may employ aggressive tactics, result in constitutional violations, or cause community harm. I therefore respectfully request that the Committee also add to this offense the failure of an officer to prominently display identification. While Hawai‘i’s police departments may not engage in a practice of extreme masking, we believe that this legislation is necessary to ensuring community safety. It is our kuleana to protect our neighbors’ rights to live without fear. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Paul Dahleen

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 1:30:54 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erica Yamauchi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of SB 2203

Aloha, Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the committee:

My name is Erica Yamauchi, and I am writing today to express my strong support for Senate Bill 2203.

Trust in law enforcement depends on accountability, and accountability begins with identification. When officers conceal their faces during interactions with the public, it erodes the fundamental transparency our democracy requires.

SB 2203 addresses a disturbing trend: federal agents wearing facial coverings during immigration raids and other enforcement actions. This practice creates legitimate fear and confusion. How can community members distinguish between legitimate law enforcement and impersonators? How can witnesses accurately report misconduct? How can officers be held accountable when they're unidentifiable?

The bill strikes an appropriate balance. It prohibits law enforcement from wearing masks or personal disguises while interacting with the public, but includes sensible exceptions for undercover assignments, protective gear for specialized tactical teams, medical-grade masks during health emergencies, and equipment necessary for weather protection or motorcycle operation.

These exceptions demonstrate the bill's careful construction. This isn't about preventing officers from doing their jobs safely; it's about ensuring they do their jobs transparently.

Hawai'i has long been a leader in protecting civil liberties and promoting government accountability. In an era when federal enforcement tactics increasingly resemble those of secret police, our state must draw a clear line. Law enforcement officers serve the public. They should be identifiable to the public.

Anonymous enforcement creates opportunities for abuse and destroys community trust. When officers hide their faces, they hide from accountability itself.

I urge you to support SB 2203. Transparency and accountability aren't obstacles to effective law enforcement; they're essential to legitimate law enforcement in a free society.

Mahalo for your consideration and service to our state, and the opportunity to testify.

Erica Yamauchi, Kaimukī

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 3:20:38 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ana Trovinger	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members,

My name is Ana Trovinger, and I fully support S.B. 2203 with one crucial amendment for your consideration.

This important legislation addresses the alarming issue of law enforcement officers using masks or personal disguises. To bolster its effectiveness and avert the potential misuse of secret policing tactics, I urge the committee to include a provision that mandates officers to prominently display their identification.

Across Minnesota and various regions of the US, we have witnessed the troubling expansion of police powers under the Trump administration, where masked law enforcement and military personnel have invaded our communities. Tragically, federal agents have been seen apprehending our immigrant neighbors, as exemplified by incidents in Kaua‘i, Hawai‘i.

The presence of masked officials poses a significant threat to public safety. When citizens feel uncertain about who constitutes legitimate law enforcement, they are less inclined to report crimes, seek assistance, or collaborate with officers. It is imperative that law enforcement remains transparent, accountable, and earns the trust of the community.

The absence of visibly displayed identification creates confusion for the public, local law enforcement, and government officials alike, making it challenging to distinguish between authorized law enforcement and those who might exploit the situation for malicious purposes. Adding a requirement for identification will help ensure that operations are conducted responsibly and lawfully, thereby upholding constitutional rights and protecting our community.

Though Hawai‘i's police departments may not currently practice extreme masking, this legislation is essential in promoting and maintaining community safety. We must stand firm in our duty to safeguard the rights of our neighbors and ensure they can live without fear.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my support.

Sincerely,

Ana Trovinger

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 3:34:48 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joie Yonamine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of SB2203 both personally and as a member of the Indivisible Hawaii State Network (IHSN). This bill creates a new misdemeanor offense for the use of a mask or personal disguise by a law enforcement officer in the performance of their duties. There are limited exceptions to account for masking or hiding identity for health reasons, undercover work and certain circumstances involving safety of the officer.

For months we have seen video evidence of aggressive, heavily armed federal agents snatching people off the street, subjecting them to excessive force, and now committing unjustified killings. During nearly all of these events the presumed agents are masked, with no identifying badge or tag. There is really no precedent for this kind of “secret” force in the United States, except the Ku Klux Klan. The tactic heightens fear in the public and interferes with accountability for misconduct by the officers.

Senate Bill 2203 is a limited, focused means to achieve greater transparency and provide a means of accountability for any injury or harm which may be inflicted on the people of Hawaii by federal law enforcement. It is a critical piece of our State’s preparations for dealing with a lawless federal government. It is a small step to returning law enforcement in Hawaii to public scrutiny and legal accountability. I urge you to pass this out of committee, and to work for passage through the legislature.

I do suggest an amendment to Section 2 (4)(a) regarding use of a medical or N95 mask. There needs to be a limitation of the exception to times where there is an airborne public health risk. Otherwise officers could simply wear that type of mask all the time.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important bill.

Joie Yonamine

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 7:57:43 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Victor K. Ramos	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

OPPOSE this bill. Why do you all consistently insist on opposing personal safety tactics used by Law Enforcement Officers.

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 10:24:22 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Trevor	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Oppose. Democrats FORCED everyone wear mask during Covid.....

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 3:43:43 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leo Nahe Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support bill SB 2203.

Community members have a right to know who the officer is when engaging in enforcement activity.

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 4:45:03 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sandy Ma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

I am testifying in support of SB 2203, which establishes the offense of use of a mask or personal disguise by a law enforcement officer.

It seems like a democratic society has crossed the rubicon if a bill like SB 2203 needs to be introduced and enacted. It should be incontrovertible truth that law enforcement officers are not to be disguised in the performance of their official duties, except for limited circumstances.

I respectfully ask you to pass SB 2203 out of your Committee unamended, as the truth now has many versions and our democracy is in peril.

Sandy Ma

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 5:30:15 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mark Van Horne	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Masked agents have no place in the United States. Masks are for criminals who wish to hide their identity. If federal agents feel the need to hide, then what crimes are they committing they are afraid will come to light? No secret police in the United States!

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 6:08:36 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mardi Jaskot	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Sunday February 1, 2026

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members:

My name is Mardi Jaskot and I **support S.B. 2203**, with one suggested amendment.

This legislation establishes the offense of use of a mask or personal disguise by a law enforcement officer. To strengthen this measure and prevent abusive secret policing tactics, I respectfully request that this committee add language adding to the offense a failure to display identification.

In Minnesota and throughout the continent, we have witnessed the growing police force that the Trump administration is building employ secret police tactics, including ordering masked law enforcement agencies and military troops into cities. Federal agents are taking our immigrant neighbors. In Hawai‘i, we have seen this occur in Kaua‘i.

