

Public Testimony for the Joint Committee On Transparent Policing and Use of Force Reform

Esteemed Committee Members,

As a Portland resident, I appeal for quality in hiring reform for Police, to include increased education requirements.

My understanding is that at present, a GED is required, with a subsequent 840 hours (5 months) of training post-hire. As a citizen I believe our community demands more of the city, and that increased education requirements are a tried and tried course of action to achieve quality in staffing.

Nurses, teachers, social workers - all who interact with the community at a crucial level require a bachelor's at a minimum, with the latter two examples requiring postgraduate education. Our recent social unrest highlights the police response as one of the undereducated.

Portland can take the national lead in a reform that would yield social dividends within ten years: by requiring a bachelor's from candidates. I suggest Police pay should also rise commensurately; but no grandfathering-in for current employees. Any current police who would argue these changes would display that they are not willing to invest in their own career, and only chose to become police because they met minimum requirements; thus identifying themselves as unworthy of the position.

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Many thanks for considering this citizen's opinion.

Respectfully,

Juan Carlos Velarde, BSN, RN