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**HOUSE BILL NO. 1482**

Offered January 23, 2026

*A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding sections numbered 8.01-42.7 and 19.2-83.6:1, relating to law-enforcement officers; restrictions on wearing of facial coverings; required identification; civil liability; penalty.*

Patrons—Schmidt, Lopez, Shin and Cousins

Referred to Committee on Public Safety

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding sections numbered 8.01-42.7 and 19.2-83.6:1, as follows:**

**§ 8.01-42.7. Liability of law-enforcement officer for certain conduct while unlawfully wearing facial covering; identification required.**

A. As used in this section:

"Facial covering" means the same as that term is defined in § 19.2-83.6:1.

"Law-enforcement officer" means the same as that term is defined in § 9.1-101.

B. Any person injured as a result of the tortious conduct of a law-enforcement officer who knowingly and intentionally wears a facial covering in violation of § 19.2-83.6:1, whether or not such law-enforcement officer has been charged with or convicted of the alleged violation, may bring a civil cause of action against such law-enforcement officer for actual damages or \$10,000, whichever is greater, including reasonable attorney fees and costs.

C. Except as otherwise provided in subsection B, any limitations on liability or damages shall not apply to an action brought pursuant to this section. A defense of sovereign immunity shall not apply to an action brought pursuant to this section.

D. No action shall be commenced under this section more than two years after the most recent conduct prohibited in § 19.2-83.6:1.

**§ 19.2-83.6:1. Prohibition on wearing of facial coverings; penalty.**

A. For the purposes of this section:

"Facial covering" means any opaque mask, garment, helmet, headgear, or other item or device whereby a substantial portion of the face is hidden or covered to conceal the identity of the wearer, including a balaclava, tactical mask, gator, ski mask, or other similar face-shielding item or device.

"Law-enforcement agency" means any agency or department responsible for the prevention and detection of crime and the enforcement of the penal, traffic, or highway laws of the Commonwealth.

"Law-enforcement officer" means the same as that term is defined in § 9.1-101.

B. Except as provided in subsection C, no law-enforcement officer shall wear a facial covering that conceals, obscures, or otherwise covers his face while such law-enforcement officer is engaged in the performance of his official duties.

C. The provisions of this section shall not apply to the use of the following by a law-enforcement officer when engaged in the performance of his official duties:

1. A translucent face shield or clear mask, provided that such face shield or mask does not conceal the wearer's identity;

2. An N95 medical mask or surgical mask to protect against the transmission of disease or infection;

3. A mask, helmet, or other device necessary to protect against exposure to any toxin, gas, smoke, inclement weather, or other hazardous or harmful environmental condition, including a respirator or self-contained breathing apparatus;

4. A mask, helmet, or other device necessary for underwater use;

5. A motorcycle helmet when a law-enforcement officer is utilizing a motorcycle or other vehicle that requires a helmet for safety;

6. Protective eyewear necessary for protection against retinal weapons, including lasers; or

7. A facial covering used by any law-enforcement officer assigned to a special weapons and tactics (SWAT) team or other specialized tactical team or unit while engaged in the performance of official SWAT team duties.

D. Except as otherwise provided by this section, a law-enforcement officer, while engaged in the performance of his official duties, shall visibly display (i) a badge or insignia bearing such law-enforcement officer's name or other individual identifier unique to that particular law-enforcement officer and (ii) the name of the law-enforcement agency that employs such law-enforcement officer.

E. The provisions of subsection D shall not apply to any law-enforcement officer who does not wear a

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59 *uniform or other distinguishing clothing, equipment, or insignia in the regular performance of his official*  
60 *duties or who is engaged in undercover operations in the performance of his official duties.*  
61 *Any law-enforcement officer who violates the provisions of this section is guilty of a Class 1*  
62 *misdemeanor.*