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On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure: HB4008

I was teargassed by the Portland police for consecutive nights. When people asked me, "why were you at the protests anyways? It's not safe." I answer that it was important to me to show up to protests for Black lives as I did not see any other way we could demand for justice. We are not heard. The policies and reforms that only gave more money to the police, had failed. Testifying at City Council didn't lead to change. We did it in all of the "right ways."

It is our constitutional right to protest, and yet the act of protesting against police brutality was met with more police brutality. I remember not being able to breathe, see, or talk when I was in a cloud of teargas. I remember mothers and elderly people who were ingesting the gas and I could not help them. I remember being shoved by the police simply for standing there. White supremacist groups are not met with the same forces of brutality. Where was the teargas in the raid of the Capitol on January 6, 2021? Or at the K-mart parking lot with white supremacists gathering and being violent?

The ties that Portland police have to white supremacist groups and their protection of their rights to protest while demonizing anti-fascists and Black Lives Matter protestors is appalling. The racism is so clear. Not only do Black people experience police violence at disproportionate rates, but standing up for Black lives will also cost us in this country violence done against this act. It is disappointing that my commitment to the right side of history has to cost me physical violence, along with many community members.

Teargas and impact munitions are war weapons banned by the U.N. The United States, including Oregon, is far too militarized in their police force to see how absurd it really is. We spend billions on the police every year, just for the police not to protect and serve, but to violate and to serve us violence. It is dystopian- think of the Storm troopers in Star Wars or the Peacekeepers in the Hunger Games. That is exactly what the police are, that is what it felt like at the protests. These sci-fi movies' guards are only in different uniform.

You have the opportunity to stand for the right side of justice. End the use of teargas and impact munitions. Oppose HB4131. Do whatever you can to divest from the police.