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ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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House District 4
Downtown Juneau
Thane, Lemon Creek
Douglas Island, Airport, and
the Mendenhall Valley to
Stephen Richards Drive

House Bill 250

Law Enforcement; Concealing One's Face

Sponsor Statement

(Version G, 34-LS1284\G)

March 9, 2026

HB 250 would make it a crime for peace officers in Alaska to wear facial coverings in the performance of their duties, with certain exceptions included. In Alaska, "peace officer" is broadly defined to include city, state, and federal law enforcement officers.

The findings in similar legislation passed into law in California in 2025 eloquently describe the reasoning for this bill:

"The routine use of facial coverings by law enforcement officers has significant implications for public perception, officer-community interactions, and accountability. Whether intended or not, members of the public may experience fear or intimidation when approached by officers whose faces are obscured. This perception can heighten defensive behaviors and unnecessarily escalate situations.

"Facial coverings limit the visibility of facial expressions, which are essential components of nonverbal communication. In high-stress or emotionally charged interactions, the inability to read an officer's expression may lead to misinterpretation of tone or intent, increasing the risk of conflict escalation. The visibility of an officer's face is vital for promoting transparency, facilitating communication, and building trust between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve.

"When officers are not readily identifiable, it increases the risk of impersonation by unauthorized individuals, which further undermines public trust, endangers public safety, and hinders legitimate law enforcement operations. The use of facial coverings by law enforcement should not obscure officer identity or hinder accountability, nor should those coverings be used in a manner that enables or conceals discriminatory or unlawful conduct."

HB 250 is pro-law enforcement legislation. It promotes public trust and the dignity and integrity of peace officers working in Alaska.