

Written Testimony for Police Accountability

Greetings Co-Chairs and Members of the Joint Committee,

I am writing today to support a series of bills, specifically LC 742, LC 743, LC 746, LC 747 LC 821, and LC 825.

I am a Portland resident, and have been observing police activity in response to the protests responding to police brutality in the wake of the murder of George Floyd. While some of the actions of a minority of protestors are not actions I would condone, and I believe they should be prosecuted to the extent of the law, some of the actions by our trained police officers have been absolutely disgusting.

In the context of LC 742, many law enforcement agencies have demonstrated they do not understand how to deploy it effectively, but the Portland Police Bureau has demonstrated that they deploy tear gas as an extra-judicial punishment on protestors, and are indifferent to the innocent bystanders in the community that are affected. The fact that our mayor, and police commissioner has earned the nickname "tear gas teddy" is merely a reflection of how out of control the PPB was with their use of tear gas.

With regards to LC 743, I cannot believe that there needs to be a law for this, but again, the PPB have demonstrated that they will take every avenue to avoid being held accountable, and hiding any measure of identifying themselves seems to be it. Even with anonymised numbers, in videos it is frequently seen that the numbers are taped over, or officers do not wear them. While I was in the armed forces, our service members stationed in the middle east would not only wear name tags with their names in english, but wear name tags with arabic. And that was in a war zone.

In context of LC 746, arbitrators should not be able to override decisions of people put in oversight. Arbitrators are not elected by a community, and there is no way to hold them accountable. Police officers facing disciplinary actions need to be evaluated by people who answer to the public.

In context of LC 747, again, like LC 743, I cannot believe there needs to be a law for this. I would go on to try and justify my support, but I argue anyone against that lives in this community to go on the record.

LC 821 in combination with LC 746 lets bad actors go on not only without punishment, but without facing any repercussions for their actions that harm the local community. Suspects have their mugshots posted and available to the public the night they are arrested; if that is acceptable behavior, I do not see why police officers should again be able to hide behind anonymity.

Lastly, and most importantly, LC 825. Qualified Immunity has been cited by multiple courts as needing to go, and I cannot agree more. This immunity not only protects officers who commit wrongdoing, but it prevents victims from getting justice. Police officers have demonstrated that they do not deserve this authority. Furthermore, I Would like to point out that since CO has withdrawn qualified immunity, policing there has not been affected in a meaningful way.

Thank you for your time,
Ognyan Moore