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To: [Exhibits JTPUFR](#)
Subject: Testimony for Meeting 7/17/20
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TO: Joint Committee On Transparent Policing and Use of Force Reform

Hello Committee Members,

My name is Leif (they/them) and I reside in Tigard. I am a 38 year old native Oregonian, a parent to an 8 year old, an engineer, and former college professor. I have engaged in my civic duties since I was 18: voting, jury duty, contacting my representatives on important matters, and protesting. Protesting is a First Amendment right in this country. As stated by the ACLU, you have a right to protest in].." "traditional public forums," such as streets, sidewalks, and parks. You also likely have the right to speak out on other public property, like plazas in front of government buildings, as long as you are not blocking access to the government building or interfering with other purposes the property was designed for."

I have been actively involved in the Black Lives Matter protests that have sprung up around the country in the wake of the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery. I have organized online discussion groups, marched, attended rallies, attended "know your rights" events, and attended protests. I have felt compelled to provide my skills in first aid and serve as a street medic at several events where I have provided protesters with ear plugs, hand sanitizer, clean masks, and water. I may not agree with everyone at the protests or every protest method, but we have shared goals: to demilitarize the police, to enact strong reforms to policing, to reduce the budget of the police, etc. I will leave it to Black leaders to better articulate the goals of the BLM movement. My objective today is to speak to the indiscriminate use of military grade weaponry and war-like tactics against protesters in Oregon. And to ask this committee to take action today to demilitarize the police and ban the use of crowd control tactics against peaceful protesters.

I was present on July 4th at the Justice Center. I worked with a few other medics and set up a medic station. From here, I observed many forms of protest from folks giving speeches, shouting chants, and musicians sharing their talent, all the way to illegal fireworks being set off and defacement of public property. What I have learned as I have engaged in the BLM movement is that there are a myriad of reasons that folks have for protesting and just as many ideas of how to get their point across. Illegal fireworks were fired directly into the sky which, as we all know, was happening in every neighborhood of America from sea to shining sea the night of July 4th. Something about being quarantined made it particularly enticing for folks to fire off illegal fireworks this year. I'm sure that the police received thousands of calls from around the state about illegal firework use. But I am certain that Portland was the only place in the state where people were tear gassed for it. I saw no police attempting to intervene individually with protesters who were not abiding by lawful protest methods. In fact, the police were nowhere to be seen and had not given any warnings that we could hear before the first round of tear gas was launched at Chapman Square. I was the first medic on the scene: a mother and her

2 children between the ages of 8 and 12 were driving by the protest (not actually participating in it) and their car was hit with a tear gas canister. The mother got a face-full and luckily managed to pull over without wrecking her car. I treated the whole family for tear gas exposure while the children were screaming and crying. The mother was temporarily blinded and I had to guide her two blocks away to a waiting ambulance. This understandably incensed the crowd who moved into the street facing the Federal building and began chanting and directing fireworks at the building. More tear gas was fired into the crowd but again, without warning. I treated several people for tear gas exposure and sent them on their way with clean masks but we had run out of water so the crowd began to leave Chapman Square. It was at this point that the police finally showed themselves and announced that "we were a riot" and indiscriminately started firing teargas at everyone including the medic station. I had to abandon my post and headed back to my car. On the way, I saw most of the protesters fleeing up a street and dozens of armed Portland Police officers following them with guns drawn. On another street, I witnessed folks in military uniforms following another crowd up the street. For many who have participated in these protests night after night, being attacked indiscriminately with tear gas, pepper spray, rubber bullets, and sound cannons has become par for the course. Seeing it and experiencing it for myself was traumatizing. The police were acting in direct violation of a court order, as they have numerous times in recent weeks. Now they are having these unknown federal forces do their dirty work for them. And as we saw Sunday night, Donovan LaBella, while peacefully protesting, was shot in the head with a "less-lethal munition" and could have died had it not been for the street medics who risked their own lives to carry him out to safety.

There is a lot of misinformation spreading around the state about who is attending these protests. That it's "Antifa terrorists" (whatever that means), left-wing extremists, paid actors, anarchists, etc. It is not! These are members of our own community, many of whom for too long have been left behind by our capitalistic system that is inherently racist. Many of us are just waking up to the privileges that we've enjoyed at the expense of others. There are young and old, folks who have never attended protests and those that have been protesting since the 60's, liberals, progressives, moderates, independents, Democrats and disillusioned Republicans. Every person protesting strongly believes in this country and is trying to change it for the better.

I am asking this committee to consider my testimony today of the abuse of power by the Portland Police and federal forces in our streets. They have purchased with our tax dollars military grade weaponry designed specifically for war and now they are creating a warzone in our communities. They are attacking protesters indiscriminately instead of addressing specific acts of vandalism on a case-by-case basis. In addition to the use of teargas, there are reports of members of the press being targeted with rubber bullets and arrested and detained for more than 48 hours to prevent them from reporting. I have multiple friends that were exposed to LRAD early in the protests and have experienced symptoms related to LRAD (fall to the ground and vomiting uncontrollably) as recently as 3 weeks ago despite a court order preventing PPB from using this sonic weapon. The Portland Police have demonstrated night after night that they are not responsible enough to carry the

deadly weapons that they wield. Please consider requiring that all police forces in Oregon demilitarize immediately and stop the use of "less lethal munitions" and sonic weapons.

There is very limited public data about the contents of the various types of tear gas used by PPB and US Marshalls or the long term health effects of being exposed. We already have learned from epidemiologists that the immediate response to exposure (coughing, crying, etc) can greatly increase risk of contracting COVID-19. From the standpoint of public health, please consider banning the use of tear gas, pepper spray, and pepper bullets and any other weapons that create responses that can increase transmission of this deadly disease.

Thank you for your time,

Leif Eccles

Senate District 13, Representative District 26