

Dear Oregon State Legislators,

My name is Heather White and I live in Portland, OR.

The Portland Police Bureau's brutal actions in response to police brutality and the Black Live Matter protests have completely changed my view on whether or not I can trust police to serve and protect all Portlanders - their actions show that I cannot and should not trust them to serve and protect Portlanders, and treat everyone equally under the law.

I've called the Portland Police a few times in the past 10 years to report suspicious activity in a neighboring property when I lived in Inner Southeast Portland. Now that I'm in Outer Southeast Portland, I called the cops on a remodeling contractor that went on a meth binge inside my own house (before we moved in). In both these instances I never thought for a moment that calling the police might be a mistake. The actions of the Portland Police officers in the last month, however, and the consistency of Police brutality across our entire nation have now made it abundantly clear that this sense of safety with the Police is entirely my own White privilege. I stand in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement and the next time something happens that warrants police involvement I will absolutely hesitate. I am now more afraid of the Portland Police than the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Portland Police officers, and Law Enforcement officers across the country must be held to the highest standards of public safety across, and the series of Oregon House Bills you are considering this week are a very powerful step forward.

You have the opportunity to regain the trust of non-racist, and anti-racist Oregonians like myself. Please take the lead in our nation and do the right thing here for all Oregonians, and show with your legislative actions that BLACK LIVES MATTER IN OREGON. This will be all the more impactful considering Oregon's shameful racist legislative past.

Please pass the following House Bills that really should already be law:

1. HB 4201: Requires deaths and certain injuries caused by police to be reported to the Attorney General
2. HB 4203 Disallows police to use force that limits a person's ability to breathe, including, but not limited to chokeholds.
3. HB 4205 Requires a police officer to intervene when they see another cop engaging in "act that is unethical or that violates law, rules or policy."
4. HB 4207 Establishes a state-wide database of policy disciplinary records. Makes that database public.
5. HB 4208 Prohibits use of teargas and sonic weapons.

Thank you for bringing these to the floor so quickly. I am hopeful you will do the right thing and pass them all unanimously, thereby serving as one bright light in this very dark time across our nation. Please do the right thing here and pass HB 4201, 4203, 4205, 4207, 4208.

Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Heather White

Portland, OR 97236