



Advancing Opportunities

June 25, 2020

To: Co-Chair Senator Peter Courtney
Co-Chair Speaker Tina Kotek
Vice-Chair Senator Fred Girod
Vice-Chair Representative Christine Drazan
Members of the Joint Interim Committee On The First Special Session of
2020

From: Katie Rose, Chair, Oregon Developmental Disabilities Coalition
Leslie Sutton, Policy Director, Oregon Council on Developmental
Disabilities

RE: Testimony on Police Accountability Bills HB 4201, HB 4208, and HB 4203

Dear Senator Courtney, Speaker Kotek, Senator Girod, Representative Drazan, and members of the committee:

The Oregon Developmental Disabilities Coalition (DD Coalition) is a group of approximately 38 organizations and individuals across Oregon that advocate for and promote quality services, equality, and community integration for Oregonians with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and their families. Our members represent advocacy groups (including self-advocacy organizations), family peer supports, DD residential providers, DD supported employment providers, and Support Services Brokerages.

We believe Oregon is strongest when we work together to address interpersonal and systemic racism. The disproportionate incidence of police violence against people of color with disabilities is not often examined. There is no federal data on police violence against people with disabilities, but experts estimate around 30 to 50 percent¹ of people killed by police also have a disability. The intersection of race and disability too often combines to result in negative, violent, and deadly outcomes for these members of our community.

HB 4201: Anytime a life is taken, or substantially injured, we should have due process to understand, remediate, and learn from the incident. We repeat the history we do not confront. Creating an impartial review of these incidents by a higher authority will help us identify patterns and hold us accountable.

¹ https://rudermanfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/MediaStudy-PoliceDisability_final-final.pdf



HB 4208: Tear gas poses special harms to people with disabilities. In addition, because the mere possibility of encountering tear gas or other irritants is such a risk for people with respiratory or other disabilities, they are deterred from attending any peaceful protest. People who are deaf or hard of hearing may not understand any warnings given by police prior to the use of tear gas and other irritants. Weapons prohibited in war, including tear gas, should not be used on civilian populations, in part because they will have particularly harmful and indiscriminate effects on people with disabilities.

HB 4203: Chokeholds and other airway restrictions are risky and unnecessary measures that should not be used in the enforcement of law. They have no place in public service of any sort.

We urge you to take these steps to protect Oregonians with disabilities, and especially the intersection of people with disabilities and Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC), who are at tremendous risk during interactions with law enforcement. Please support HB 4201, HB 4208, HB 4203 to pass during the current Special Legislative Session of 2020.

Thank you for your leadership and your movement toward positive change for people of color with developmental disabilities, who are cherished members of our community.

Thank you.