

Submitter: Celeste Summers
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure: HB4008

I am writing with an urgent message to ask you to oppose attempts to change or weaken HB 2928. In 2021, the state legislature did the right thing by establishing reasonable restrictions on police using tear gas and munition weapons against protestors and communities.

The legislature got it right when it listened to the community and curtailed police violence used against protesters. It should not ignore the community now.

If changes are adopted, police will be able to continue using tear gas and munition weapons to terrorize and retaliate against communities protesting for their civil liberties and civil rights. The changes also seek to eliminate protections for people seeking medical care from protest medics.

The strong protections this legislature established in 2021 help combat the chilling effects of police violence against racial justice protests. Nobody should fear police violence at protests.

The 2021 law also protects innocent bystanders. Before the law was passed, Portland police unleashed tear gas in communities and choked families and children in their own homes. Families should not fear being poisoned by chemical weapons in our own homes and streets.

If the legislature wants to make any changes to the 2021 tear gas and munitions bill, it should pass an outright ban on tear gas. Also, consistent with the White House's efforts, Oregon should update our laws so that police are allowed to use deadly force as a last resort when there is no reasonable alternative, in other words only when necessary to prevent imminent and serious bodily injury or death.

The Oregon Legislature should lead in stopping police violence and killing, which has disproportionately harmed Black communities. Just last week, Amir Locke, a sleeping Black man, was killed by police in Minneapolis. Just three weeks ago, we learned that Portland Police were using extremist training materials with violent and dehumanizing attitudes towards protestors.

The Oregon Legislature should take steps to protect the public from police violence and create greater racial justice in Oregon.