

I support the ban on tear gas use by law enforcement in all circumstances. We have already seen that the riot exception has been misused by police in Oregon. As a nurse who works primarily with underserved and vulnerable people including people of color, immigrants, and people who are houseless, low-income, and/or chronically ill I am especially concerned about the transient and permanent health effects that are known to come from tear gas exposure. These effects are serious enough that tear gas use is banned in warfare, so it should not be used on our streets either. Tear gas use only exacerbates the already serious public health crises of racism and police violence that many people in my community face every day.

During a pandemic, tear gas has the additional problem of increasing the risk that someone with COVID will spread the infection to others if they are coughing and producing copious secretions and of harming the health of all exposed so that they are more at risk of contracting COVID in the coming days and weeks in other contexts.

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