I grew up on Oahu and one of the joys and strengths of our islands is that we have are all been close neighbors and even family whether we are civilians or civil servants, including our police. Please maintain the professionalism and trust necessary for our productive and safe island communities through affirming S.B. 2203.

We are all less safe when masked agents are in our streets. When people fear law enforcement, they are less likely to report crimes, seek help, or cooperate with law enforcement. We need to ensure that law enforcement agents are transparent, accountable, and trustworthy.

The lack of identification makes it difficult for ordinary people, local law enforcement, and public officials to differentiate genuine law enforcement actions from impersonators exploiting the situation to harm our community members. It also makes it difficult to identify who is behind operations that may employ aggressive tactics, result in constitutional violations, or cause community harm. I therefore respectfully request that the Committee also add to this offense the failure of an officer to prominently display identification.

While Hawai‘i’s police departments may not engage in a practice of extreme masking, we believe that this legislation is necessary to ensuring community safety. It is our kuleana to protect our neighbors’ rights to live without fear.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify!

Sincerely,

Mardi Jaskot

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 6:16:15 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jordan Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members:

My name is Jordan Smith and I **support S.B. 2203**, with one suggested amendment.

This legislation establishes the offense of use of a mask or personal disguise by a law enforcement officer. To strengthen this measure and prevent abusive secret policing tactics, I respectfully request that this committee add language adding to the offense a failure to display identification.

In Minnesota and throughout the continent, we have witnessed the growing police force that the Trump administration is building employ secret police tactics, including ordering masked law enforcement agencies and military troops into cities. Federal agents are taking our immigrant neighbors. In Hawai‘i, we have seen this occur in Kaua‘i, for example.

We are all less safe when masked agents are in our streets. When people fear law enforcement, they are less likely to report crimes, seek help, or cooperate with law enforcement. We need to ensure that law enforcement agents are transparent, accountable, and trustworthy.

The lack of identification makes it difficult for ordinary people, local law enforcement, and public officials to differentiate genuine law enforcement actions from impersonators exploiting the situation to harm our community members. It also makes it difficult to identify who is behind operations that may employ aggressive tactics, result in constitutional violations, or cause community harm.

I therefore respectfully request that the Committee also add to this offense the failure of an officer to prominently display identification.

While Hawai‘i’s police departments may not engage in a practice of extreme masking, we believe that this legislation is necessary to ensuring community safety. It is our kuleana to protect our neighbors’ rights to live without fear.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Jordan Smith

Honolulu, 96817

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 6:51:51 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carla Allison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard and Committee Members:

My name is Carla Allison, and I am writing in **strong support of SB2203**, prohibiting the use of face masks by law enforcement to conceal identity.

While this bill includes needed exceptions we, the public, have a right to know the identity of law enforcement officers engaging in law enforcement, lawful or not.

We need to take a stand now to ensure law enforcement are not allowed to hide in Hawaii should they resort to bullying and threatening tactics we are seeing taking place in other states.

We want no secret police operating in Hawaii.

I urge you to support SB2203.

Thank you for your consideration,

Carla Allison

Honolulu

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 7:03:46 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Collat	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Secret police are the stuff of two-bit dictators, not the United States. Accountability of public servants to the public they are supposed to serve is a cornerstone of the American style of governane. I am writing in strong support of SB2203 both personally and as a member of the Indivisible Hawaii State Network (IHSN). This bill creates a new misdemeanor offense for the use of a mask or personal disguise by a law enforcement officer in the performance of their duties. There are limited exceptions to account for masking or hiding identity for health reasons, undercover work and certain circumstances involving safety of the officer.

For months we have seen video evidence of aggressive, heavily armed federal agents snatching people off the street, subjecting them to excessive force, and now committing unjustified killings. During nearly all of these events the presumed agents are masked, with no identifying badge or tag. There is really no precedent for this kind of “secret” force in the United States, except the Ku Klux Klan. The tactic heightens fear in the public and interferes with accountability for misconduct by the officers.

Senate Bill 2203 is a limited, focused means to achieve greater transparency and provide a means of accountability for any injury or harm which may be inflicted on the people of Hawaii by federal law enforcement. It is a critical piece of our State’s preparations for dealing with a lawless federal government. It is a small step to returning law enforcement in Hawaii to public scrutiny and legal accountability. I urge you to pass this out of committee, and to work for passage through the legislature.

I do suggest an amendment to Section 2 (4)(a) regarding use of a medical or N95 mask. There needs to be a limitation of the exception to times where there is an airborne public health risk. Otherwise officers could simply wear that type of mask all the time.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important bill.

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 7:16:53 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Peter Greenhill	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,
I strongly support SB 2203 because it promotes transparency and public trust by prohibiting law enforcement officers from wearing masks or disguises during public interactions, except in clearly defined circumstances such as undercover work or motorcycle operation.
Please pass this important measure.

Mahalo.

Peter Greenhill

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 7:44:40 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dana Ishii Dowden	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members:

My name is Dana Dowden and I support S.B. 2203, with one suggested amendment.

This legislation establishes the offense of use of a mask or personal disguise by a law enforcement officer. To strengthen this measure and prevent abusive secret policing tactics, I respectfully request that this committee add language adding to the offense a failure to display identification.

In Minnesota and throughout the continent, we have witnessed the growing police force that the Trump administration is building employ secret police tactics, including ordering masked law enforcement agencies and military troops into cities. Federal agents are taking our immigrant neighbors. In Hawai‘i, we have seen this occur in Kaua‘i, for example.¹

We are all less safe when masked agents are in our streets. When people fear law enforcement, they are less likely to report crimes, seek help, or cooperate with law enforcement. We need to ensure that law enforcement agents are transparent, accountable, and trustworthy.

The lack of identification makes it difficult for ordinary people, local law enforcement, and public officials to differentiate genuine law enforcement actions from impersonators exploiting the situation to harm our community members. It also makes it difficult to identify who is behind operations that may employ aggressive tactics, result in constitutional violations, or cause community harm. I therefore respectfully request that the Committee also add to this offense the failure of an officer to prominently display identification.

While Hawai‘i’s police departments may not engage in a practice of extreme masking, we believe that this legislation is necessary to ensuring community safety. It is our kuleana to protect our neighbors’ rights to live without fear.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Dana Dowden

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 9:19:37 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lynn Otaguro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

I am writing in support of SB 2203.

When a member of law enforcement acts on behalf of the government, they hold a particular duty to follow the laws and the Constitution, and to act with restraint. The requirements of this bill helps to bring all public actors in line with the kind of transparency and accountability that we already require of our state and county law enforcement. By doing so, this bill will keep our communities and our local law enforcement safer.

