

July 17, 2020

To the Joint Committee On Transparent Policing and Use of Force Reform:

HB 4208 (2020) as it is currently written has led to countless unjustified incidents of police releasing tear gas onto protestors in the streets of Portland, thereby inciting fear, panic, and putting the lives of Portland residents in danger.

As is currently written, HB4208 (2020) states "A law enforcement agency may not use tear gas for the purposes of crowd control except in circumstances constituting a riot, as described in ORS 166.015." According to OR 166.015, a riot is defined as "A person commits the crime of riot if while participating with five or more other persons the person engages in tumultuous and violent conduct and thereby intentionally or recklessly creates a grave risk of causing public alarm." What is happening every night in Portland are protestors gathering and chanting without any weapons. It is not until PPB officers declare an unlawful assembly and begin to shoot tear gas, pepper balls, rubber bullets, etc. (which are all tumultuous and violent), that the situations escalate. There are countless videos of officers charging at protestors without any "tumultuous and violent conduct" from protestors. Every night, it becomes more evident that law enforcement officers cannot be counted on to make this distinction.

Even if there were a "riot", there is no justified reason to use these harmful and toxic weapons. We are in a global pandemic with rising cases of a virus that attacks the lungs and have led to multiple deaths.

According to the CDC, People exposed to riot control agents may experience some or all of the following symptoms immediately after exposure:

- Eyes: excessive tearing, burning, blurred vision, redness
- Nose: runny nose, burning, swelling
- Mouth: burning, irritation, difficulty swallowing, drooling
- Lungs: chest tightness, coughing, choking sensation, noisy breathing (wheezing), shortness of breath
- Skin: burns, rash
- Other: nausea and vomiting

Long-lasting exposure or exposure to a large dose of riot control agent, especially in a closed setting, may cause severe effects such as the following:

- Blindness
- Glaucoma (a serious eye condition that can lead to blindness)
- Immediate death due to severe chemical burns to the throat and lungs
- Respiratory failure possibly resulting in death

Furthermore, long-term health effects of exposure to riot control agents include:

- Prolonged exposure, especially in an enclosed area, may lead to long-term effects such as eye problems including scarring, glaucoma, and cataracts, and may possibly cause breathing problems such as asthma.
- If symptoms go away soon after a person is removed from exposure to riot control agents, long-term health effects are unlikely to occur.

(Source: [CDC: Facts About Riot Control Agents Interim document](#))

As a citizen of Portland, which now has the highest cases of police brutality per capita, I ask that you **reform this bill and place a complete ban on tear gas.**

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Katya Reyna
Citizen of Portland, Oregon