

Dear Co-chairs Senator Manning and Representative Bynum, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Debbie Wong. I live in West Linn. I have been involved in advocacy work in various areas of social justice through the years. I want to thank you all for drafting bills to address the issues of police brutality and lack of accountability.

I fully support LC 744 and LC 745. I have some comments as follows.

LC 744: I support implementing a clear process for reporting misconduct and maintaining a data base. I believe, however, that the time line for reporting will result in a significant delay in the interrogation of the officer involved in possible misconduct which will be a barrier to effective investigation. Optimally I believe an officer should be interrogated within 48hours after an alleged incident of misconduct. According to the draft, it could be up to 192hours before the investigation is even opened. In a separate but related issue which may be beyond the scope of this proposed bill is the need for standards governing the internal affairs process itself from selection of investigator to ensure objectivity & lack of conflict of interest to the process itself to ensure thoroughness, accountability and legitimacy which has been a problem in many police departments including most recently West Linn as revealed by the Fesser case.

LC 745: I support banning choke holds completely. It is an extremely dangerous maneuver. In addition, impairment of breathing could trigger even greater resistance from the suspect which is counterproductive. I feel there should be a mandate for a "use of force" continuum starting with de-escalation techniques first. On a separate but related issue, perhaps we should be taking a closer look also at why we are arresting people. Are there alternatives to taking people into custody such as citations or summons for minor offenses which would not lead to the need for use of force to take someone into custody? I think of Eric Garner who died after "resisting arrest" for the sale of loose cigarettes. I think of Elijah McClain who died "resisting arrest" for looking "suspicious". I think of George Floyd who died resisting arrest for possible passing a counterfeit bill. Isn't one innocent til proven guilty? Could this have been handled with a summons?

I thank the committee again for their hard work for justice.

Respectfully,

Debbie Wong