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VISIBLE Act

What the problem is:

In recent months, civil immigration enforcement operations have increasingly involved officers engaging with the public while wearing unmarked tactical gear and concealing clothing that obscures both their agency affiliation and personal identity. Without visible badges, names, or insignia, members of the public often have no way to confirm whether they are interacting with legitimate government officials.

This lack of transparency endangers public safety by causing confusion, fear, and mistrust, especially in communities already subjected to heightened immigration scrutiny. It also increases risks for law enforcement personnel by creating uncertainty in high-stress situations, particularly when individuals cannot distinguish real officers from impersonators. In a system where the government exercises significant power over liberty and mobility, ensuring basic transparency is essential to ensure legitimacy, safety, and public confidence.

What the bill would do:

The VISIBLE Act addresses this problem by requiring immigration enforcement officers—including DHS personnel (such as CBP and ICE), federal agents detailed to immigration operations, and deputized state or local officers—to display clearly visible identification during public-facing enforcement actions. Specifically, the bill:

- Requires officers to display clearly legible identification—including their agency name or initials and either their name or badge number—in a manner that remains visible and unobscured by tactical gear or clothing;
- Prohibits non-medical face coverings (such as masks or balaclavas) that obscure identity or facial visibility, with exceptions for environmental hazards or covert operations;
- Requires DHS to establish disciplinary procedures for violations, report annually to Congress on compliance, and investigate complaints through its Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties.

The bill does *not* limit immigration enforcement authority or tactics. It does not apply to covert or non-public operations, nor does it prohibit face coverings when necessary for officer safety. It also does not apply to enforcement actions conducted solely under criminal authority.

This is a narrow, commonsense transparency measure to promote professionalism and public trust. Members of the public should be able to identify who is exercising federal immigration authority in their communities. The VISIBLE Act ensures they can, without interfering with enforcement operations or officer safety.