

To the members of the committee:

I am a resident of inner Portland, and have lived through the provocations of both left and right-wing protestors. I have seen both crowd control and crowd dispersal from the Portland Police Bureau. The PPB lived up to its highest ideals on the day that they separated both BLM and Patriots' Prayer marchers – they let two opposing viewpoints express themselves; the tension boiled over.

However, I've also seen PPB and OSP disperse left-wing protestors after declaring unlawful assembly. In every case, it was the wrong thing to do: it fed into the left's perception that policing in Portland has a right-wing bias; it also fed into the right's messaging of left-wing protestors as rioters. It has only furthered rifts and political divisions in Portland. Let me repeat myself: /in practice, every time I've seen law enforcement in Portland disperse unlawful assemblies, it has not brought peace, but simply given cause for left and right to keep protesting and escalating the conflict./

This waste of policing has also cost us, the taxpayer, dearly. If the protests have calmed down, it has been at a tremendous cost: night after night of protestors being arrested for "unlawful assembly" – an ineffective shakedown tactic, especially when the Multnomah County DA has declined to prosecute protestors. Hours and hours of police overtime, millions of dollars spent on counterproductive policing. What, then, has allowing law enforcement to disperse unlawful assembly accomplished? Intimidation and waste.

As a Portlander who believes that Portland is most vibrant with diverse viewpoints, and who votes with his tax dollars, I have one request: take away the power of law enforcement in Oregon to disperse unlawful assemblies, and arrest participants simply for being there. It exacerbates conflict, rather than resolves it, and it is money wasted on overtime.

Let's be reasonable Oregonians.  
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