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June 18, 2025

Honorable Scott Wiener
California State Senate
1021 O St., Suite 8620
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Support for SB 627 (Wiener, Arreguin) – Law enforcement: masks
AS AMENDED ON JUNE 16, 2025**

Dear Senator Wiener,

On behalf of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (“MALDEF”), I write in strong support of Senate Bill 627. The bill will prohibit law enforcement at all levels operating in California from covering their faces while conducting operations, with limited exemptions for masks used for medical or fire-related reasons. The bill will also ensure that SWAT officers can protect their faces as necessary on duty and require that officers have their names or other identifying information on their uniforms.

MALDEF has long advocated for equal treatment of immigrants in the public and private sectors and worked to preserve their due process and civil rights. More specifically, MALDEF has championed and defended policies like Special Order 40 and the TRUST Act that keep a wall of separation between local police and federal immigration authorities to ensure that the immigrant community can contact police, when they are victims of or witnesses to crimes, without fear that they risk deportation for themselves or their loved ones. This security is shattered when federal immigration agents pretend to be local police officers.

In recent months, federal law enforcement officials, mostly from Immigration and Customs Enforcement, have conducted raids announcing themselves as “police” and wearing jackets stating “police,” in effect impersonating local law enforcement. Such raids have occurred in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Concord, Downey, Montebello, and many other places, since the new federal administration began ramping up its immigration enforcement efforts.

This is concerning enough, but federal law enforcement agents—in California and across the country—have also engaged in routine immigration arrests while covering their faces and, at times, badges, names, and other identifying information. In some cases, federal agents wearing masks and plainclothes have snatched people off the street—without presenting identification or a warrant—bundled them into unmarked vehicles, and whisked them away to detention centers across state lines without contacting their families or loved ones.

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Harrowing videos of incidents reveal a tactic that runs counter to a free and open democracy and, indeed, represents a staple of police states. While there are instances in which it would be reasonable for law enforcement to hide their identities, this cannot become the norm in routine arrests.

MALDEF lends its voice to the broad coalition calling for support of SB 627 and urges its passage.

Regards,

Hector Villagra

Hector Villagra

VP, Policy Advocacy &
Community Education