

March 19, 2019

To Chair Williamson and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

I am the Director of Conduct and Community Standards at Portland State University. My work requires me to investigate and adjudicate all allegations of misconduct by students here. In my work, I frequently come into contact with people who are angry, combative, needy, or unstable. Because of privacy laws and the nature of my work, I conduct most of my interactions with students on a 1:1 basis, meaning that I am alone in my office with them.

Most of these interactions are uneventful and unremarkable. However, in the situations where things turn tense, there is nothing but my desk and my wits in the room to keep me safe. I do have a panic button that allows me to quickly summon CPSO if needed. I write today to enumerate two incidents that lead me to ask for your consideration as we examine how we want to move forward.

In one incident, a former student came in to the office to request to be reinstated to the university. Shortly after starting the meeting, the person indicated that they had been in rehab for meth use. They stated that they wanted to return to Portland State because it provided affordable housing and access to food and money through student loans. It quickly became apparent to me that this person was under the influence of some drug or drugs, and they were becoming increasingly agitated at my questions about whether they were ready to return to school at that time. It is worth noting that the person had been suspended for acts of violence. I realized I was in danger, and what could I do? I flipped the panic button to elicit a response by CPSO.

In another incident, I had to meet with a student who professed white supremacist ideology, and had brought a weapon to campus. In that scenario, as the conduct officer, I am the only person who can have that meeting with that student on behalf of other students and faculty and staff. As a woman of color, I am statistically more vulnerable to acts of violence, especially at the hands of people who espouse extremist ideals. When there is potentially a weapon involved, I need to know that there is someone who can offer me an increased chance of going home to my children at night.

I ask you to consider your discomfort with armed security weighed against my actual safety. I will also state that I recognize that I am not the only person who is in a position where they may routinely be in danger on our campus, but I also believe my position is unique in that my work exclusively balances the community's needs against those of individual actors. Since this work is on behalf of all, I ask for specific consideration of my safety in return.

I would like to stay and continue my work, but please know that I cannot do my work in a venue that unnecessarily exposes me to risk additional to that I face every day already. I would hope to engage in a community conversation about how we collectively move forward from here, while acknowledging pain that exists in our community and supporting each other. In the meantime, I ask you to not support HB 3338.

Sincerely,

Dana Macaulay, M.Ed, J.D.

Assistant Dean of Student Life and Director of Conduct and Community Standards
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