

Testimony: LC

Good afternoon, Co-Chairs and Members of the Joint Committee,

Portland is my home and over the years, I have lost track of the number of times that police have broken their social contract to protect members of the public.

The First Amendment guarantees the right to free speech and protest - but police have routinely declared an unlawful assembly whenever members of the public are protesting them. They have attacked and brutalized members of the public, including legal observers, and medics with impunity.

Thank you for your work on addressing this crisis.

#### **LC 742**

Police officers should not be allowed to injure members of the public and if police cannot keep the public safe without injuring them, we need to design and implement a new system. Mr. Selvaggio lists “chemical incapacitants” as a “non-lethal tool” but neglects to mention that these tools are injuring peoples’ health (info in the links below). He furthermore fails to mention that we are in the middle of a global pandemic and using any tools that can make the public more susceptible to the coronavirus is abhorrent.

Links:

Tear Gas and its Health Effects, Oregon Health Authority

<https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/HEALTHYENVIRONMENTS/HEALTHYNEIGHBORHOODS/TOXICSUBSTANCES/Pages/Tear-Gas.aspx>

“Portland protestors are reporting women’s health problems from tear gas: What’s going on?”

<https://www.fastcompany.com/90543705/portland-protesters-are-reporting-womens-health-problems-from-tear-gas-whats-going-on>

“Tear gas during COVID-19 is a public health disaster”

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/technology/tear-gas-during-covid-19-is-a-public-health-disaster/ar-BB15cRZ4>

“Public health officials worry tear gas, pepper spray could contribute to coronavirus spread as Seattle protests continue”

<https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/health/public-health-officials-worry-tear-gas-pepper-spray-could-contribute-to-coronavirus-spread-as-seattle-protests-continue/>

“Tear Gas Is Way More Dangerous Than Police Let On — Especially During the Coronavirus Pandemic”

<https://www.propublica.org/article/tear-gas-is-way-more-dangerous-than-police-let-on-especially-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic>

#### **LC 743**

Police should not be allowed to obscure their badge numbers as it hinders efforts at public accountability.

SERT plainclothes exceptions should not be expanded.

**LC 746**

I offer support for a Commission that will ensure a greater deal of accountability for officers than arbitration. Arbitrator vetoes should not be allowed.

**LC 747**

Members of the public who are arrested should not be harmed or injured.

**LC 821**

Police officers' crimes should be tracked and the public should be duly notified.

**LC 825**

I ask you to repeal qualified immunity for police officers. They are supposed to serve the public and therefore cannot be shielded from accountability.

"Federal judge pens scathing opinion on qualified immunity: 'Let us waste no time in righting this wrong'"  
<https://www.cnn.com/2020/08/04/politics/qualified-immunity-federal-judge/index.html>

"How 'Qualified Immunity' Protects Cops From Being Held Accountable"  
[https://www.huffpost.com/entry/what-is-qualified-immunity\\_n\\_5ef38307c5b66c312681008c](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/what-is-qualified-immunity_n_5ef38307c5b66c312681008c)

"Qualified immunity makes a mockery of justice. Abolish it."  
<https://www.oregister.com/2020/08/05/qualified-immunity-makes-a-mockery-of-justice-abolish-it/>

Sincerely,

Akash Singh  
Brown | Queer  
He/Him/His/They/Them

Writer | Essayist  
Environmental Justice | Migration Justice Advocate  
*Practice the Justice That You Preach*