

## Email Responses

### **Kenton Resident**

I'm writing to you to let you know how disappointed I am by the actions of the police in North Portland last night. We had police in riot gear hanging off of SUV's driving down our street and tear gas being deployed by police 2 blocks from our home. My husband was at the De La Salle parking lot when a black woman was arrested for walking down the sidewalk while trying to get past the police on her way home from work. She was not part of the protests but was arrested for trying to walk past the officers. While she was yelling at the police she wasn't a threat to them and should not have been arrested.

### **Piedmont Resident**

My home is blocks away from the intersection from where the confrontations took place. My partner was putting our infant to sleep when PPB began use of LRAD and tear gas, declaring unfounded claims of a riot within earshot of her crib. That is disturbing enough, but I witnessed something even more disturbing while I cruised the perimeter of my neighborhood, making my vehicle available to any protestors who needed a ride to safety. And I am so glad I did.

Around the corner from my house, several cop cars and two paddy wagons of riot cops prepared to deploy. They were getting hyped up. I circled the block and noticed one teenager at a bus stop. They wore a brightly colored t-shirt and jeans, clearly not a part of the protesting happening a half a mile away. I circled again and as I approached the corner the riot wagon passed, dozens of fully armored cops with weapons and masks boisterously headed toward peaceful protesters. I came to the stop sign and the teenager looked at me and desperately asked if I knew when the bus was going to come. I didn't, and I offered them a ride. They ran into my car. As soon as the door closed, they cried, "They pointed their guns at me! They pointed their guns at me."

Is this the city my daughter is going to grow up in? Where she could be waiting for a bus to get home and the dozens of militarized police are going to point their GUNS at her. While offices of elected officials sit idly contemplating how they are going to maneuver this situation for their political gain?

I told this young person, scared and powerless, they are safe now. You are safe, I repeated, absolving myself to continue trying to REASON with the people who keep these aggressive, poorly trained idiots on OUR streets, threatening our CHILDREN, arresting JOURNALISTS and killing innocent PEOPLE (I see you KENDRA JAMES). "You are safe, now."

### **Piedmont Resident**

I live within a few blocks of the PPB attack on peaceful demonstrators on N Lombard last night. Before the police arrived, I was proud and happy to have this group of peaceful protesters in the neighborhood. I can assure you - they were peaceful.

At some point the unprovoked police just snapped - followed by hours of helicopters overhead, loud bangs, police yelling out over a loudspeaker. What was peaceful and inspiring became terrifying very quickly. At one point we were so afraid we considered calling out for help, but who would we call? Who are we supposed to call when the group causing harm and the group tasked with addressing wrongdoing are the same group?

### **Kenton Resident**

I live in Kenton with my spouse and our one year old child. I am writing about the ongoing protests in the wake of the murder of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, and specifically the outrageous response of the police in our neighborhood last night. I worked for three years in legal aid before joining the office and came here to push for progressive change in the criminal justice system. I have felt both incredibly moved by the calls for change in our community and very challenged to continue with my work in law enforcement.

When the governor called for a special session to deal, at least in part, with reforms to prevent police brutality in Oregon, I was hopeful. I am particularly grateful that the changes that Senator Frederick has been advocating for for decades are finally getting their audience. The bills that ended up passing were not everything I hoped to see, but I understand the legislative process. That said, it is already apparent that the reform efforts have not gone far enough.

In the days since the special session concluded, the Portland Police Bureau have continued to act with abandon, seemingly uninterested in conforming to the desires of the people they serve, and indifferent to civilian command. Under the guise of an "unlawful gathering," and apparently in compliance with new law regulating police use of tear gas, they unleashed their weapons on my neighbors. As I sat with my son, attempting to get him to sleep in his crib, we heard cracks and bangs as the police responded to calls for liberty with violence. As Speaker Kotek has already acknowledged in a letter to the mayor, the resort to violence it was uncalled for and unnecessarily risky.

At the next opportunity, I hope that the legislature acts to curtail police use of force much more stringently. I hope that we can reshape our law enforcement, and our state in general, to lead with principles of non-violence rather than principles of war. There will be no justice in our city until that happens.

### **Arbor Lodge Resident**

Here are more details to our encounter with the brutality last night.

My family resides at ##. We are the closest single family home to the sight where CS gas was fired by the PPD last night.

Around 8:30-45pm there was a peaceful march headed west on Lombard Ave. My husband and I, joined by several neighbors, went outside to cheer them on.

