

Public Testimony Sept. 3, 2020

Thank you for addressing these important topics.

I'd like to express my support for the topics at hand during today's meeting, especially LC17,18,19, and 20.

Regulating the use of chemical irritants is imperative to protecting an individual's ability to peacefully protest. While the news today is charged with language to express a false narrative of total destruction, I urge you to look back over the almost 100 days of protesting in Portland and Oregon as well as years past. There are countless examples of tear gas being used on entire, largely or entirely peaceful groups, one sticking out in my mind from early in June when PPB dispersed a crowd prior to the curfew in place at that time. I'd like this directive to go further and outright ban the use of CS gas, at least until such time that it can be shown definitively (through testing exceeding manufacturer's blanket statement of "safe use") to not cause harm to either a person's long-term health or the surrounding environment. The use of CS is also leading to numerous settlements costing the city of Portland precious budget dollars during a recession due to leakage into homes. Citizens should not be concerned about chemical weapons seeping into their homes solely based on their proximity to a protest, no matter the conditions of said protest.

I urge the committee to recommend the requirement for identification on officer uniforms. The pushback to being identifiable is largely related to concerns of "doxxing" and harassment of officers. I'd like to point out that numerous members of our society, including medical professionals, teachers, journalists, and yourselves especially, are continually navigating these politically charged, deeply personal, and contentious times publically while being fully identifiable and that these members and yourselves continue to do so professionally. There are also laws in place which address the officers' concerns of harassment. Allowing an officer to operate without being identifiable both emboldens the officer with anonymity and makes it difficult for the public/press/established review processes to hold an officer accountable. The societal benefit of identifiable policing outweighs the personal concerns of officers which are already protected by existing laws. Imagine a world where your votes were hidden, it would not be one with mutual respect or trust, key components of effective policing. I'd also like to point out that the counter option of using a numeric code is often more difficult to remember than a name. Even if you get a name wrong, it is generally within the identifiable ballpark. Having numbers both short enough to be easily recognizable but unique enough to be effective, is a competing goal, not to mention it just continues the issue of anonymity and does nothing to build trust with the public.

Lastly, creating public databases for both discipline and use of force metrics is a key step forward toward accountable and trustworthy policing.

Thank you,

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