

Hearing for Joint Committee On Transparent Policing and Use of Force Reform
July 17th, 2020 @ 1pm

Dear Joint Committee On Transparent Policing and Use of Force Reform,

I am writing in regards to HB 4208 relating to the use of tear gas by law enforcement. I have been at the protests when cops have declared a riot, which then allows them to use tear gas under HB 4208. I am always confused when they declare a riot because I don't see a riot by protesters. Sure, there are some small number of protesters throwing water bottles and some using little laser pointers, but the crowd is not doing anything that I would consider a riot. The vast majority of us are just exercising our constitutional right to protest by chanting loudly, taking up space, and non-violently expressing our anger and frustration at a system that doesn't protect us. The fact that the police can declare a riot, without any real cause, and without any accountability so they can use tear gas on us for protesting in the streets of our cities is horrifying. Tear gas is a chemical weapon that is banned in the use of war. If it is banned in war, why should it be used against crowds of people exercising our First Amendment right? I am urging you to completely ban the use of tear gas. Period. It seems to have no purpose other than to terrorize us. I should be able to show up and exercise my right to protest without the fear of being harmed by tear gas. It is appalling we allow the police to use of this chemical weapon. Completely ban the use of tear gas.

Thank you for reading this testimony.

Katy