The march continued two blocks west to the police union building, a seemingly empty office space. Within 20 minutes we could hear the PPD announce over the loudspeaker that the protest was deemed unlawful and declared a riot. The PPD continued to push the crowd back east.

My husband remained in the front yard to watch in case anyone needed help. I stayed inside with our young children watching the entire encounter from our second story window.

CS gas was fired at the crowd at least 3 separate times, sending multiple canisters in each round.

At one point one individual lit a firework into the air, fizzling in the space between the protest and the PPD. The crowd quickly corrected that individual and it did not occur again.

Some time around 10pm an excessive amount of CS gas was thrown at the crowd again, shown in the photo above. My husband was gassed from our property.

My children, ages 8 and 5, came out of their bedroom coughing and crying, complaining that their noses burned. This is after we attempted to seal up their bedroom, turn off their window air conditioner and

cover it with multiple layers of fabrics. The gas still came into their room. My children were gassed in their own bedroom where they should have been safest.

I witnessed the entire encounter. No one's lives were endangered. It was a peaceful demonstration until the PPD showed up and deemed it a "riot". No windows were broken, no looting was committed. Everyone was safe until the PPD endangered THEM.

My family is fine, but this is not about us. It's about the continued police brutality and their consistent attacks on humanity.

FIX IT. Please.

#### **Arbor Lodge Resident**

Thank you for your letter to Ted Wheeler regarding yesterday's use of inappropriate force by the police department against calm protesters in North Portland last night.

I happened to be in the area (I was trying to go to Fred Meyer for groceries) and witnessed much of the situation as it unfolded. From my view as well there was no aggression or violence on the part of protesters, and deliberate unwarranted attacks by the police.

As I have written to Mayor Wheeler several times over the past month, and this is the only representative's office that has not so much as sent me an automated reply..... It is good to know there is more formal pressure on them as well.

Thank you for standing up for the rights of people to have their voices heard, and against the egregious misuse of force and manipulation of "law" by the Portland Police.

#### **Vernon Resident**

I live in NE Portland (right off MLK) and have been woken up several times in the past week or two to the sound of stun grenades. From watching live feed, I have seen that those grenades are often being thrown directly at folks protesting. We don't have an air conditioner so we keep our windows open and have recently been closing them at night because we have had toxic CS gas come through into our apartment. To do this during a pandemic that targets one's respiratory system seems especially cruel. I had read that the use of tear gas had been banned and am curious as to why there has not been any action taken as that has clearly been violated? I find it unnerving that we have a mayor who condones the use of toxic chemicals in our neighborhoods as well as the targeted arrests of journalists. I have only been to a few protests in the past few weeks but can attest that any violence has been instigated by the PPB. Any fear I feel regarding the protests is due to the violence and attacks by the PPB onto my neighborhood and community. I thank you again for speaking up on behalf of your constituents.

#### **Portsmouth Resident**

Thank you so much for your investigation into the PPD behavior during the North Portland protests on 6/30/20.

I have many concerns most of which you covered in your letter.

My daughters was present so I was monitoring a live feed produced by a gentleman named Robert Burns.

One thing that especially disturbed me was that the police intentionally shot (from what I could tell) two canisters of CS gas directly at a group of Press workers who were in the fenced in DeLaSalle School field.

For what is worth, Robert Evans (I do not know him) would be an excellent resource. He obviously had been at all the protests to date. I found him on Twitter.

First of all, thank you for your letter to Mayor Wheeler. It is very encouraging to finally see a public official speak about the outrageous response to legal protest by the PPD and, by extension, the Portland City Council and Mayor.

#### **Kenton Resident**

I live in North Portland, in the Mocks Crest area. I would like to bring up a point about the use of CS and Pepper munitions that may not be apparent to some. I have an underlying respiratory condition that means exposure to mace, CS, or pepper chemicals could cause a serious, life threatening reaction. Due to this, I have been hesitant to attend any protest that might elicit the use of these substances by PPD.

This means that when the PPD show up, I HAVE to leave. This makes the very presence of PPD a chilling force on my utilization of my First Amendment right to protest and redress. Until they are banned from using these munitions, I am denied the ability to freely show support for a cause I back one hundred percent.

Please consider adding this lense to your view of recent events. I again commend your voice and appreciate your support. Let us all keep going and work to fix all we can while we have this moment.

#### **University Park Resident**

Your letter to Mayor Wheeler was spot on. It reflects the concerns of your constituents. I was traveling though the area in my car and saw some of the activity and more on video. The tactics used by the Portland Police were particularly troubling.

