

Submitter: Sandy Chung
On Behalf Of: Sam
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure: HB4131

Sam, Portland: I am a Portland resident who took part in several peaceful political demonstrations primarily during 2020/21. I consider myself an average person, and while I respect people who are dedicated to full-time activism, I do not consider myself as such. Based on my experiences during the protests I attended, I oppose any legislation sympathetic to use of tear gas and/or crowd control munitions, for the following reasons:

Gas is indiscriminate and causes lasting physical and environmental damage. I should not have to walk among these chemicals in the streets where I live. Neighbors, community, children, should not be continually exposed for events they did not partake in. Our city should not be blanketed in poison for years simply because we have strong activism here.

Should I choose to partake in a protest under the 1st amendment, as is my inalienable right, I have to realistically consider the risk of developing cancer or being subject to immediate internal bleeding (the latter of which happened to my family from tear gas). Additionally, I was not prepared mentally for such brutality, and am still psychologically working through the damage it did to me. Is that a correct way to interpret the constitution? Free speech only if I'm willing to be permanently scarred? Realistically yes, it is. But I do not believe it should be.

It is well documented that PPB (Portland Police Bureau) is either incapable or not responsible enough to use their own judgement about appropriate use of force, and that they made efforts to continue heavy use of force even in spite of legal restrictions. Threat of state violence is held over activism in Portland as a deterrent, not as a response. Until PPB can prove they are capable of effective policing, as a response to actual real violence, through strategies other than relying solely on gas / crowd control munitions, they should not be allowed to even have gas/munitions as an option. Never once did I see or feel like mass damage to property or life was imminent at a protest, except when PPB arrived and started firing into the crowds.

Finally, tear gas should already been outright banned. It is banned by the US in warfare for use against soldiers. So why is it acceptable for our police to use against non-combatant civilians? Does the city really have no tactic to handle potential unrest than committing war crimes itself?

In summary, I do not in any way support any legislation that enables the horrible chemical pollution and brutality the Portland community experiences from use of gas

and/or crowd control munitions. I do not support any caveats to its use to be included even in current restrictions. There is no time it is appropriate. The damage it does is far beyond the damage it is intended to prevent. There is no justification to continue using gas/munitions.

Please take this seriously. This is our lives and the lives of our children.

Thank you.