

To: Honored Members of the Joint Committee On The First Special Session of 2020
From: Genevieve Schaack, Teacher, Eugene, OR
RE: HB 4208

Hello,

I am writing in support of the bill to ban tear gas and sonic weapons as outlined in HB 4208. These weapons are dangerous beyond understanding. ORS 161.239 reads, with regards to use of force, in part:

(2) Nothing in subsection (1) of this section constitutes justification for reckless or criminally negligent conduct by a peace officer amounting to an offense against or with respect to innocent persons whom the peace officer is not seeking to arrest or retain in custody.

These weapons are inherently reckless. When tear gas is deployed, it is used against whole blocks of citizens, regardless of if they are part of a protest or not. Sonic weapons, while directional, are not narrow in their targeting. Part one of ORS 161.239 identifies the felonies/ threats to officer safety that warrant use of force. While I cannot say that some fractional percent of persons that have been tear gassed or the target of sonic weapons have not fallen into those qualified categories, it is impossible to use these types of force against only those people.

Thank you,

Genevieve Schaack