

Submitter: Olivia Buscho
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: HB4131

As a Portland resident, someone who has experienced the effects of the weapons considered in this bill, and an attorney advocate for civil rights, I vehemently oppose HB 4131 weakening restrictions on police use of chemical and munition weapons against protestors and street medics, and support the amendment for stronger protections submitted by civil rights advocates in HB 4131-3.

In my personal experience at protests, the 2(a)(A) riot exception to restriction on chemical weapon use is already too broad because a single actor's behavior allows the use of the tear gas, which by nature is indiscriminate and affects everyone in the surrounding area, including people in nearby homes. 2(a)(B) allowing the use of chemical weapons against any individual whose conduct "justify[ies] the use of physical force under Oregon law" is so broad as to scarcely be an exception, but allows indiscriminate use of a weapon that is impossible to target at individuals, but affects everyone in the area. Chemical weapons should be banned outright.

Impact munitions should similarly be banned during protest as they are unnecessarily dangerous and potentially lethal. 2(b)(B) allowing their use aimed at a person's head under any circumstance is an outrageous threat to a citizen's right to assemble. Portland Police officers, as I'm sure officers in other Oregon cities, have demonstrated time and time again an inability to rein in and appropriately limit uses of force. Codifying permission to use lethal weapons against protestors under any circumstance is in direct opposition to our Constitution and is unconscionable.

The use of these and the LRAD device should be further limited to allow the civil rights of Oregon citizens to prosper and to veer from slipping closer to a police state.