

I experienced CS tear gas and unknown chemicals this summer in Portland. There was also an evening where the unknown gases were different colors than the usual smoke that had been recognized before. It was rumored that federal agents and portland police were using expired gas canisters. This massive amount of gas that is banned on military battlefields has little scientific data available for us to understand the extent of the adverse short or long term health effects. I can share my personal experiences and hope it will be considered during the course of consideration and passage of this bill. The use of force from these weapons were unnecessary, reckless, abusive, dangerous for the environment, nearby property and for the health and safety of all people.

I was a mom in yellow within a human barricade of mothers serving as wall between fully armed officers (both portland police and federal agents) and fellow protestors. I stood in the streets with a backpack hooked around the front of my body as instructed from protestors who had been around the week prior, to serve as an impact munition shield to protect myself so I could return home safely to my babies. I had zero weapons on me and stood there in an effort to protect other protestors from being harmed with a helmet, goggles, a gas mask, ear plugs and clothes that covered all of my body. My personal experiences were severe fatigue that lasted multiple days, skin chemical burns, upset stomach, forgetfulness, three menstrual cycles during the one single month following, exacerbated post-traumatic stress, difficulty breathing, and burning eyes, nose and mouth. This was not a single canister, two or three let off during these events. There were little to no warnings given. There was enough gas in the area that it filled the air and moved with the wind down the streets for several blocks. There was such severe and disorienting gas that my friend could not see her way out of the suffocating fog, preventing her from escaping a close range munition and requiring an urgent care visit.

The officers behind fences and in the streets had guns that they pummeled pepper bullets and unknown objects at us from and thick gooey mace spray that they shot at helmets within 5 feet of range for several seconds until heads were dripping with the unknown substances. They tossed chemical weapon canisters and flash bangs into the dark streets as if they were throwing around candy from a parade float. I know that journalists, houseless individuals, medical personnel and legal observers were all affected by this unwarranted police violence. This was modern warfare, we protestors were defenseless, standing in solidarity and protest for Black Lives and our right to assemble and had no means for legal redress or protection from these inhumane attacks on innocent people. Officers are not above the law. Along with regulating the use of these weapons, we need to remove immunity to have any accountability.