

Police reform

I sent a message a few minutes ago. Now that I have had time to see the other bills on the table I hope you will allow me to make some further comments. Again, I learned of this at the eleventh hour and so haven't had time to go through the bills in detail. It appears three of the bills are still in draft, so I can only go by the titles and summaries.

LC 742 - Videos show officers removing the masks of protesters and holding their faces in streams of tear gas. This is extremely dangerous. I saw a protester suffer a seizure, presumably from tear gas. Officers are not using these tools the way they are designed to be used.

LC 743 - Although parts of this bill may be impractical, I hope it can at least be amended and parts passed into law. There is no reason for an officer acting within the bounds of law to hide their identity (aside from undercover work). In my opinion identification numbers should be worn in a way making them visible from video so such videos can be used as evidence in disciplinary hearings.

LC 746 - We have a system that makes it nearly impossible to hold officers accountable when they break the rules. There have been many videos in the past months clearly showing excessive force. How many will face any consequences? My bet is zero.

LC 747 - Excessive force seems to be used as a form of extra-judicial punishment. This is contrary to acceptable notions of rule of law in a democracy.

LC 821 - There is no reason for disciplinary records to not be public information. Hiding them does nothing more than to sweep systemic problems under the rug.

LC 825 - I wrote about qualified immunity in a previous email, and so will not repeat.

By creating a class of citizens who are seemingly immune to rule of law we have created a system that rots from the inside. I have read numerous stories of good officers who have quit their jobs because police culture has grown too toxic. There are many problems in our world, but this is the one that has at this moment reached critical mass. The time for reform was decades ago. Today the opportunity is presented.

Thank you,
Dan Stahlke
412-482-8267
Hillsboro, OR