

Dear Co-Chair Bynum, Manning and to all the members of the Joint Committee on Transparent Policing and Use of Force Reform,

My name is Seemab Hussaini and I'm the vice-chair to the Oregon Chapter for the Council on American-Islamic Relations, member of the executive committee for Portland United Against Hate, and I actively work with a coalition of organizations, clergy and community members on negotiating the Portland Police Associations contract negotiations. I do much more, but these are a good start in addressing why I'm writing to you today.

I have had the unfortunate honor of being indiscriminately gassed and hit by several "non-lethal munitions" by Portland Police Bureau within a dozen or so of the 50 days of 1A protected protests and demonstrations. I've tended to those hurt, including a young woman who had her goggles pulled down and pepper sprayed directly in the eyes. I've had friends with children attend a June 2nd event with organizational speakers like Kayse Jama, Executive Director of Unite Oregon, to only be gassed to the point of a pregnant black woman throwing up due to the lack of her ability to breathe. She was (and still is thankfully) pregnant and is currently filed suit against the city with her family.

You have heard these stories and many just like it, and I don't mean to be disrespectful in bringing these up as if you didn't. Quite contrary actually, I have been proud over the strength and solidarity your leadership has represented us Oregonians and beyond, particularly around your proposed resolution on the use of Riot Control Agents (RCA's) such as gasses and chemical weapons used by Law Enforcement Officers (LEOs). I feel like there's hope fighting this authoritarian breach into our State which is working so vigorously to heal from it's own racist past, as there is so much work yet to be done. But, the main factor in healing this state and Americans beyond our border lies in how we are policed, and this movement is our collective exhale. We need substantive reform now.

The original sins our this country's past has a home in policing in the United States. We are seeing from local, to county- to state- to federal LEOs become more and more militarized, and their authority increases over our populations. **When you're a hammer, everything looks like a nail.** And the only way that this can be stopped is to completely remove the stockpiling and use of chemical weapons against any human being within Oregons borders. I've personally watched LEOs smiling and laughing as they launch and throw these agents at us. Heard them "woot!" at a successful kettling of people as they tossed these chemical agents in all four directions, driving by and hanging off their white vans. I was one of them on June 5th.

Since that day, I've managed to stay further back from these chemical attacks, but had been caught in a kettle yet again on several dates since. It's proven difficult to avoid and this is wrong. It doesn't get lost on us that the very reason why we're protesting is the same apathy PPB and now Federal Forces have shown us nightly for 50 days. Regardless of our current restrictions LEOs attack with the impunity they enjoy.

I now have developed a steady yet intermittent cough, as my lungs feel almost itchy at times. I worry that my participation may affect my health negatively (especially during this COVID

pandemic), but I will still continue until I see changes that translate. Because as a Muslim community organizer, there's nothing I can do for my community that will last unless Black Lives begin to Matter. And the best that I can ask for you here and now is a complete ban on chemical weapons in the State of Oregon.

Peace and Blessing to you all,

Seemab S. Hussaini