The actions of last night show that HB 4208 as passed is not an adequate deterrent to the use of CS gas and sonic devices by Police even near sites with hazardous materials.

I urge you to initiate either official legislative hearings on what happened last night OR an informal listening or town hall. I also urge you to immediately call on the Joint Committee on Transparent Policing and Use of Force Reform (HB 4201) to start its work and hold hearings in Portland in early July. I urge you to request that the Commissioner of Police (Ted Wheeler) appear and explain the actions of his employees.

The Legislature may wish to consider in the next Special Session budgetary "incentives" to "encourage" local police departments to move away from the use of CS, projectiles and sonic devices and to encourage de-escalation tactics and community policing.

#### **Kenton Resident**

I am a resident of North Portland, in the neighborhood of Kenton. I am shocked and sickened by the brutal and irresponsible actions of the Portland Police that occurred last night, on June 30, 2020. My neighborhood found itself amidst what can be objectively described as a military zone – a wall of militarized police wielding unreasonable weaponry advanced upon protestors, subsequently firing at protestors with CS tear gas, shooting them with projectiles at close range, and issuing flashbangs. Police inflicted this same violence on neighbors and motorists trying to help injured protesters, and they assaulted and arrested journalists. Helicopters circled for hours. There are countless photos and videos that provide evidence of this malfeasance—notably, evidence provided by Journalists who were subsequently targeted with violence and arrests by those same police.

This would be egregious in its own right, but the use of tear gas in Portland by police is currently a violation of a federal court order. Further, the police took these actions in a residential neighborhood – one in which families and children were subjected to harmful tear gas during a pandemic, as well as potentially traumatized by flashbangs and militarized violence.

This, sadly, is only one instance of many, but it is illustrative of continuous and persistent misuse of power and acts of violence by PPB. This blatant attack on citizens and their first amendment rights must be addressed by the city and state leadership immediately. The PPB and Mayor Wheeler appear to have forgotten that citizens like myself pay the police to serve the community. Instead, PPB are prioritizing the security of their own power, while trampling citizens' rights and inflicting unnecessary harm on the community.

#### **Piedmont Resident**

I am writing to you because policing in Portland (and the rest of the nation) needs to change, as evidenced by the excessive force used on protesters last night on Lombard.

I live a mile and a half away from where police acted unlawfully by calling the protest a riot in order to use CS gas on them. I was home with my family when these non-violent protesters marched by on Rosa Parks from Peninsula Park. They chanted and held signs--like so many recent protesters expressing a real need for change.

A little after 9, my family and I began to hear police voices so loud that we thought they were much closer. Their voices heightened the tension felt by me and my neighbors in our homes, suggesting that terrible crimes were happening very close by. We could hear police threats of gas use well before it was deployed. I can only conclude that their use of gas was intended from the beginning. The tension and threats could have only served to escalate the confrontation.

By 10:30, a horrible smell was in the air. Again, we live more than a mile away and had to shut our windows. My children are witnessing a police force that scares them, not protects them. The lack of accountability for police crimes scares me, too.

I believe that when we look back at this time, the work of protesters will be lauded as righteous and necessary. Whatever is accomplished, they've put their bodies in front of poisons and threats of violence to dismantle racial oppression.

#### **Roseway Resident**

Thank you so much for beginning to take action about the police brutality here in Portland. Their response has gotten out of hand and indeed as you have stated in your letter, declaring a riot when there is none and the attacking citizens and journalists is illegal! CS gas has been banned by several judges SEVERAL times and yet they keep using it to the danger of residents- especially during the pandemic! I appreciate what you are doing to press the matter.

What will you do to keep them safe? Their safety is my safety. Their fight is our fight.

#### **Irvington Resident**

I am writing to you as I was recently subjected to arrest by the Portland Police Bureau while taking part in the protest march on Tuesday June 30th.

While at the protests during this past month it has been obvious that very few of the officers are taking covid seriously; as they do not social distance outside and over half of them are not wearing masks when speaking directly to each other or other people.

Even though I had seen this; I was not prepared for the blatant disregard for health that I was subjected to throughout the almost 11 hours that I was in custody.

I was violently taken to the ground for asking why I was being grabbed; as I had been following instructions to move East and had been helping people stay grouped together and keep moving at a

pace that everyone could attain at the back of the group. We were attacked from the South by officers in riot gear while being told over the LRAD that we needed to continue to the East; which we were doing. Two officers took my arms, a third hit me in the side twice and once in the thigh with the end of his baton; and then the three of them held me down while yelling "Stop resisting"

My mask was pulled from my face and I was subjected to pepper spray; they threatened to do it again as I tried to calmly but loudly explain that I was trying to put my hands behind my back but could not due them holding me down. They finally let me put my arms back and I started to feel the onset of an asthma attack; the mace, getting my arms pulled back, the weight on my back; I began telling them I have asthma and explaining where my inhaler was. An officer did retrieve it and give me puffs; while I was still held on the ground.