Recently, in USA Today, Minnesota Police Chief O'Hara wrote:

“Nearly two centuries ago, Sir Robert Peel articulated [nine principles of policing](#) that remain as relevant today as ever. The legitimacy of policing depends not on force, but on public consent. Police authority, he argued, flows from trust, and is earned through restraint, fairness and professionalism. When public consent erodes, no amount of enforcement can restore order.

We are a nation governed by laws, and those laws must be respected. But the rule of law does not sustain itself through authority alone. It depends on respect for civil rights, professional standards and leadership committed to ensuring that enforcement practices themselves do not cause harm...”

“When enforcement drifts from professionalism – when standards are lowered, training is insufficient and accountability is absent – the result is not public order. It is public fear. And when fear eclipses trust, public safety suffers.”

https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/voices/2026/01/27/minneapolis-police-chief-ice-shootings-public-trust/88338271007/?fbclid=IwY2xjawPtI31leHRuA2FlbQIxMABicmlkETFyb09lQkJxVjNzaG5Pb3J5c3J0YwZhcHBfaWQQMjIyMDM5MTc4ODIwMDg5MgABHrA1nsabYL0yjNCdiVHPwXvwKztQ-tgrSto2GQwYPLTQh1leRpFOkaiTmuZd_aem_vjbwRm4ijybLAfIFPQZwBg

Please support the passage of this bill.

Sincerely,

Lynn Otaguro

Honolulu, Hawaii

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 9:36:28 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kionna Cadirao	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I feel it is our right as people to identify law enforcement who are harming innocent people! The way that they have dealt with a lot of situations is insane!!!! I think at least the right thing to do is to be able to identify any law enforcement, as of now, it is like they are sneaking around & targeting random people. That makes others feel unsafe out in public because it could be anyone around them!

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 9:40:49 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nicholas Zehr	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

I submit testimony in strong support of SB2203.

A core function of democratic policing is public trust. That trust depends on transparency, clear identification, and accountability, especially during direct interactions between law enforcement and the public. When officers are visibly identifiable, residents can reasonably distinguish legitimate authority from impersonation, coercion, or abuse. This clarity protects both the public and law enforcement officers themselves.

SB2203 addresses a growing and legitimate concern: the use of facial coverings by law enforcement during routine public interactions. Such practices, when not narrowly justified, undermine confidence, heighten fear, and create ambiguity about lawful authority. This is particularly troubling in a free society that rejects secret policing and values openness in the exercise of state power.

Importantly, the bill is carefully and responsibly tailored. It preserves operational flexibility by explicitly exempting undercover work, medical needs, weather and emergency protection, motorcycle safety, and specialized tactical operations. These exemptions ensure officer safety and mission effectiveness while maintaining the principle that routine law enforcement actions should be conducted openly and transparently.

By drawing a clear line between legitimate, identifiable policing and circumstances that justify concealment, SB2203 strengthens accountability without impeding public safety. It reinforces

the idea that law enforcement authority flows from public consent and must be exercised in a manner consistent with democratic norms.

For these reasons, SB2203 represents a balanced, measured, and necessary step to restore and preserve public trust. I respectfully urge the committee to pass this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 10:08:20 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jesse Hutchison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you!

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 10:12:46 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Lum	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

I strongly support SB 2203 because it promotes transparency and public trust by prohibiting law enforcement officers from wearing masks or disguises during public interactions, except in clearly defined circumstances such as undercover work or motorcycle operation.

Please pass this important measure.

Mahalo,
Jen Lum, 'Ewa Beach

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

I strongly support **SB 2203** because it promotes transparency and public trust by prohibiting law enforcement officers from wearing masks or disguises during public interactions, except in clearly defined circumstances such as undercover work or motorcycle operation.

Please pass this important measure.

Mahalo,

Melanie Lau, MD

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 11:50:03 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lori Kamemoto, MD, MPH	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments: February 3, 2026 Dear Chair Rhoads and Senate Committee on Judiciary Members:
Re: SB2203 - Relating to Law Enforcement Position: Strongly Support SB2203 promotes transparency and public trust by prohibiting law enforcement officers from wearing masks and disguises during interactions with the public except in clearly defined circumstances. We have already seen what public harm can result when federal law enforcement believe they are not identifiable behind their masks and disguises. Please support this bill to protect our Hawaii Ohana. Mahalo, Lori Kamemoto, MD, MPH

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 12:30:50 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christine Trecker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I firmly support SB2203 which makes it a misdemeanor offense if a law enforcement officer masks or in way disguises his or her face in the line of duty.

In addition, I strongly encourage amending SB2203 Section 2 (4)(a) regarding use of a medical or N95 mask by *specifying that a mask can only be worn when there is an airborne public health risk.*

Sadly, there is even a need to legally require that law enforcement officers be unmasked, but Hawaii must be prepared. Until we can put an end to the Trump Administration's ICE operations involving aggressive, masked, heavily armed ICE officers, states nationwide must take proactive steps passing bills such as SB2203.

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 12:31:59 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kevin Hughes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this common sense law. Everyone in law enforcement should be protecting us from crime not terrorizing us with masks and disguises.

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 12:37:56 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dina Shek	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,
I strongly support SB 2203. This important bill promotes transparency and public trust by prohibiting law enforcement officers from wearing masks or disguises during public interactions. This bill allows for reasonable exceptions, and does not impede legitimate law enforcement activities.
Please vote to pass SB 2203.

Thank you.

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 1:37:56 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristen Young	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members:

My name is Kristen Young and I support S.B. 2203, with one suggested amendment. This legislation establishes the offense of use of a mask or personal disguise by a law enforcement officer. To strengthen this measure and prevent abusive secret policing tactics, I respectfully request that this committee add language adding to the offense a failure to display identification.

In Minnesota and throughout the continent, we have witnessed a growing police force employ secret police tactics, including ordering masked law enforcement agencies and military troops into cities. Federal agents are taking our migrant neighbors. In Hawai‘i, we have seen this occur in Kaua‘i.

We are all less safe when masked agents are in our streets. When people fear law enforcement, they are less likely to report crimes, seek help, or cooperate with law enforcement. We need to ensure that law enforcement agents are transparent, accountable, and trustworthy.

The lack of identification makes it difficult for ordinary people, local law enforcement, and public officials to differentiate genuine law enforcement actions from impersonators exploiting the situation to harm our community members. It also makes it difficult to identify who is behind operations that may employ aggressive tactics, result in constitutional violations, or cause community harm. I therefore respectfully request that the Committee also add to this offense the failure of an officer to prominently display identification.

