

Without SB 621, which is inextricably linked to Measure 26-217, which Portland voters passed in November by a 4-to-1 margin, will not come to fruition. We have overwhelmingly approved that the Portland city charter include a police oversight board that has the authority to investigate officers, compel officer testimony and other witness statements, subpoena documents, and take final disciplinary action against cops—including firing them.

But current state law says the discipline process for public employees must be decided via collective bargaining. Without SB 621, Portland's oversight board would most likely go to the bargaining table, where City Hall would face off against the Portland Police Association. From there, the oversight board could go to arbitration, where the board's survival would be tenuous.

I am a former local union member and I strongly support unions. However, my union contracts did not protect me or other union members from being charged with and/or prosecuted for crimes, either committed while on duty or off. Police must also be held accountable to maintain public trust and safety.