

Submitter: Jennifer Jones
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure: HB4131

I am submitting testimony in opposition to the base bill 4131, but I support the language on dash 3 which is also reflected in HB 4008, dash 8.

My teenaged daughter asked to attend a Black Lives matter protest in Portland, Oregon shortly after George Floyd was brutally murdered by police. She said to me that she had often thought about what she would have done as a white student to assist black citizens during the Civil Rights Movement when she was in history class and thought this was her moment to show support in ending police violence inflicted on black people. I agreed if she let me escort her, and we picked a family friendly event which ended in downtown Portland.

The police declared the assembly illegal, but we were unable to determine which direction to leave. We were hearing rumors in the crowd that white supremacist groups were attacking people when they left in small numbers. The situation was confusing, it was loud, hard to see, and we were surrounded by police in riot gear. They fired pepper balls into the crowd and people started to panic. My daughter's throat and eyes were especially irritated. I then started trying very earnestly to find anywhere to exit and get to safety, as my daughter was born with a heart condition and they were starting to fire tear gas into the crowd. I was worried about what would happen to her heart if her respiratory system was affected.

We were able to escape back to the car and I tried to find a way to cross a bridge to leave downtown. It was hard to do, as people were running from police. The police were chasing after the people far to the west of where we were originally gathered, as we zig zagged through the city trying to find an exit. I saw a police officer hit a kid that looked no older than my daughter with a baton and shove them to the ground as I waited for the crowd to pass. As we were able to make it through a couple of intersections almost towards Burnside, I saw a young girl, again probably around the same age, slumped on the ground, looking near unconscious while a police officer stood by. The police officer did not appear to be giving any medical assistance.

My daughter has never attended another protest and says she will never attend one again. She was afraid she would end up in the hospital or dead. She no longer believes protesting will make any difference to people who have the power to change laws and inequity in our community. She no longer believes anyone can hold police accountable. She no longer feels that even trusted adults are able to keep her safe. She no longer believes black people in our community will ever know justice. After that day, I put away the police cars and emergency vehicles that had been given to

my young son as gifts.

After that day I talked to all of my friends and coworkers about what was happening to black people across our country and what I witnessed in our city. I thought if ordinary middle aged people like me turned up, our representatives would take a stand and make things right. I found some who would attend protests with me. When the federal marshals started abducting people in unmarked vans, my coworkers and friends no longer felt safe to protest in our city. They started to feel as my daughter did, hopeless.

I am no activist. I belong to no organizations. I have just been trying to find any venue to discuss what we experienced that day and to prove to my daughter that we can make a difference. That the people that we elect will listen to their constituents when we say we cannot trust the police to use chemical munitions, or truly any weapon, justly. Please show my daughter that we can make a better and more equitable future possible by voting no on the new language in bill 4131. Please do not take away the small restrictions that were placed on the indiscriminate violence police can inflict on our community. Our children are watching.