While Hawai‘i’s police departments may not engage in a practice of extreme masking, we believe that this legislation is necessary to ensuring community safety. It is our kuleana to protect our neighbors’ rights to live without fear.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Kristen Young
Honolulu, HI 96813

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 2:31:09 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ellen Carson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill. It provides better accountability for our law-enforcement, and better security For our residents.

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 5:30:55 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Ball	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Rhoads and Vice Chair Gabbard,

I am writing in strong support of SB2203. We have seen alarming national coverage of the dangers that anonymity can have for our law enforcement officials, many of whom serve our communities bravely and responsibly. The reckless actions of this federal administration, however, demand that we strive for absolute transparency and accountability from those pledged to enforce our laws. This bill has my strong support, and will only strengthen our community's faith and trust in our local law enforcement officers as well. Mahalo nui loa for your and the committee's strong support of good government, ethics, and accountability legislation throughout this session.

Sincerely yours,

David Ball

Waialae-Kahala

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 6:28:27 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thomas Sheeran	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

February 3, 2026

Dear Chair Rhoads and Senate Committee on Judiciary Members:

Re: SB2203 - Relating to Law Enforcement

Position: Strongly Support

SB2203 promotes transparency, public trust, and accountability by prohibiting law enforcement officers from wearing masks and disguises during interactions with the public except in clearly defined circumstances.

We have already seen what public harm can result when federal law enforcement believe they are not identifiable behind their masks and disguises.

Please support this bill to protect our Hawaii ohana.

Mahalo,

Thomas Sheeran

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 7:40:34 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cynthia J. Goto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 7:52:41 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hugh Jones	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support the passage of legislation that would protect Hawaii residents from the development and use of secret police forces.

Secret policing is a tool used by authoritarian governments to intimidate, scare, harass and violate the civil rights of Americans. The use of secret police encourages abusive behavior because those employed in these jobs cannot be held accountable by any oversight body, the media, the public or in the civil courts because they remain unidentified.

Allowing secret police leads to other abuses too--like "fake" law enforcement officials that can take advantage of Americans.

I urge the passage of this bill.

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 8:09:28 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richard S Velasquez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

this is a basic protection, there should be no secret police

LATE

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 9:01:35 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrew Trump	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

It is imperative for the safety of our communities that law enforcement is identifiable to the public.

Mahalo,

Andrew

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Sen. Karl Rhoads, Chair

Sen. Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

LATE

HEARING:

Tuesday, February 3, 2026 at 9:00 AM

Conference Room 016 & Videoconference

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

TESTIMONY IN **SUPPORT** - RE: SB 2203 RELATING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christine Andrews, and I live in Wailuku, Maui. I am writing today in **support of SB2203** Relating to Law Enforcement. I have been an attorney licensed in Hawaii for over 25 years. I currently volunteer as a Know Your Rights and constitutional protector trainer and educator statewide. I have helped train teachers and students, business owners and union members, faith leaders and health care providers, parents and senior citizens on what their constitutional rights are, that these rights apply to all within the United States, regardless of citizenship status, and how to ensure these rights are not violated. I have also trained them how to prepare themselves, their staff, and their places of work and community service for interactions with federal agents.

The images we see on the news and social media of aggressive, untrained, and violent unmasked, unbadged persons attacking citizens and noncitizens alike is eroding trust in law enforcement and our government. In my capacity as a volunteer educator, I have heard concerns that victims of sexual and domestic violence, some of our most vulnerable community members, are afraid to call local law enforcement for assistance because they now do not trust law enforcement. I have heard from health care providers that fear of lawless, violent, unmasked and unidentified persons is making people afraid to leave their homes to seek necessary medical care.

As a lawyer with an understanding of the Constitution and who has taken an oath to uphold it and the rule of law, what I am witnessing nationwide is chilling. Seeing images of the murder of people engaged in lawful, constitutionally-protected activity has impacted my mental health. As a woman and mother, I am afraid of being targeted by unmasked, unbadged government agents or imposters. I am afraid that they will take my picture and find out who I am, where I live, and come to my house and harm not just myself but my loved ones. I would ask that this bill be amended to ensure that law enforcement does not use license-plate identifying technology, so that I do not have to fear hostile and lawless agents tracking my activities and endangering the community members I serve. I almost hesitated to submit testimony in support of this bill for fear of retaliation. This is how far we have fallen in the direction of

authoritarianism, that people like me fear speaking up for basic, civil protections such as unmasked and properly-identified federal agents.

I am an educated, privileged, white person. I, like millions of others, have chosen to use my privilege to stand up for and protect my neighbors and community members. People like me are being killed for it. Yet I am undeterred by the deaths of Renne Goode and Alex Pretti. I am inspired, and millions are standing alongside me. The government agents who killed Alex Pretti felt empowered to engage in violence openly and with impunity because they felt protected from accountability because they were masked and unidentified. This bill provides important protection for volunteers like me and for community members who no longer trust their law enforcement agents of any kind.

I request that you support SB 2203 and help restore rule of law, instill respect on the part of law enforcement, and rebuild trust in government.

Thank you for siding with your community on this issue.

Mahalo,

Christine L. Andrews, J.D.
Wailuku, Maui

LATE

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 9:10:15 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle Bonk	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you.

LATE

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 9:11:51 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mae Isonaga	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Rhoads and Judiciary Committee Members:

Subject: Support for SB2203, Relating to Law Enforcement

We stand in strong support of SB2203. All Law Enforcement should show their faces while on duty in our communities, and should have their names visible on their uniforms, like our Honolulu Police Department. It makes no sense to wear a mask, unless you have something to hide. Wearing a mask in our communities builds fear, not trust.

Please support our communities by passing SB2203.

Mahalo,

Mae Isonaga and William Tam

LATE

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 10:46:29 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jason Lewis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SB2203 Law Enforcement; Mask; Disguise; Prohibition

I am writing in strong support of SB2203 both personally and as a member of the Indivisible Hawaii State Network (IHSN). This bill creates a new misdemeanor offense for the use of a mask or personal disguise by a law enforcement officer in the performance of their duties. There are limited exceptions to account for masking or hiding identity for health reasons, undercover work and certain circumstances involving safety of the officer.

For months we have seen video evidence of aggressive, heavily armed federal agents snatching people off the street, subjecting them to excessive force, and now committing unjustified killings. During nearly all of these events the presumed agents are masked, with no identifying badge or tag. There is really no precedent for this kind of “secret” force in the United States, except the Ku Klux Klan. The tactic heightens fear in the public and interferes with accountability for misconduct by the officers.