I later asked them to put my mask up; they advised that it would have mace on it but they did not have any mask for me. I decided to have them put my mask on as they had me on the ground and were speaking over me and none of them were wearing masks. It was not pleasant; but I decided I would rather let the mace burn my skin in that moment than be completely unprotected in that space; even knowing that masks are truly for other people not yourself...[continued]

### **Kenton Resident**

On Tuesday, June 30 2020, between the hours of 8pm and 1am officers with the Portland Police Bureau and Multnomah County Sheriff's department violently and repeatedly attacked a group of citizens in the vicinity of the intersection at Lombard and Interstate in north Portland, including:

- Peaceful demonstrators that were marching -Nonviolent protesters displaying passive resistance
- Minors -Elderly -Diversely abled -Chronically ill -Unhoused neighbors -Homeowners -Residents
- Business owners -Employees -Transit Commuters -Drivers -Bystanders that were walking
- Patrons of local businesses

Officers deployed triple chaser CS gas chemical weaponry (tear gas manufactured by Defense Technology), flashbangs, baton strikes, rubber bullets, pepper spray and additional excessive force at protestors

Of great concern:

--A young black woman was tackled, struck with baton & arrested...she was a resident of that neighborhood, simply attempting to pick up her son... [continued]

### **Multiple North Portland Residents**

This incident (among others) demonstrates why use of extreme and violent crowd control measures (such as CS gas) must be outright banned. The PPB will label any peaceful gathering a 'riot' if it allows them the use of these life threatening tools. Budgets are moral documents and the continued funding of the PPB in its current form is unacceptable.

### **Facebook**

#### **Constituent**

Thank you speaker. The PPD is a far greater threat to public safety than the few vandals mixed in with the peaceful protestors.

#### **Constituent**

Thank you Speaker Kotek. I agree with everything you said. PPB command officers and regular officers must be held accountable for their illegal actions. There appears to be no other way to stop the PPB from bulldozing over our individual and civil rights. Their behavior is even more concerning as the PPB seems to be becoming emboldened to act more and more aggressively every day.

**Constituent**

Thank you, Speaker Kotek! This north Portlander appreciates your efforts on our neighborhood and city's behalf.

**North Portland Resident**

Thank you for speaking out. I was pepper sprayed by PPB at the beginning of the dispersal because I wasn't able to keep moving since there were other protesters behind me. PPB continued to shove people into other protesters in an dangerous and unnecessary fashion.

**Constituent**

Thank you Speaker Kotek! I am an active precinct committee person and long time Portland resident. I believe in showing up and supporting my community. I participated in several of the protests which began at Revolution hall or Jefferson HS. But I stay clear of protests anywhere near PPB. I feel safe and supported with BLM and social justice community, but I do not feel safe when the police are involved, and I stay away from them! Bring back public safety and peacekeepers!

**Constituent**

Thank you for continuing to represent your district so well, Speaker Kotek. We appreciate it.

**Constituent**

Anyone in that vicinity of the tear gas must clean their air filters of their cars and homes. I yelled up to people on their balconies to close their windows. The tear gas gets into the sewers, gardens, etc. Police created a dangerous situation firing canisters into the crowds and several landed at the Shell gas station. There are pepper balls in the street that cars drove over after it was over - spreading pepper particles into the air. Canisters left in the street were cleaned up by the few protestors who remained behind. Not the police. I picked up a dozen pepper balls that did not break open. None of this is safe. None of this protected anyone. None of this was necessary. It was outrageous behavior by the police.

**Constituent**

Thank you, Speaker. The protests were happening at the end of my block and when I joined, the protests were entirely peaceful and the police were announcing that we were being unsafe and physically pushing people to move the crowd, for no safety reason I could see. I (among many others) was shoved by a cop and they raised weapons on people in the crowd who posed no harm.

- And they were deploying tear gas that was blowing directly into my neighborhood. Enough to sting our eyes at our house.
- It was literally happening at the end of my block. The gas was making my kids' eyes tear up from a block away. There were no agitators at that time except the police. The protesters were peaceful. The cops declared it a riot.

