

Dear Senator Courtney and Senator Dembrow,

In the coming special legislative session, I hope that you will do everything in your power to end qualified immunity for police officers. This law is dangerous in that it allows police officers to evade accountability for homicide, assault, and abuse of power.

The bills proposed by the Joint Committee on Police Transparency and Use of Force Reform should be brought to the floor in the special legislative session and passed now. These changes would save lives, prevent abuse of power, and protect the people of Oregon from injustice at the hands of the police.

Banning is long overdue for tear gas, impact munitions, sonic devices, and other inappropriate uses of force by the police department: in every case. All of the restrictions proposed and presented so far have come with some forms of restriction “in case of danger of loss of life” or “in case of riot,” which the police repeatedly use as excuses to use dangerous chemical and impact weapons against peaceful protesters. No example of a protest response exists when it is justified to use gas or impact munitions or sonic devices, especially in response to a few people causing some property destruction. Responding with physical damage to a human being cannot be a response to someone causing damage to an inanimate object. In no circumstances should uninvolved bystanders also be targets. That this is happening during a pandemic is evil.

Restrictions for police officers need to be greatly increased. Too often officers are hurting innocent people who are trying to leave in compliance, or police hurting people with no warning or provocation. Discipline for the police should be a mandate, and other officers must be required to stop officers using force and report them. Arbitrators should not be able to overturn legitimate discipline for use of physical or deadly force.

Airflow restriction techniques need to be completely banned.

While the current infection rates for COVID-19 and the state of the economy and budget are important legislative concerns, the state of racism and violence in our local police force must also be addressed, and we should be doing everything we can to protect our citizens from undue harassment, assault, and abuse when exercising their constitutional rights to protest and in their daily lives. This cannot wait until 2021. Major changes are needed now.

Best regards,

Sean Daly

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