Senate Bill 2203 is a limited, focused means to achieve greater transparency and provide a means of accountability for any injury or harm which may be inflicted on the people of Hawaii by federal law enforcement. It is a critical piece of our State’s preparations for dealing with a lawless federal government. It is a small step to returning law enforcement in Hawaii to public scrutiny and legal accountability. I urge you to pass this out of committee, and to work for passage through the legislature.

I do suggest an amendment to Section 2 (4)(a) regarding use of a medical or N95 mask. There needs to be a limitation of the exception to times where there is an airborne public health risk. Otherwise officers could simply wear that type of mask all the time.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important bill.

[signed]

Jason Lewis

Lahaina resident

LATE

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 11:34:44 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Danielle Goren	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of SB2203 both as a Lahaina resident and as a member of the Indivisible Hawaii State Network (IHSN).

This bill creates a much-needed new misdemeanor offense for the use of a mask or personal disguise by a law enforcement officer in the performance of their duties. There are limited exceptions to account for masking or hiding identity for health reasons, undercover work and certain circumstances involving safety of the officer.

For months we have seen video evidence of aggressive, heavily armed federal agents snatching people off the street, subjecting them to excessive force, and now committing unjustified killings. Masked agents have terrorized the public, detaining a five-year-old boy, shooting and killing two U.S. citizens, raiding churches, utilizing teargas on peaceful protesters which include children and the elderly, sexually assaulting people they have in detention...the list of atrocities multiplying exponentially each day. During nearly all of these events the presumed agents are masked, with no identifying badge or tag. They are acting with impunity heightened by anonymity the masks afford, violating basic human rights and showing a gross disrespect for our Constitution and bedrock principles of liberty and justice for all. This is how secret police under authoritarianism operate; not legitimate, accountable law enforcement in a democracy.

"The inconsistency of masked agents with our democratic constitutional principles was outlined by Ronald Reagan-appointed judge, Honorable William G. Young, United States District Court, District of Massachusetts, in his decision in *American Association of University Professors v. Rubio*,[\[1\]](#) issued late September of last year:

And there's the issue of masks. This Court has listened carefully to the reasons given by Öztürk's captors for masking- up and has heard the same reasons advanced by the defendant Todd Lyons, Acting Director of ICE. It rejects this testimony as disingenuous, squalid and dishonorable. ICE goes masked for a single reason -- to terrorize Americans into quiescence. Small wonder ICE often seems to need our respected military to guard them as they go about implementing our immigration laws. It should be noted that our troops do not ordinarily wear masks. Can you imagine a masked marine? It is a matter of honor -- and honor still matters. To us, masks are associated with cowardly desperados and the despised Ku Klux Klan. In all our history we have never tolerated an armed masked secret police. Carrying on in this fashion, ICE brings

indelible obloquy to this administration and everyone who works in it. “We can not escape history,” Lincoln rightly said. “[It] will light us down in honor or dishonor, to the latest generation.” Abraham Lincoln, Second Annual Message to Congress (Dec. 1, 1862).

Perhaps we're now afraid to stick our necks out. If the distinguished Homeland Security intelligence agency can be weaponized to squelch the free speech rights of a small, hapless group of non-citizens in our midst, so too can the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation, and the audit divisions of the I.R.S. and the Social Security Administration be unconstitutionally weaponized against the President's ever growing list of “enemies” or opponents he “hates” notwithstanding that political persecution is anathema to our Constitution and everything for which America stands.

Finally, perhaps we don't much care. After all, these Plaintiffs, a group of non-citizen pro-Palestinians are relatively small compared to the much larger interest groups who have every right vigorously to espouse the cause of the State of Israel. Palestine is far away and its people are caught up in the horrors of a modern war with heavy ordinance wreaking massive indiscriminate destruction, a war that is not one of our making. Why should we care about the free speech rights of their compatriots here among us?

Here's why:

The United [S]tates is a great nation, not because any of us say so. It is great because we still practice our frontier tradition of selflessness for the good of us all. Strangers go out of their way to help strangers when they see a need. In times of fire, flood, and national disaster, everyone pitches in to help people we've never met and first responders selflessly risk their lives for others. Hundreds of firefighters rushed into the Twin Towers on 9/11 without hesitation desperate to find and save survivors. That's who we are. And on distant battlefields our military “fought and died for the men [they] marched among.” Frank Loesser, “The Ballad of Roger Young”, LIFE, 5 March 1945, at 117.

Each day, I recognize (to paraphrase Lincoln again) that the brave men and women, living and dead, who have struggled in our Nation's service have hallowed our Constitutional freedom far above my (or anyone's) poor power to add or detract. The only Constitutional rights upon which we can depend are those we extend to the weakest and most reviled among us.”[\[2\]](#)

Senate Bill 2203 is a limited, focused means to achieve greater transparency and provide a means of accountability for any injury or harm which may be inflicted on the people of Hawai'i by federal law enforcement. It is a critical piece of our State's preparations for dealing with a lawless federal government. It is a small step to returning law enforcement in Hawaii to public scrutiny and legal accountability. Masking “isn't about any typical policing concerns, such as

safety. It's about a symbol – a way to wear utter contempt for democratic institutions and the rule of law right there on your face.”^[3]

An amendment to Section 2 (4)(a) regarding use of a medical or N95 mask should be considered: imposing a limitation on the exception to times where there is an airborne public health risk in order to ensure officers do not choose to wear that type of mask all the time.

Please pass this out of committee, and please work for passage through the legislature.

Again, I thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I thank you for your commitment to our democracy.

Respectfully,

Danielle Goren

Lahaina

[1] Civ. A. No. 25-10685-WGY (D. Mass. Sep. 30, 2025), access at <https://docs.justia.com/cases/federal/district-courts/massachusetts/madce/1:2025cv10685/282460/261>

[2] *Id.*, at pp. 98-100 (emphasis added).

[3] Danny Westneat, *The real meaning of those ICE masks, as blurted out in a WA hearing*, The Seattle Times, Jan. 28, 2026, <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/the-real-meaning-of-those-ice-masks-as-blurted-out-in-a-wa-hearing/>

LATE

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 1:15:37 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kimberly Oshita	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard and Committee Members,

My name is Kimberly Oshita and I support SB2203, with one suggested amendment. This legislation establishes the offense of use of a mask or personal disguise by a law enforcement officer. To strengthen this measure and prevent abusive secret policing tactic, I respectfully request that this committee ass language adding to the offense a failure to display identification.

In MN and throughout the continent, we have witnessed the growing police force that the current administration is building employ secret police tactics, including ordering masked law enforcement agencies and military troops into cities.

We are all less safe when masked agents are in our streets. When people fear law enforcement, they are less likely to report crimes, seek help, or cooperate with law enforcement. We need to ensure that law enforcement agents are transparent, accountable and trustworthy.

