

Dear Honorable Co-chairs & Committee members:

Thank you for the opportunity to give testimony today. We have been catapulted out of the collective complacency & denial which have allowed racism to thrive among our institutions unabated since the founding of our country in 1776 and State in 1857. The cost of that collective awakening of whites weighs heavily on the Black community. Police brutality and everyday violence have targeted the Black & Brown community without recourse or accountability--visible in the deaths of Daniel Prude, Steven Taylor, Andres Guardado, Jacob Blake, Elijah McClain, Kendra James, Quanice Hayes, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Tamir Rice, Aaron Campbell, Keaton Otis, Tony McDade and so many other Black men & women who were simply living, engaging in activities that most non-Black people can do without fear: jogging, sleeping, getting an iced tea for a friend, driving home from work.

It was only in 2001 that the state of Oregon removed the provision established in the Oregon constitution in 1857 that banned Black people from coming to the state, residing in the state, or holding property in the state ([2014 report](#) by Portland State University and the Coalition of Communities of Color). The state also had the highest per-capita Ku Klux Klan membership (according to Walidah Imarisha, an African American professor) in the country which still has residual effects today with far right groups such as Patriot Prayer, known for its white supremacist ideology, responsible for the recent shooting of protesters against racial injustice.

As a concerned citizen in Portland, the events of the past 4 months has highlighted for me the need for laws to protect peaceful protesters (LC17) from excessive force including use of plastic & rubber bullets that have caused permanent injuries & disabilities to survivors.

Nonlethal weapons are a multibillion-dollar-a-year business and growing. The industry could be worth more than \$9 billion by 2022, according to Allied Market Research, a company that does industry forecasting. Combined Tactical Systems is a brand of the company Combined Systems, Inc., one of the world's leading manufacturers of tear gas. Does Oregon want to continue to support such companies while undermining the right for citizens to protest which is a right of the governed? Strongly recommend that LC 17 name tear gas as a prohibited method of protest control used by State, City & County officials. (<https://www.pri.org/stories/2018-11-29/global-tear-gas-business-booming-its-complicated>)

LC 18 protects citizens by requiring law enforcement officers to wear identifying signs & official badges and be required to disclose official identity. Over the past several months, unmarked officials have harassed & abducted citizens without a warrant, that has sent a chill & reminiscent of authoritarian regimes abroad.

LC 19&20 requires public record reporting of misconduct for state officers, which I think should also include city officers & county sheriffs who should not be above the law or insulated by immunity for excessive & wrongful force & racial profiling.

Black people who migrated from the South post-Reconstruction, terrorized by Jim Crow laws that operatively still functioned to keep Black people segregated second-class citizens in Oregon and were not welcomed. This history of discrimination continues. Today the average income level for Black families in Portland is nearly half

that of white residents, and police shootings of Black residents are disproportionate to their 6% share of the population.

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/24/us/portland-oregon-protests-white-race.html>)

A 2011 Portland Housing Audit found that landlords discriminate against Black & Latinx people 64% of the time, charging higher rents, requiring higher deposits & fees, not offering move-in specials, not offering applications and showing inferior units. (*Oregonian*, N.H. Jones, May 10, 2011, updated Jan. 2019). Many Black, Indigenous, Latinx and people of color communities are priced out of living in the City altogether, which reinforces historical segregation & redlining.

The 2014 Portland State University and the Coalition of Communities of Color report concluded that “Oregon has been slow to dismantle overtly racist policies”. As a result, “African Americans in Multnomah County continue to live with the effects of racialized policies, practices, and decision-making.” The report found Black families lagged far behind white families in employment, income, graduation rates and health outcomes.

Health disparities are reflected in data that Black women & men suffer from higher rates of infant mortality, breast, colon, prostate, cervical & ovarian cancers, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, and diabetes, kidney disease, and higher rates of amputations & dialysis. Black people's increased exposure, diagnosis, and death from the Covid 19 result from the high concentration of essential workers who are Black, pre-existing health conditions such as asthma, diabetes & lung & kidney diseases and the lack of access to quality and affordable health care and housing.

The rate of hospitalization or death from Covid 19 is double to 5x greater for Black patients as white. For Latinos, 4x greater than whites, for Native Americans 5x greater than whites. (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/racial-ethnic-minorities.html>)

This history of racial exclusion & bigotry fueled by self-interest will require strong anti-racist policies to ameliorate & correct the effects of the racist past. We can begin with basic provisions as outlined by these proposed legislation to protect civilians, outlaw excessive force & require public reporting of misconduct, complaints filed & allegations of excessive force, limit immunity and arbitration that impede the ability to effectively hold officers accountable, and begin to correct the long history of white supremacy rooted in the state's founding. I ask that as a legislative body, that you commit to enacting Anti-Racist policies to correct the long history of injustice & exclusion in Oregon's shadowy past.

Thank you.