

Hello,

My name is Julia Riley and I live and work in Portland proper. I am emailing today to discuss my experiences with the Portland Police's use of tear gas, projectiles, and unnecessary force against nonviolent resisters.

In the past months of protesting since George Floyd's murder, my husband and I have experienced flash-bangs, rubber pellets, intimidation tactics, and mocking treatment at the hands of PPB. On one night, our fellow community members had brought concrete blockades into the street and we stood inside, holding signs and calling for change. PPB marched on us from one side to get our attention, then rushed us from the other side holding their guns and yelling at everyone to move to the parks. They let off several flash bang grenades, causing confusion and coughing as people tried to get out of the smoke.

As they herded us to the sidewalks, I saw three officers slam a man to the ground, pile on top of him, and begin to arrest him. No officers would speak to us about why the man was getting arrested, and anyone who tried to help him stand was met with a brandished weapon. The officers holding back the line of nonviolent, angry protesters looked terrified - it's almost like this type of action against their own community isn't what they signed up for.

I am appalled by the tactics I have seen used against nonviolent protesters. When only a handful of people in a crowd of thousands has been unruly, the entire group has been indiscriminately attacked with "less-lethal" (but still harmful and terrible) munitions. We do not want our taxpayer dollars to fund such a broken system that cares more about property than human life.

Instead, this committee should contribute state funding to community-led safety efforts, and pass policies identified by Black-led organizations as urgent to fix police immunity and abuse of community through force.

Black lives matter. We will not stop marching and calling for justice and true equality.

Sincerely,
Julia Riley