

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 Committee On The First Special Session of 2020

From: Katie Rose, Executive Director, Oregon Support Services Association

RE: HB 4201 ban on use force that limits ability of person to breathe

The Oregon Support Services Association (OSSA) is a collective of the 14 Support Services Brokerages currently operating across the entire state of Oregon. We serve adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) living in their own or family homes, providing them with the case management and supports needed to connect them to community resources and direct service providers where they live.

As our elected lawmakers, you have convened a Special Session this week to consider changes to combat the police brutality against Black people that has so painfully grown to a local and national emergency. We want to offer our support of HB 4201, as a logical step toward keeping people of color with intellectual and developmental disabilities safe in their communities. 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.

Our twenty years of serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in their own or family homes has shown us that people with IDD are as diverse as the rest of humankind. Many people with IDD do not present as having a disability at all. Despite that invisibility, their cognitive processing delays or inability to physically comply with orders could cost them their lives during a charged interaction. We support HB 4201, and the removal of airway-restricting maneuvers as a practice in the course of enforcing the law in Oregon.

Please support HB 4201 to pass during the current Special Session of 2020. Thank you for the opportunity to support the safe and equitable enforcement of law throughout Oregon with the introduction of this legislative concept.

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