

Good afternoon Co-Chairs Manning and Bynum and Committee Members and staff, thank you for this opportunity to speak — my name is Emory Mort from North Portland in Multnomah County, I come to you as someone who organizes with a Network that works on police policy and issues locally and statewide. If possible, my testimony will require 3 minutes and I request a time extension. (note: I ended up not giving my testimony because at the onset of the session it was announced the final 25 people on the call list would not speak, which I found to be an outrageous plan, given the purported intention of the session)

Our network and others worked hard to honor your process. We educate and organize people to understand your work and these potential bills before us today.

I want to say clearly I and many in the network support the bills LC 17, 18, 19, 20. I support all strong changes you hear from constituents such as families who have lost Loved Ones to police action. We will support strong bills you put forth in the future.

I have 3 things to say in support.

First, legislators here are from different backgrounds, rural, city, Black white. So I want to say a bit about my background. I grew up with my family working on a farm in rural New York state. We hosted 4H on the farm, teaching each other to raise and show beef cattle, sheep, chickens, hogs and horses. We were all white people. My family didn't talk about the issues Black people have. We hardly ever talked about or thought about police.

I grew to value these topics because of relationships. From learning and growing.

Some of those important relationships are present on this call, and I want everyone to recognize the courage it takes for people to really dig deep and speak publicly about these police bills. For example, It's not easy being the only clergy in your local town to openly support a meaningful change to police conduct. It's not easy for a young person to write in on the public record for all to see, not sure of risks.

So my second point is addressed to police leaders. As a man, I will say to the men police leaders: we need you to be men. That means honoring these bills when you talk to your force, your union, your local elected officials, the prosecutors, the press. If you talk with your colleagues and undercut these bills, belittle the process without honoring what the process is about, then you're not doing your duty as a man and as a leader in this country right now.

The stakes are high. Very high. and I, and I'm sure many legislators here, need you to be your best self, as a man. Does the public have a right to pass meaningful. policy or not.

And finally, to legislators here, to legislators listening including the decision-makers, and to their staff, we ask more of you besides passing these bills.

We need these bills and these issues spoken about honestly, clearly, frequently, and in an accessible, educational manner.

We need you on the local news sitting down and helping people prepare and understand. We need you opening up to your local journalists about these bills. We need you hosting town halls that are accessible to people with disabilities. Accessible to people with trauma, people with language barriers, people for whom speaking out is hard, people without wi-fi.

We need you to show everyday people this: that people out there holding signs, or protesting like I have, are connected with this policy.

We need that of you, and we need it NOW. This is not a secret process that you know about while others remain disconnected. Please rise to the occasion and make this part of your public service.

You can play a part in proudly showing that Black Lives Matter is about making real substantive change. About striving for real and deep justice on police and other issues.

I trust the co-chairs will help facilitate such work.

With that, I thank you and urge you to pass the bills LC17 through 20 (with the improvements you'll hear today), get rid of cops' ability to take our money and kill and do violence with impunity by ending qualified immunity, and generally rise to the occasion and do something useful in disciplining the violent officers terrorizing my city and this state.