

I am submitting written testimony in reference to the legislation being considered at the August 2020 special session. I am commenting on LC 742, LC 743, LC 745, LC 751, LC 761, LC 762, and LC 763. Rather than commenting on each specifically, I am stating at the outset that I am in support of all of that proposed legislation—as a good start to the quelling of the excessive use of forces, lack of transparency, and lack of accountability and prosecution of law enforcement of law enforcement officers who commit excessive and egregious deeds.

I live in Portland, Oregon and as you are well aware, many unnecessary and harmful actions have been perpetrated upon peaceful protestors. As of my writing this testimony (August 4, 2020) teargas has been sprayed on demonstrators at least 96 times since the protests began on May 28. People exposed to these toxic chemicals include county commissioners, the mayor of Portland, and many community and civic leaders. And, many have been injured by projectiles and other “less lethal” weapons. In addition, the air and water in the area of downtown are now being tested for levels of toxicity caused by the toxic gases. Women are reporting disturbance in their menstrual cycles, and many are suffering chronic migraines and other illnesses. The time to ban these weapons is NOW.

Officers must be clearly identifiable—not with tape over their names or snatching people from the streets in unmarked rented vehicles.

I am a supporter of labor unions. I was president of my local teachers’ union for two years. However, our union did not prevent educators who committed criminal acts to be terminated from their jobs or to give them immunity from prosecution and incarceration if necessary. Police unions should not be allowed to protect criminals within the police force. A union’s job is to negotiate wages and working conditions, not protect law-breakers in their police force.

Police budgets comprise a sizable portion of city budgets. Funds need to be redirected to community services and personnel trained to quell unrest. The presence of our highly militarized and overly weaponized law enforcement, as recent events have demonstrated, escalate violence!

Investment in communities and human services will do much more to bring peace, justice, and equity to our neighborhoods. I believe we need to rethink and restructure our approach to “maintaining the law”! We must begin to divest and redirect.

The proposed legislation must be passed. Although this will just be the beginning of a long and necessary “reimaging and creating” viable and long-lasting justice for all.

Respectfully,

Alice Shapiro

2545 SW Terwilliger Bl #320

Portland, OR 97201

541-999-7278