

In relating to the public hearing on police reform

To whom it may concern,

I am writing as both a concerned citizen and registered Oregon voter concerning the consideration of a number of bills that involve how policing is carried out here in Oregon. These are things that matter to me on a deep personal level and are the first and most important thing I will be considering in the 2020 election. In general, the apparatus of the police has been used to suppress the rights of minorities throughout history and to silence the voices of those that would try to speak on their behalf. I have personally witnessed the police beat my friends without reason or cause for arrest, traumatize them, and stand by or even help other civilians do the same in their name. Every morning I wake up to a list of new atrocities that the police have committed against my peers, more arrests that will never see a day in court, and police inflicted injuries that will take weeks or months to heal, if they do at all. As it stands in our current system, I cannot expect that even a single one of these officers will face any punishment for their behavior, or for any behavior. Police unions will continue to prevent charges from being levied, and qualified immunity will protect those who do see their day in court. The time has come to change. You can either be an agent of that change, or take a back seat as the people of Oregon choose someone else to institute that change come November.

Now I would like to address my particular thoughts concerning individual items, as listed below:

LC 742 (LC 17)

Chemical weapons, kinetic impact projectiles, and sonic weaponry should not be in the hands of law enforcement. I support this bill in the restriction of their use, but I would like to see at least chemical weapons banned entirely. These are weapons that are prohibited in the theater of war and have no place being used on our own citizens. I hate that this is something I have to say, but we should not commit war crimes on our own people or allow such acts to continue through inaction.

LC 743 (LC 18)

The first step towards justice is accountability. In many ways, the police seek to cheaply imitate the military through rank and equipment. However, even when fighting the likes of ISIS, our soldiers wear their name on their uniforms. It is frankly ludicrous that our police officers are allowed to act with anonymity like this.

LC 746

Police unions have long prevented police, whom already get a large benefit of the doubt in a courtroom, to face punishments as a result of their actions. I am in support of this legislation.

LC 747

The rights of those arrested must be respected. Innocent until proven guilty. I know of protesters who have been arrested who were not even read their Miranda rights when arrested. (I don't believe the police ever intended to charge them with anything) I am in support of legislation in this area.

LC 762

The freedom of information has always been essential to the administration of justice in a free and democratic society. I am in support of this legislation.

LC 763

Reports of use of force by police are often fudged or otherwise lied about to make police look good. They cannot be relied upon to incriminate themselves. That being said, allowing these reports to be seen by the public allows for them to be compared against the public record. I am in support of this legislation.

LC 821

As I've stated before in this document, police accountability begins with a public record of their crimes. I am in support of this legislation.

LC 825

Qualified immunity has been the shield that police use to be protected against any and all accountability for crimes they commit. At the very least, the "violation of well-established constitutional rights" needs to be changed to "violation of constitutional rights" in order for the police to be charged with anything.

Thank you for reading my testimony. Try to be on the right side of history.

- Scott La Fetra