The lack of identification makes it difficult for ordinary people, local law enforcement, and public officials to differentiate genuine law enforcement actions from impersonators exploiting the situation to harm our community members. It also makes it difficult to identify who is behind operations that may employ aggressive tactics, result in constitutional violations, or cause community harm. I therefore respectfully request that the Committee also add to this offense the failure of an officer to prominently display identification.

While Hawaii police departments may not engage in a practice of extreme masking, we believe that this legislation is necessary to ensuring our community safety. It is our Kuleana to protect our neighbors' rights to live without fear.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Kimberly Oshita

LATE

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 2:08:52 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richard Tillotson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support enforcing our laws but not by breaking other laws to enforce them. It is my belief that masked, armed, unidentified federal officers who enter homes and detain people without a judicial warrant are behaving unconstitutionally. This law should help end that practice. Please support this bill.

Aloha,

Richard Tillotson

LATE

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 3:11:20 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
PENNY LINDSEY	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

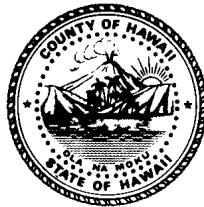
I have lived in Hawaii over 15 years and this is the first time I am submitting testimony. SB2203 is important enough to go out of my comfort zone to state my support.

Please support SB2203 for increased public safety, transparency, and a positive relationship between law enforcement and citizens and visitors to our State.

Mahalo,

Penny Lindsey

Hawaii resident and US citizen



HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL - DISTRICT 2

25 Aupuni Street • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

LATE

DATE: February 2, 2026

TO: Senate Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Jennifer Kagiwada, Council Member
Council District 2

SUBJECT: SB 2203

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the Committee,

I am writing to you in strong support of SB 2203. Please see the attached recently passed, Resolution 399 Draft 2 from the Hawai'i County Council urging the State of Hawai'i to protect individuals against unconstitutional acts committed by federal immigration agencies. SB 2203 addresses the concerns from our community regarding federal agents concealing their identities through the use of nonmedical masks, which is in alignment with the priorities outlined in the attached resolution.

This law would improve the overall trust and safety between law enforcement and the public in Hawai'i. I ask that you **pass SB 2203**.

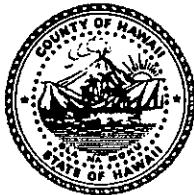
Mahalo for your time and consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jenn Kagiwada".

Jenn Kagiwada

COUNTY OF HAWAI'I

STATE OF HAWAI'I



RESOLUTION NO. 399 25

(DRAFT 2)

A RESOLUTION URGING THE STATE OF HAWAI'I TO PROTECT INDIVIDUALS AGAINST UNCONSTITUTIONAL ACTS COMMITTED BY FEDERAL IMMIGRATION AGENCIES.

WHEREAS, on January 20, 2025, President Donald J. Trump issued Executive Order 14159, "Protecting the American People Against Invasion", which revoked prior immigration enforcement guidelines that prioritized public safety and humanitarian considerations, called for the expansion of state and local cooperation agreements with the federal government under Section 287(g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, and directed a nationwide surge in immigration arrests, detentions, and removals, including the expanded use of expedited removals that bypass due process hearings; and

WHEREAS, on January 20, 2025, the Trump Administration revoked the 2021 "Guidelines for Enforcement Actions in or Near Protected Areas", a long-standing directive that discouraged federal immigration enforcement in community spaces such as schools, healthcare facilities, places of worship, and disaster relief areas, thereby allowing federal immigration agents to conduct operations in sites that were previously safe for all residents; and

WHEREAS, recent national and local events targeting immigrants and peaceful dissenters have underscored the importance of reaffirming the State's commitment to upholding constitutional rights for all residents, and remaining dedicated to justly enforcing laws, protecting individuals from government overreach or discrimination, and maintaining public trust; and

WHEREAS, the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Hawai'i guarantee fundamental and due process rights to every individual, which the State of Hawai'i must uphold and enforce; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Homeland Security, (hereinafter, "DHS") and its component agencies, including Immigration and Customs Enforcement (hereinafter, "ICE") and Customs and Border Protection have dramatically escalated enforcement operations nationwide, including nearly tripling the number of detentions and removals in Hawai'i from the previous year, leading to heightened fear in immigrant communities, family separations, and workplace disruptions; and

WHEREAS, the 2023 U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey found that in the State of Hawai'i, one out of five residents is an immigrant, totaling more than 255,000 people, over one-third of whom are noncitizens, including nearly half of Hawai'i County's 25,000 foreign-born residents; and

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 320-25, Draft 2, adopted by this body on October 22, 2025, recognized the importance of ensuring that the constitutional rights of all residents and our values as a multicultural society are protected; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE COUNTY OF HAWAI'I that this body hereby urges the State of Hawai'i to ensure the health and safety of Hawai'i Island residents by:

1. Prohibiting immigration enforcement officers—including ICE, DHS, and any federal agents detailed to immigration operations—from concealing their identities or wearing nonmedical masks that obscure their faces during public-facing enforcement operations, except during undercover investigations relating to criminal activity or when required due to emergency health concerns or environmental hazards;
2. Requiring state law enforcement agencies to inform any individual in custody of their rights in their preferred language when ICE requests an interview or issues a detainer;
3. Protecting sensitive community spaces from civil immigration enforcement and barring state agencies and contractors from assisting civil immigration enforcement without a judicial warrant;
4. Prohibiting State law enforcement and administration from providing privileged or confidential information, including but not limited to immigration status, to ICE or DHS;
5. Prohibiting fulfillment of detainer requests on behalf of ICE or DHS for civil matters;
6. Requiring that all immigration officers clearly identify themselves during public-facing enforcement operations, including displaying their agency and badge name and number, except during undercover investigations relating to criminal activity;
7. Prohibiting unmarked vehicles from being used for civil enforcement of ICE or DHS business; and
8. Prohibiting law enforcement agencies from entering into a memorandum of agreement with the Federal government pursuant to Section 287(g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the County of Hawai'i urges the Hawai'i State Legislature to support and enact legislation that upholds the values of the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Hawai'i regarding due process and immigrant rights.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the County Clerk shall transmit a copy of this resolution to the Honorable C. Kimo Alameda, Mayor of the County of Hawai'i; the Honorable Joshua B. Green, M.D., Governor of Hawai'i; all members of the Hawai'i State Legislature; and Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General.

Dated at Kona, Hawai'i, this 17th day of December, 2025.

INTRODUCED BY:


COUNCIL MEMBER, COUNTY OF HAWAII


COUNCIL MEMBER, COUNTY OF HAWAII

COUNTY COUNCIL
County of Hawai'i
Hilo, Hawai'i

I hereby certify that the foregoing RESOLUTION was by the vote indicated to the right hereof adopted by the COUNCIL of the County of Hawai'i on December 17, 2025.

