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May 4, 2021

VIA EMAIL ONLY

TO: Chair Bynum
Vice Chair Noble
Vice Chair Power
Members of the House Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Elliot Levin, PROTEC17 Research Director and Legislative Advocate

RE: PROTEC17 Support for SB 621

On behalf of the nearly 900 Professional and Technical Employees, Local 17 (PROTEC17) represented employees of the City of Portland, I write today in support for SB 621. PROTEC17 represents a wide variety of professional and technical employees including engineers, planners, information technology specialists, and technicians who live and work in the Portland area. Additionally, we represent approximately 8,000 public sector employees across Washington State.

As a public sector labor union, we deeply understand the importance of collective bargaining rights and due process in the workplace. We do not take lightly the step that SB 621 takes in placing the legislature in the midst of a collective bargaining relationship between two parties. However, as an organization committed to anti-racist efforts, we find ourselves aligned with the large majority of voters in our community that sent a clear message in November of 2020 through measure 26-217.

Meaningful community oversight is clearly a necessary step to real police accountability. The public places an extreme amount of power and trust in the hands of police officers, including the extraordinary right to make life and death decisions. Accordingly, police officers should be held to the highest possible standards of accountability to the public. For accountability to serve its purpose, the diverse community that grants law enforcement powers to police officers must have trust in the system that governs such accountability. The oversight board created by measure 26-217 is an important step toward building that trust.

We urge you to support SB 621.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elliot Levin'.

Elliot Levin
Research Director and Legislative Advocate
PROTEC17

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