

Dear State Legislators and Committee Members,

I am writing as a resident of Portland regarding Measures LC 742 and 743.

As a citizen of Portland I have watched and experienced the events of the past 2 months regarding the Black Lives Matter movement and the response of the Portland Police Bureau as well as that of other police organizations within our state. To give you some context on where I come from; my mother, my father, and my uncle were all police officers, and my mother still works as a DA investigator. I grew up with all of them and have as good a 2nd-hand understanding of police as I think anyone can have. It is from this point of perspective that I tell you the actions of police officers in this state, especially those of the Portland Police Bureau are unacceptable. Under no circumstances should their actions be allowed to continue unregulated by you or another committee outside the police force itself.

Regarding LC742:

The use of chemical weapons being outlawed for use against our worst enemies but legal to use on our citizens is already a questionable policy. It is therefore abhorrent to see and know that the majority of the past 50+ days of protests have seen excessive use of tear/CS gas munitions on crowds of protesters, the vast majority of whom are non-violent. Furthermore, the excuse used by the PPB that these instances occurred during riots is laughable. The distinction for police to be able to determine what is and what is not a riot or what is and what is not dangerous to the public is broad and vague. It does not take a stretch of the imagination that when met with a group of citizens demanding defunding and accountability from the police, the police would use these vague powers to disperse and attack their political and financial opponents with the fervor we have seen despite their best attempts to hide it. The treatment Mr. Edwin Tevis Wheeler experienced at the hands of the federal government several nights ago is no different and no more despicable than that which he allowed to be enacted on his own constituents. I fully encourage and support you enacting further measures to regulate the use of crowd control munitions, chemical weapons, and sonic weapons in our state. The PPB has clearly displayed that they are no longer capable of regulating themselves with the toys we pay for out of our own pockets, and that they no longer deserve our trust in being able to manage behavior against a group that opposes their actions and work culture ideologically. They do not get to move and act unfettered when they have not proven they can do so in such a way that protects the rights of ALL of the citizens they protect.

Regarding LC743:

The point of having a badge number and identifications system outside of a purely logistical side within the police department is to allow citizens to identify police officers, note the legitimacy of their position, and hold them accountable to the oaths of their office. The deplorable ethics of covering up badges during confrontations where officers are consistently being shown to abuse power and exert excessive force upon citizens of this state should NOT be allowed. Officers should always have their badges on display for the public to identify for several reasons. It prevents the officer from the belief that they can act with impunity, and that no one will be able to identify them for their acts. It allows citizens to be able to pursue injustice enacted upon them when it does happen. It protects citizens from not being able to hostile forces masquerading as police for malicious purposes.

Furthermore, the demilitarization of police is crucial if they ever wish to re-establish trust between them and the community once again. By the PPBs own logic, they believe that after literal months of abuse and violence perpetrated against them, citizens donning shields and gas masks (all defensive measures you will note) is a indication that protesters are there with the "intent to fight rather than disperse". What does that say when regardless of any action taken by protesters police show up with enough militarized weaponry and gear to take down every protester and their mother twice over. When you train police to see threats in everyone regardless of context, they are going to find threats everywhere regardless of legitimacy. When you arm public defenders for war (and then often require them to use or lose said equipment) the only thing left for them to do is enact war upon the citizenry.

I fully support and encourage legislation to demilitarize police and ensure their accountability to their citizens.

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The police are some of the very arms which enact and enforce your elected rule and legislation. They have enacted continued and consistent violence upon they people who put you in office to not only protect them but to enrich their lives. Every day you allow this abuse to go on is a day you have failed in protecting those people.

Thank you for your time