

Dear Committee Members,

I am a Registered Nurse and I live in Woodlawn, in Portland, Oregon. Nurses advocate for patients' rights, especially for those whose rights may be more easily violated or not fulfilled (American Nurses Association, 2015). That's why I am writing today to ask that you declare your support for HB4208 and ban future police use of tear gas against Portland citizens.

The use of tear gas is a clear threat to public health.

City and state measures designed to contain the COVID-19 pandemic are directly threatened by the use of these weapons that provoke coughing and respiratory distress, both of which can aerosolize infectious COVID virus particles to spread infection.

Its use also risks provoking life-threatening respiratory distress in individuals with underlying lung conditions at a time when medical respiratory supplies are of critical importance.

If for no other reason than this, it is imperative that you all vote in support of HB4208 today.

However, the use of tear gas was unjust well before COVID-19, as you'll know from the Geneva Protocol.

No matter the stated intentions of those using it, current use by PPB to disperse BLM protests has shown it is a weapon of white supremacy to quiet the voices of Portland citizens demanding the changes they need to protect their own lives and the lives of BIPOC community members they love.

The fact that a tear gas canister was also recently further weaponized as a projectile against a protestor is further evidence that tear gas is a dangerous tool that has no place as a tool for "peacekeeping" in our streets.

We have seen multiple patients with injuries stemming from violent and inappropriate use of tear gas that threatens to pit us health workers against our colleagues in law enforcement at a time when cooperation is needed more than ever.

And again, I cannot state more emphatically how **the continued use of tear gas only continues to exacerbate the mounting stress on local healthcare systems** already in the midst of an unparalleled pandemic.

Committee Members, I implore you to support HB4208 today and permanently ban the continued use of tear gas as a weapon to quiet the voices of the those Portlanders willing to stand up for their beliefs, and continue making Portland the great city we all seek to build. I am your ally in that endeavor, and it is my hope that in your votes for HB4208, you show that you agree that our fellow citizens (and my patients) are as well.

Respectfully,
Annie Rose Robb, RN