

Over the summer and fall of 2020 I was subjected to harm by the PPB and OPS through use of numerous chemical weapons, impact munitions and sound devices. I first hand witnessed and experienced the PPB use tear gas on crowds of people peacefully protesting, inciting panic and stampedes as a result. I also witnessed them launch tear gas canisters at chest and face level directly into crowds. I witnessed them launch cans into the back of the crowd and then tell us to clear the area in the direction of the gas. I was personally shot in the back with a canister of tear gas. I witnessed a young person get shot in the back of the head with a canister. Once the Mayor declared tear gas only usable during a riot the majority of the protests that before had been declared unlawful assemblies became "riots" despite there being no change in what the crowd was doing.

The morality of using tear gas is dubious at best. Using it on civil rights demonstrators during a respiratory pandemic is despicable.

On numerous occasions throughout the summer and fall me and my peers were subjected to the use of less than lethal impact munitions. These included rubber bullets, mace balls, and numerous other metal projectiles that I don't even know the name of. The munitions were shot at us from close range and on multiple occasions were aimed at our chests and faces. From pictures across the country we have seen what happens when a person is hit in the face with a "less than lethal" munitions: fractured faces and skulls. My peers and I have scars from these munitions from bruising and cuts that took weeks to heal. In response to the PPB's use of munitions and gas we were forced to show up to non-violent protests for civil rights dressed in gas masks, helmets and protective pads. The fact the citizens would need to dress to such a degree to protect ourselves should be an indicator at the level of violence being instigated by the police force and federal agents. I had peers that stopped coming to protest for fear of serious bodily harm secondary to tear gas or impact munitions.

I don't feel I have time to fully discuss the health ramifications of being exposed to tear gas and other chemical agents. Data shows these agents to be carcinogenic, damaging to lung tissue, capable of inducing miscarriages and menstruation. While some might say that we don't have enough data we all KNOW that being exposed to noxious chemical agents is NOT GOOD for the human body or psyche.

The use of gas and impact munitions on citizens is diametrically opposed to a democratic society that supports free speech. The use of chemical agents, like CS gas, empowers the silencing of the people by the state. The PPB has shown themselves incapable of using discretion or good judgment when it comes to crowd control and use of force. Despite public outcries attempts to keep them from gassing protestors have proven ineffective. These weapons must be taken out of the hands of people who would use them so recklessly. There is no reason we as a state should be allowing or bankrolling the morally bankrupt and financially burdensome act of arming the police force with weapons used in warfare to use on citizens.