

Testimony - LC 17

Public testimony for LC 17 - crowd control

It is hard to put into words the anger and frustration I have experienced as an Oregonian protesting police brutality. Every night we have seen disproportionate attacks by police on peaceful demonstrators. They use the slightest pretext to indiscriminately attack everyone in attendance. We have seen women, children, medics, and press be routinely brutalized by officers. Their leadership has showed a constant disrespect for the citizens of this State and our elected officials. Due to an ever increasing aggressiveness to "end the protests", officers have become ever more brutal with increasing brashness. Now State troopers are being deputized to circumvent the democratically elected Multnomah County District Attorney. In public statements, law enforcement leaders are making clear they don't care what voters choose or want, and any attempts at accountability will be publicly condemned as "anti-cop." They know what they are doing and the dangerous game they are playing.

Lost in the daily cycle of violent police images, is the fact that for every violent arrest and public beating, there are four more protestors created and potentially radicalized. The police have created more unrest and demonstrations by their heavy handed techniques, than years of organizing could have. Everyone can read when nearby Sheriffs refuse to work because of the threat of being accountable for their actions. Every statement by the union head of PPA sets community relations back years and takes a torch to public trust.

Police brutality causes more protests.

The idea that they can arrest their way out of scrutiny is counter productive to the idea of ending the protests. It only takes one assault by a police officer to make that citizen (and their whole family) hate the police for the rest of their life. Nothing can repair that trauma, no amount of "community policing" will make that person trust the police again.

Hyperbolic rhetoric from irresponsible conservative representatives have fueled a dangerous situation with armed criminals being invited to show up to protests armed and ready to do the police's job for them. This is shameful of elected Oregon representatives and is reflective of how low they have allowed their party to fall. They have encouraged collusion with right-wing militias and are almost daily encouraging domestic terrorists to harm Oregonians.

Some of you on the committee still want to see a better Oregon for all its citizens and this cycle of nightly demonstrations cannot end without your public leadership in healing the rifts between citizens and their police forces. That cannot begin without a deescalation in crowd control actions by the police. We need strong and unequivocal language that prohibits using loop-holes to circumvent laws to protect protesters. We need you to ensure that police cannot be used as pawns to hype up a party's "law and order" creds or repress a candidates political "enemies."

Sincerely,
David Linn
Portland, OR