

Submitter: Noah Hatz
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: HB4131

I am writing today to oppose the amendments in HB4131-1, HB4131-5, and HB4131-6, specifically the exclusion of tear gas as a chemical incapacitant. This attempt to handwave away the dangers of tear gas and its indiscriminate use is offensive on its face. I have personally been attacked by Portland Police while standing peacefully and not wearing any protective gear, and an unprotected breath of tear gas is absolutely an incapacitant for a full grown, healthy adult. For someone with breathing or mobility issues, or for children in homes being indiscriminately gassed by PPB the danger is even greater. Additionally, changing how and when a riot may be declared specifically for the purpose of allowing the police to use tear gas or additional physical force will necessarily mean the police will declare more peaceful gatherings riots as an excuse to target groups the Portland police dislike (At this point that's everyone in Portland but Ben Smith and Andy Ngo). Portland police have repeatedly proved they will escalate incidences and reach for violence as a tool of first resort. They cannot be trusted with weapons like tear gas and they certainly cannot be trusted to accurately assess and describe protest conditions without applying their own partisan biases. For these reasons I am asking the legislature to retain the blanket ban against tear gas use and to disallow any further changes to when and where a riot may be declared and what is permissible when a riot is declared.

Thank you