

Written testimony for JTPUFR meeting

Dear Senator Manning, Representative Bynum, and Members of the Committee,  
I am writing to express my support for the strongest possible versions of LCs 742, 743, 746, 747, 762, 763, 821, and 825. In particular, I would like to voice support for ending qualified immunity, which protects police officers from being held responsible for their actions while on the job, outright.

I would also like to encourage you to implement a total ban on the use of CS gas as a crowd-control agent. According to its manufacturer, the CS gas used by the Portland Police Bureau contains barium chromate and lead chromate—both of which are known to be toxic—as well as other heavy metals. CS gas has been found to cause [long-term respiratory problems](#), including making people more susceptible to respiratory illnesses. It has also been linked to increased risk of miscarriage and it exacerbates asthma. Perhaps worst of all, at the end of the day, doctors do not know the full extent of the health risks posed by this chemical irritant, especially on people who are exposed repeatedly—and since it goes wherever the wind blows it, there is no way to protect the general public from exposure when it is deployed on a group of protesters.

Limiting the use of CS gas to situations where police have declared a riot is clearly insufficient, especially since the legal definition of a riot in the state of Oregon is such a low bar, requiring a minimum of just six participants "engaging in tumultuous or violent conduct." In college, I attended more than one party that would have met that definition. In my view, the Portland police have been using this loose definition as an excuse to subject protesters to disproportionate force. That's an issue on its own—but banning chemical incapacitants would be a step in the right direction.

Sincerely,  
Katelyn Best

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<http://kabest.me>