

Dear Co-Chair Courtney, Co-Chair Kotek and members of the committee,

I am a student at Oregon State University and here is my testimony as it relates to police accountability. I can't recall positive experiences with police. From an early age, I recall police regularly roaming around my neighborhood. I've been watched, belittled, and have had my needs disregarded by my police. Once I got to high school, my interactions with police ended up with my family being separated. I've had both of my parents arrested and incarcerated over nonviolent offenses. I can honestly say that police intervention and putting my family through the prison industrial complex did nothing to better my family situation. Police intervention does not provide opportunity for care, healing or rehabilitation. If anything, it has resulted in greater harm within my family, and has only caused more pain in my life. Every time I have been forced to call the police to assist in sensitive and emotionally challenging situations, I am left more hurt and alone.

When I was about to become a freshman in college, I had a fight with my dad on campus and a campus police officer witnessed the situation. Before I knew it, my dad was in handcuffs and was taken away. He was my ride home, and the police offered no support for me. I was left to deal with the situation myself. Instead of focusing on my studies during my college education, I had to step up to support my family while my father was incarcerated. I'm one of the lucky ones, because my dad is still alive and did not die in police custody. I feared every day that he would. Still, the effects of these events are deeply devastating to my family today, as we struggle to make ends meet while both of my parents carry criminal records, poor health, and a lack of access to community resources. My family could have been met with the resources they needed, but instead they were locked in a cage.