

Talon Kennedy
1860 Alder St, Apt 9
Eugene, OR, 97401

March 20, 2019

Re: place on the record for HB 3338

To: Chair Williamson and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I am a student employee for the UO Police Department and have been for slightly over a year. I have been a student at the University of Oregon and the Robert D. Clark Honors college for the past three years and an active participant in university life. Over the course of my time with the department I have been responsible for the student-directed transportation program the UO Campus Shuttle, which was created by UOPD, interacting with both administrative staff and police officers within the department on a regular basis. My interactions with officers have ranged from calling on their aid during nightly operations when a rider may be dealing with dangerous levels of alcohol in their system to attending Coffee with a Cop, or simply saying hello on campus. Our program has relied heavily upon a strong, positive relationship with the UOPD. The reason our Campus Shuttle program continues to exist today is due to a need that arose a year ago, when there were two armed robberies within the immediate vicinity of campus as well as student, staff, and faculty housing. I support the continuation of the UO Police Department being armed, because I can attest to the character of the officers I have personally interacted with. I support UOPD being armed, because there are others on and near campus areas who will be armed, and officers do interact with people near to campus who have the right to be armed. I believe it inhibits the officer's abilities to protect the campus community if there is an active shooter situation on our campus. Additionally, our officers should be able to defend themselves in the same way that the individuals they interact with are legally permitted to defend themselves.

I do not stand by UOPD without thought or care or deliberate consideration. I know there is systemic racism in this country. I know there are problems with policing and I do not claim that UOPD is free of those problems, that would be blind to a reality which so many minorities in our country face. I agree that change must occur, however, disarming the department will not solve these problems, nor will it serve our campus community in the long-run. If police on our campus are disarmed I would be left wondering whether or not officers would stay. Many of these officers are experienced in their line of work and have expertise to share with newer recruits. If they cannot protect themselves on the job, will they stay? Or will they consider the impacts this could have on their loved ones and seek work elsewhere? What would our campus security look like if our officers left?

I have seen firsthand the dedication police officers at the University of Oregon have to their careers and to their campus community. I see them empathize with students and provide second chances. I watch them constantly working to help a community of people who exist in a space where we as young students are learning how to be individuals, what it means to stand up for something, and how a mistake can impact the rest of our lives. It takes a special kind of department to work with a community of college students and I have seen the UOPD excel at this connection during my time at the University of Oregon. Action of the most dramatic kind may result in more negative consequences than positive ones, so don't disarm UOPD. More training in weapons use or cultural competency could be alternative solutions. They may not be the perfect answer, perhaps there are more impactful solutions outside of

further training, those are options to be considered, but I do not believe that disarming UOPD will have a positive impact on our community or solve the problems under discussion.

Sincerely,

Talon Kennedy