**Constituent**

The PPB criminalised a peaceful protest, terrorised a neighbourhood, and instigated violence.

This seems less about keeping the peace and more about reinforcing the primacy of police officers and their egos.

**Constituent**

Thank you! I was trying to leave the area by car and was caught in multiple clouds of CS gas. This is not ok and there was no riot before the cops showed up.

**Constituent**

Thank you!!!! This resident of St. Johns much appreciates you standing up for us and our neighborhoods of N. Portland.

**Constituent**

I did not witness any violence in the part of the protestors. Indeed it seems the PPB called it a riot just so they could come out and play with their riot toys and clock some overtime while hurting citizens—and not just the protestors. The entire community was put at risk because riot cops gonna riot.



### **Constituent**

I watched this happen from my balcony this evening. As an eyewitness, I can truly state that this crowd was not doing anything wrong. This was a PEACEFUL protest, until the POLICE started using crowd control and CS gas to break up the crowd.

I am just completely blown away. (Video)

### **Portland Resident**

The violence and abuse of power being exhibited by Portland Police is out of hand. What I witnessed last night near the Portland Police Association on N. Lombard was chilling. I'm posting a few videos below which give a glimpse but do not at all capture the extent of it.

The first video is a short clip of protestors gathered in front of the Police Association building. As you can see, the group is nonviolent. As usual, hurling insults and some plastic water bottles, but nothing in which any officer's life or well-being was at all in danger. But by that point PPB had \*already\* declared the assembly unlawful, and even (as you can hear on the video) claimed that there was "criminal activity" happening. There was not.

The second video is less than twenty minutes later. Protestors had not done anything more than what I've described, but still PPB had already aggressively pushed the crowd back, including use of batons on people. One ACLU legal observer was struck hard against her back. In the video you can see some of the munitions police are using, rubber bullets and smoke, and how militarized they are and the whole scene is in responding to nonviolent protest.

The third video is just another 25 minutes later or so. Again, not much more from the protestors except some more water bottles and insults. Whatever escalation has occurred is coming from police and their aggressive presence and action. As you can see in the video they then charge hard at the group and make some arrests quite forcefully.

After a little while longer they release CS gas into the crowd. There is a restraining order against doing so, but by this point they had announced that they considered the assembly a "riot," which presumably gave them the right to violate the order not to use tear gas. This was NOT a riot. It is horrific that our tax dollars are going to support the police force carrying out this kind of abuse.

Perhaps the most disturbing part of the night was that at least three members of the press were arrested. I saw a tweet earlier of the charges against one of them and they are an absolute lie. There was at least one felony count of assaulting an officer, but there is video of him being arrested and it is crystal clear that none of that happened. Folks, this is serious. It looks like the DA may not be following on those charges, but what the police are doing is in direct violation of protected rights. Press being arrested, their phones being confiscated as evidence. It's frightening.

I'm not following all the news, but I see at least some indication that there are "violent clashes" between protestors and police. That is simply false. There is no comparison at all between protestors' actions and the violence being perpetrated by the police. And PPB posted something about "baseball-sized rocks" being thrown at them. I saw nothing of the sort.

I know that many of us cannot be out there, so I am sharing this in hopes that these realities are clear. Please share as you're moved to so we continue to amplify truth and expose police violence.

## TEXT

**7/1/20**

Thank you for your message to Mayor Wheeler. I was there last night as a neighbor and legal observer for the ACLU and can attest to everything you commented on as true.

### Neighborhood Associations

#### **Arbor Lodge Neighborhood Association**

I am writing from the Arbor Lodge Neighborhood Association (ALNA) Board to say thank you for your advocacy for our Arbor Lodge neighbors who were negatively impacted by the use of CS gas and other devices last Tuesday near the area of Lombard and Campbell.

Several neighbors reached out to us, and asked if we had a plan for such an emergency. We did not, but will discuss this at our next ALNA meeting. I know you were sent a copy of our statement on policing recently. I hope you've had time to review it.

Thank you again for representing us, your neighbors, and speaking out against the use of CS gas and other devices especially in residential neighborhoods.

#### **Portsmouth Neighborhood Association**

Thank you for your recent letter of July 1st to Mayor Ted Wheeler in response to the police violence on our streets. We appreciate you standing up for the safety of our community. You are right to demand leadership from Mayor Wheeler in the face of this ongoing assault. To have our North Portland streets filled with gas and violence was just one in a series of violent nights. We are disturbed at the way law enforcement agencies are responding to righteous outrage about the long history of racist attacks against Black people. We share your concern about police treatment of reporters.