ATTEST:


COUNTY CLERK CHAIRPERSON & PRESIDING OFFICER

ROLL CALL VOTE

	AYES	NOES	ABS	EX
GALIMBA	X			
HUSTACE	X			
INABA	X			
KAGIWADA	X			
KĀNEALI'I-KLEINFELDER	X			
KIERKIEWICZ	X			
KIMBALL	X			
ONISHI	X			
VILLEGRAS	X			
	9	0	0	0

Reference: G-625.2/GOEAC-84

RESOLUTION NO. 399 25

(DRAFT '2)

LATE

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 3:41:08 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Addie Berliner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank You for Supporting This Bill!!!!

LATE

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 3:42:35 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brian Huffman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Brian Huffman, Esq., and I submit this testimony in strong support of legislation establishing a misdemeanor offense for a law enforcement officer who wears a mask or personal disguise while interacting with the public in their official duties.

At its core, this bill is about **accountability, transparency, and public trust**—values that are essential to effective policing and to a healthy democracy in Hawai‘i.

Law enforcement officers exercise extraordinary power: the authority to detain, arrest, use force, and in some cases take a person’s liberty or life. With that power must come clear and visible accountability. When officers conceal their identity through masks or disguises while performing official duties, that accountability is undermined. Members of the public cannot identify who is acting under color of law, cannot meaningfully report misconduct, and cannot be assured that the person confronting them is, in fact, a legitimate officer.

This concern is not hypothetical. Across the country, masked or unidentified officers have been deployed during protests, traffic stops, and routine encounters. These practices have led to confusion, fear, and escalation—particularly for communities that already experience disproportionate policing. In Hawai‘i, where our communities are close-knit and our cultural values emphasize mutual respect and responsibility, such practices are especially corrosive.

Requiring officers to remain identifiable while engaging the public serves **three critical purposes**:

1. **It protects the public.** Clear identification reduces the risk of impersonation, abuse of authority, and unlawful detention. No resident should have to guess whether the person confronting them is a legitimate officer.
2. **It protects law enforcement officers.** Transparency builds trust, and trust makes policing safer and more effective. Officers who act professionally and lawfully should not fear identification; it reinforces the legitimacy of their actions.
3. **It strengthens democratic accountability.** The ability to identify public officials performing public duties is fundamental to oversight, complaint processes, and the rule of law.

Importantly, this legislation does not prevent the use of appropriate protective equipment when genuinely necessary—such as medical masks during a public health emergency—so long as officers remain identifiable and are not disguising their identity. Rather, it draws a clear and reasonable line: **law enforcement officers should not be anonymous while exercising state power over the public.**

Hawai‘i has long been a leader in protecting civil rights, human dignity, and community-centered governance. By establishing an offense for the use of masks or personal disguises by law enforcement officers during official interactions, the Legislature would reaffirm that policing in our state must always be conducted in the open, with accountability, and with respect for the people it serves.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to pass this measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your consideration.

Best,
Brian Huffman, Esq.

LATE

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 3:48:26 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
MARILYN JOHNSON	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support that law enforcement should not be allowed to disguise their identity with masks.

If the Federal government treats CBP officers as if they have total immunity and will not share data with State investigative bodies, then the only accountability left is public shaming of individuals who choose to perform such horrendous acts that the person believes they must hide their identity.

Thank you for being proactive and bringing this bill forward. Please pass the strongest language version of it ASAP.

Marilyn Johnson, Pahoa

LATE

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 4:29:03 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristen Kelly	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

ICE has been bullying and killing citizens engaged in lawful activity. Please pass this bill and help protect Hawaii Citizens. Make them show their face and wear visible identification. Please do the right thing

LATE

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 4:46:16 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carol Gaylord	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Carol Gaylord and I support S.B.2203, with one amendment request. I respectfully request to add to the offense language regarding failure to display identification. Throughout the US and in particular, Minnesota the Trump Administration is using secret policing including masked law enforcement and military troops. In Hawaii we have seen this on Kaua'i island.

This causes fear of those who are supposed to protect and serve. This will lead to fear of reporting crimes, seeking help and cooperating with law enforcement. This, as we have heard happen on the mainland US, can also lead to impersonating an officer. I believe we need to prevent this before it becomes routine here in our special home.

Mahalo~

Carol Gaylord

LATE

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 6:03:08 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Scott	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I believe it is unethical for law enforcement personnel to hide their identities while on duty, they should be required to identify themselves at the request of any person who sees them in public.

LATE

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 6:36:17 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Casey Park	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Casey Park and I support SB2203. If people wearing ski masks and tactical gear with no visible identification swarmed your workplace to take your coworkers away in unmarked vehicles – would you be able to tell the difference between law enforcement and a kidnapping? What if they took your family member or friend – how could you find or contact them, or figure out what kind of lawyer to call, without knowing who those agents were? Disguised local law enforcement is a danger to communities and to democracy.

LATE

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 7:13:39 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maria Welvaert	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

No secret police operating in Hawaii.

LATE

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 7:24:05 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brady Welvaert	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

A masked, unaccountable police force is unacceptable in a modern democratic society.

LATE

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 8:48:42 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erin Wilmer Patio	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in full support of this bill.

LATE

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 9:00:54 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Martin F Lindsey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a lifelong American committed to the preservation of our constitutional republic, a 20-year veteran of the United States armed forces, and a 13-year federal civil servant who has dedicated my career to service and the rule-of-law. I am deeply alarmed by the Department of Homeland Security's continuous violations of our citizens' constitutional civil rights. Their abuses cannot be allowed to be perpetrated against the citizens of Hawaii and thus I wholly support SB2203 and urge you to vote it into law.

As someone who has sworn an oath to defend the Constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic, I am profoundly concerned that the unchecked use of federal force in our cities, the deaths of unarmed citizens under controversial circumstances, and the lack of transparency in federal enforcement cannot stand without grave consequence to our civil order and republican governance. This moment demands that Congress and the many States exercise our constitutional prerogatives to reassert civilian accountability over militarized federal actions.

LATE

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 9:02:17 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cameron Goya Lynde	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB2203

TO: Hawaii State Senate
FROM: Cameron Goya Lynde
DATE: February 2, 2026
RE: SB2203 — RELATING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT.

Aloha Honorable Members of the Senate,

I write today to **strongly support SB2203**, which would prohibit law enforcement officers in Hawaii from wearing masks or other personal disguises that conceal their identity while interacting with the public, except in limited, clearly defined situations.

