



OREGON ACADEMY OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS

June 24, 2020
Special Session #1

Re: Support for LC 81 & 83: Police Accountability

The Oregon Academy of Family Physicians (OAFP) supports LC 81 and LC 83 banning the use of choke holds and tear gas by law enforcement. In addition, OAFP supports banning the use of rubber bullets as crowd control measures. George Floyd's death has ignited a much-needed national conversation about the use of force by law enforcement. As part of this conversation, anti-racism protests in Oregon and around the country have been subjected to military crowd control tactics. These tactics, including tear gas and rubber bullets, have resulted in injuries as grave as permanent loss of eyesight.

Law enforcement violence is defined as a public health issue by the American Public Health Association. This violence disproportionately affects Black, Indigenous, and people of color and requires greater oversight and accountability to be addressed. Choke holds have been banned by many large police departments yet they remain a legal means of restraint in Oregon. Banning the use of choke holds, such as the one that resulted in George Floyd's death, is an immediate necessity to prevent unlawful death.

The recent nationwide protests have also brought to light the disproportionate military tactics employed by law enforcement to disperse crowds of peaceful protestors. The use of tear gas (also known as CS gas) during warfare is outlawed as part of the Chemical Weapons Convention of which the U.S. is a signatory. Yet it has been widely employed in cities during the protests and has resulted in respiratory and eye injury. Of even greater concern is the use of rubber bullets at close range. While they are classified as "non-lethal," they have resulted in numerous fractures and other injuries including the permanent loss of eyesight.

These reforms are a first step towards protecting Oregonians.

Respectfully,
Sam Barber
Lobbyist, Oregon Academy of Family Physicians

References:

<https://www.opb.org/news/article/npr-how-decades-of-bans-on-police-chokeholds-have-fallen-short/>

Systematic review of injuries from CS/tear spray:

<https://bmcpublihealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-017-4814-6>

Rubber bullets:

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(19\)31764-7/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(19)31764-7/fulltext)