

Senate Bill 560

Chair Prozanski, chair Barker and members of the committees, thanks for taking time to listen to me today. For the record, my name is Quinton Maurice Blanton. I am here today to inform you of why passing senate bill 560 is necessary. For the past three years, I have been attending college at George Fox University in Newberg, Oregon. While the campus certainly has not been a safe haven from bigotry, it is the Newberg police department that has provided me with my most racist experiences to date. One evening, while I was walking home from the gym, a squad car with two officers drove up on the side of me. The driving officer then slowed the car to the pace I was walking, both officers were looking at me like they wanted to get out the car and kill me. I was horrified but stood my ground and stared back. After about twenty seconds of eye contact between the officers and I, the driving officer began to speed up and slow down in short spurts. After thoroughly intimidating me for about one minute, the two officers finally sped off at about 60 miles per hour with their blue and red lights on. I was so scared after they left, I ran the remaining 60 yards home breathing heavily, feeling unsafe, and shaking. At that particular moment I knew the police in Newberg could not be trusted and that I was a target for their harassment, misconduct, and profiling. As awful as this incident may sound, this was not the last time I would be left feeling violated by the Newberg police.

On the night of November 24, 2012, I was walking home from a friend's house. When I got one house down from where I lived, a police car turned the corner and drove past me head on, after the officers drove fifty yards past me, they turned off their headlights, turned on their red and blue lights, and began speeding towards me at more than 70 miles per hour. The driving officer jumped out of his vehicle with his hands on his utility belt. I asked, "what's the problem officer?" to which he responded, "you were walking in the middle of the street." I replied, "no I wasn't sir." That's when the officer drew his gun, pointed it at me, and began walking towards me. I was so scared I tried running home. Unfortunately, I only got as far as my neighbors yard. While frantically yelling for help, an officer approached me with his flashlight in my face, threw me to the ground, and twisted my hands behind my back so hard, I felt my left shoulder pop out of socket. I immediately told the officers about the pain I was in but I didn't get offered any medical attention. I was stood up and escorted by an officer to the street with about ten or more other officers surrounding me. After asking why I was stopped, an officer responded, you were

in the street, which I am certain I was not. I then said, "this is so unfair" An officer then blurted out, " Geez! You guys need to stop blaming everyone else for what happens to you and take responsibility for you guys' action, you all would be a lot better off if you did." One officer reinforced this statement under his breath by stating, "that's right N-word." An officer then searched me without my consent, and when I asked for badge cards, all the arresting officers' refused to provide me with theirs. On my way out of the booking station, I asked one last time for the arresting officers' badge cards, to which an officer responded by posturing himself and speaking like a stereotypical black man and saying "da name is officer Cooke."

It is Needless to say this experience was life changing for me. The encounters I've had with the Newberg police particularly the latter have severely traumatized me. Whenever I see a police car, my heart begins to race, I sweat beads, and I become bogged down by anxiety. As a result of consistently being terrorized by the Newberg police, I am not only fearful of the police but I do not want to support or assist them in any way. Of course not all cops are bad and I have had some positive encounters with the police, but the bad experiences outweigh the good by far, therefore, it has become apparent to me I'm a citizen who is protected and served but I am also extremely vulnerable to police brutality because I am a black male.

Also, in both encounters, I was charged with a host of misdemeanors that I did not earn and my life went into a tailspin. After that night, I was suspended from my second semester of college, I had to quit my job, and also, I'm finding it a lot harder to find a job and housing. Additionally, I've paid nearly \$2,000 in restitution for crimes the police simply felt like charging me with. I am aware that passing senate bill 560 will not eliminate profiling but it can help curtail it. The state of Oregon is no doubt in a unique position. If senate bill 560 is passed, we can be an example to the rest of the country of what progress looks like, or, we can continue to deny the existence of profiling, which contributes to its survival.

Thank you again for your time. Please, support the End Profiling Act. I'm happy to answer any questions which you might have."