The term “public servant” is often applied to those who work in law enforcement, along with those who work in other branches of civil service. This term is important because it designates law enforcement as part of a public service; something aimed to benefit the people, belonging to them as a public park does, or a public library.

With this in mind, I write to you to strongly support SB 2203. It is imperative that if law enforcement is to serve the good of the public, officers must not be permitted to hide their identity.

If they were permitted to do so, homicides such as those of Alex Petti and Renee Good in Minneapolis, MN last month could be repeated in our islands without accountability or recourse. Additionally, if police are permitted to wear masks, there would be nothing stopping someone from impersonating law enforcement and carrying out crimes without their identity becoming known.

For the safety of our people and for our ability to trust our law enforcement to have accountability, I urge you to adopt SB 2203.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Cameron Goya Lynde

LATE

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 9:06:58 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabeth Weitz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Template testimony

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members:

My name is Elizabeth Weitz and I support S.B. 2203, with one suggested amendment. This legislation establishes the offense of use of a mask or personal disguise by a law enforcement officer. To strengthen this measure and prevent abusive secret policing tactics, I respectfully request that this committee add language adding to the offense a failure to display identification.

I am a Psychology PhD student, and one of my areas of interest is procedural justice. When officers mask themselves, and don't identify themselves, it reduces the procedural justice of the interaction. Each interaction between law enforcement and individuals shapes societies perception of how fair law enforcement is in general and whether they respect the public. It's important that law enforcement operate with justice and respect - if they don't set that example, people won't respect the law.

In Minnesota and throughout the continent, we have witnessed the growing police force that the Trump administration is building employ secret police tactics, including ordering masked law enforcement agencies and military troops into cities. Federal agents are taking our immigrant neighbors. In Hawai'i, we have seen this occur in Kaua'i, for example. We are all less safe when masked agents are in our streets. When people fear law enforcement, they are less likely to report crimes, seek help, or cooperate with law enforcement. We need to ensure that law enforcement agents are transparent, accountable, and trustworthy.

The lack of identification makes it difficult for ordinary people, local law enforcement, and public officials to differentiate genuine law enforcement actions from impersonators exploiting the situation to harm our community members. It also makes it difficult to identify who is behind operations that may employ aggressive tactics, result in constitutional violations, or cause community harm. I therefore respectfully request that the Committee also add to this offense the failure of an officer to prominently display identification.

While Hawai‘i’s police departments may not engage in a practice of extreme masking, we believe that this legislation is necessary to ensuring community safety. It is our kuleana to protect our neighbors’ rights to live without fear.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.
Sincerely

LATE

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 9:23:34 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaulana Yoshimoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB2203 to help ensure greater safety for all of us and hopefully serve as a step towards building more trust in law enforcement. After all, an important role of law enforcement is to help people feel safe in our community. It is important that we all know the difference between law enforcement and a group of people masked bullying and abducting people posing as law enforcement. How is the public to know the difference? Using a mask and having no identification creates a dangerous environment for all of us. Thank you for your hard work towards ensuring the health and safety of our community in Hawai'i.

LATE

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 9:30:58 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maya Maxym	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

With apologies for late testimony, I would like to share my strong support for this bill. Law enforcement officers should always be identifiable as one of many ways to hold them accountable for their actions. Masks or other face coverings used for the purpose of concealing the identity of any law enforcement officer should not be permitted. Mahalo.

LATE

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 9:49:02 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
KALAE PEARCE	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill SB2203. No secret police operating in Hawai'i ever!

LATE

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 10:10:00 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melody Peralta	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of SB 2203, the public has the right to know the identity of law enforcement officers and who are engaging in law enforcement activity. ICE has been operating with impunity, threatening, beating, and killing citizens who are lawfully engaged in peaceful protests and community support. If ICE agents are allowed to cover their faces, who's to say anyone can dress up as an agent, and hurt, kidnap, and kill others without proper identification and verification. Please protect our community from these armed militiamen, sanctioned by a corrupt administration.

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 10:50:34 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle Lindsey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of bill SB2203. With all of the national tragedies and even seeing what ICE has been doing within our state, this needs to be done to serve and protect our people. When we have masked, unidentifiable "federal agents" roaming our streets and taking people who may look different, this causes fear for all our residents. Therefore, causing some distrust with our local government and law enforcement officers.

I would also like to suggest for language that federal law enforcement officers must provide identification to be included within the bill to avoid more incidents with masked, unidentified law enforcement. This also shows us that our local government is listening and is willing and able to serve and protect their people.

Thank you for your time.

LATE

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 10:55:27 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Connor Lindsey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB2203, as a free nation cannot exist underneath an oppressing force that consistently violates rights and laws while claiming to be "law enforcement." As a nation, we've fought foreign aggressors with the claims that those masked men were terrorists seeking to harm us. If we would go to war with such people, how can we possibly tolerate our supposed law enforcement officers sharing in such tactics. It's beyond shameful when I feel like I need to avoid law enforcement when something goes wrong, rather than seek them out for help. Time and time again, I've lost faith and trust in our local and federal law enforcement after various blunders, the effects of personal favors and bias, as well as outright refusals to help in situations they swore to serve. To now blur the line between law enforcement and terrorism by taking on the tactics of militants and secret police is absolutely unacceptable. Any LEO that can't stand proud with face and badge presented to all has no place in civil service. If you need to hide from your actions in presence of the local population, then that should only speak to the horrific nature of your actions, not the greater populous.

SB2203 has the opportunity to make many consider the ramifications of their actions. If they do not feel comfortable standing before the masses with nothing to hide, then it is time for them to reflect on their choices and their actions. For some, this will mean nothing and they will continue to choose violence and to terrorize, but for others, it will be a chance to look closer at what the people want and a chance to step away from the atrocious acts currently occurring.

LATE

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 6:57:32 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabeth Kumabe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

These and other practices by the federal government under the current administration are truly degrading trust between the public and the criminal justice system.

LATE

SB-2203

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 7:12:29 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christina Puakea Busby	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, My name is Christina Busby. I am a resident of Honolulu, a long time educator, and a Native Hawaiian with ancestors who immigrated to Hawaii. The violence I've witnessed as ICE has invaded Blue states like California, Minneapolis, and Illinois is absolutely terrifying. The fact that masked agents have been allowed to terrorize, kidnap, and even murder innocent men, women, and children without consequence is so very disturbing. We are witnessing our constitutional rights be destroyed. In Hawaii, we must do everything we can to protect ourselves. We are a state that is made up primarily of immigrants. We must be proactive and outlaw law enforcement officials from wearing masks and hiding their identities. This helps to keep all of them and their processes more transparent. Please pass SB2203.