

Chair and Members of the committee,

To preface my statement I would like to start by saying I am a 17-year-old and any friends I will be referring to during this statement are between the age of 15 and 18.

I am a child and my friends and I are children.

The reason we are out here has been in grievances towards the brutality the Portland police have caused not only to our generation but to the 178 years black brown Oregonians have had to face, directly because you have allowed systematically racist, sexist, and homophobic law enforcement to play a huge role in constantly keeping black people oppressed.

During my statement, I may refer to PPB or Law Enforcement Agencies As “Lawful terrorist” because the trauma we have had to endure from these agencies is terrorism by any definition.

Now to start:

I have personally been a survivor of the weapons “Lawful terrorist” have released to the public at least 20 accounted times between the end of May 2020 to this day.

Mainly at the Justice Center downtown Portland.

PPB has proven to have a lack of metacognition when it comes to dealing with any complex protest. Protests vary from all different sizes, locations, and actions. From my experience, PPB always deals with every single one the same. Their strategies include anything that will endanger the lives of protesters, bystanders, and even in some cases the police officers themselves. They prioritize their pride just to be able to say they can “handle the situation” rather than trying a new type of professional de-escalation on a protest.

You have allowed weapons of war into the hands of these “lawful terrorists” and they have grossly misused it. PPB’s enormous ego directly correlates with the abuse of chemical agents and sound devices because they use these very dangerous and expensive chemicals as if they are nothing.

For example, Inauguration Day 2021. A large group of protesters gathered at Revolution Hall in Portland around 3 pm to protest many different things*. Portland Police bike cops were on the ground and very confrontational from the moment that gathering began. A very serious incident occurred between the officers and the protesters and de-escalation were needed. Portland Police decided using chemical agents was the best plan and released it. They did not account for wind and the large fog of chemicals blew directly towards bike cops and into the neighborhoods behind Revolution Hall which includes many businesses, an elementary school, homes of that neighborhood, houseless camps, and clueless bystanders.

Chemical weapons are not tools that should be used lightly and every “lawful terrorist” you have given it to has abused their right to have funding and access to it. The superintendent gave a testimony on February 3rd where she referred to the chemical agent as a simple “discomfort”.

This weapon has created a deep-rooted level of harm in the Portland community that will take deep healing. The superintendent's failure to recognize that invalidates a large part of Portland's community who have been affected by this.

PPB has also abused the use of sound devices. These weapons are eerie and traumatic at the very least, at most they are un-accessible to everyone in the general public. The sound weapons are usually used once maybe twice before the warning of arrest or gas which leaves civilians (especially disabled civilians) a very short window of time to leave the area. The sound is also only in English, so Spanish speaking civilians are unable to understand. When I encountered the sound weapons I was appalled by how prepared "lawful terrorists" were to battle civilians. My friends on the other hand would be dealing with the deeply traumatized mental state that PPB has caused them. These sound weapons are specifically one of the many reasons there have been multiple diagnosed cases of PTSD within my group of friends. This is not just the case for my friends but the case for many individuals in the Portland community. I have watched civilians get triggered by sound weapons to the point of a total mental breakdown leaving them unable to leave the area and being forced and tortured with chemical weapons.

In conclusion, Chair and Committee Members I urge you to not only pass HB2928 but to amend the bill to properly protect protesters and civilians from any unjust actions Law Enforcement Agencies might unleash upon them. To reference The superintendent (not a direct quote) anew, not everyone at protests is trying to cause harm but a few in a crowd is enough to gas our city with chemical weapons. Now I hope you might be able to reverse that example she gave and use it on the Enforcement Agencies present in Oregon today. Not every officer is a power-hungry white supremacist with a superiority complex but if a few of them are in these agencies that is enough to tear it down entirely and start fresh.

Thank you for your time,

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