

Testimony of Carrie Medina
Portland, Oregon

In support of HB 2704
House Judiciary Committee
June 2, 2015

Dear Chair Barker and Committee members,

I am writing to you in support of HB 2704. I began using my camera to record and report on public activities during the Occupy Portland movement and have openly recorded many public activities since that time.

When I am recording a public activity, I am generally “livestreaming,” which means my recording is being shown online in real time. At the conclusion of a recording, my videos are archived for later viewing. The “livestreaming” of protests has become a powerful tool for witnessing and accountability.

When I am “livestreaming,” I believe I am serving as a “camera of accountability” and that my actions are squarely protected by the First Amendment. I have filmed and reported on activities ranging from a bicycle accident to the pepper-spraying of a Portland high school student. I have developed a following of my livestreaming and have traveled to protests in Chicago and Washington, D.C. to record.

I co-founded Film the Police Portland, an organization dedicated to advancing police accountability by filming police encounters in the Portland area. I have regularly filmed on weekend evenings in Old Town Portland where I often spoke with officers to let them know what I was doing and why.

As a bystander and witness to numerous police encounters, I know that it has not always been safe or practical to notify officers that I was recording. To the extent that current Oregon law could be used to charge me with a crime for openly recording audio of a police encounter without providing a warning, I believe that interferes with my First Amendment rights to broadcast, record and share my recordings with viewers. I urge you to support HB 2704 to bring Oregon’s law into alignment with the First Amendment.

I work as a research assistant at Oregon Health & Sciences University, where I manage an employee wellness program and help promote OHSU events on social media. I, also, am the mother of a baby son I named “Justice.” I urge you, for the sake of Justice, to pass HB 2704 out of committee and to urge your colleagues to vote “yes,” as well.

Sincerely yours,

Carrie Medina