

Thank you for providing the opportunity to present this testimony.

I'm grateful to this committee for setting out to examine use of force by police officers, increase transparency in police protocols, and research ways to reduce serious physical injury or death at the hands of those sworn to protect and serve us.

Every night in Portland right now, protests against police brutality are being met with police brutality. Video after video has surfaced of the people sworn to protect and serve Portlanders escalating tensions, lashing out at Portlanders with hair-trigger tempers, beating people, tear gassing them, shooting them with rubber bullets, and causing life-threatening injuries. We're now seeing further escalation of this violence at the hands of—unbelievably—the Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection, and the US Marshals Service. We are in the middle of a pandemic that threatens our bodies' respiratory systems, and the people sworn to protect and serve us are using riot control agents that are highly toxic, have lasting health effects, and cause severe injuries.

As a constituent of the 42nd district, it's my right to demand that this committee do things to make my community safer.

- Ban riot control agents like tear gas and LRAD devices.
- Ban the use of excessive force by police against its communities.
- Create policies that make police accountable for their actions against the people they serve.
- Hold police accountable for the disproportionate ways they arrest, attack, brutalize and kill people of color - communities of Black, Brown and Indigenous people.
- Start with transparency and accountability, and work toward abolishment.

Of the many things this committee is set to examine, I reject the idea that you are analyzing procedures and policies used in other states. There is no model for policing that Oregon should be mimicking and taking on. Instead, Oregon should seek to be a leader in this country by instituting fundamental and structural changes that overhaul—and eventually abolish—the police. I do not need to write to you as a white immigrant from New Zealand and tell you, a committee of Americans that includes BIPOC people, why policing was set up in this country. I do not need to tell you that the system of policing is working precisely as it was intended. What I do need to say is this: the choices you make as a committee can and should have lasting effects on the lives of Oregonians of all races, but specifically BIPOC people. The police have not protected nor served these communities, because the police were not established to protect and serve these communities.

I am not a lawmaker, politician, or expert, so I can't tell you how to fix this problem. All I can do as your constituent is urge you to do your jobs and do better by the BIPOC people of this state. And do it soon.

Hannah Jennings-Voykovich
42nd District Constituent