

Subject: No on HB 4131

Chair Bynum, Vice-Chairs Noble and Power, and members of the House Judiciary Committee,

My name is Natalie Lerner and I live in Portland.

I have volunteered as a legal observer with the ACLU of Oregon since February of 2017. During that time, I have witnessed and experienced countless horrifying acts of violence at the hands of the Portland Police Bureau. I have watched the police brutalize elderly people by slamming them into the ground, seen youth be violently handcuffed, and experienced the terrifying sensation of being tear gassed. It is clear to me that the Portland Police have little to no respect for the rights of the people of this city, and are willing to resort to extremely harmful tactics if allowed to do so.

Tear gas in particular is an incredibly indiscriminate way for the police to show force. It impacts everyone in the vicinity, including anyone walking down the street, people living in the area, and people trying to follow police orders and disperse, as well as people exercising their first amendment right to protest. As studies have shown, tear gas can have harmful and not yet fully understood negative health consequences, [including disrupting menstrual cycles](#) and potential longer-term impacts on reproductive health. In addition, tear gas impacts the respiratory system in short and potentially longer-term ways, which is particularly harmful when we are in the midst of a respiratory pandemic and there is some indication that [tear gas makes people more vulnerable to contracting COVID](#). Further, tear gas harms all residents of a city where it is deployed (including plant and animal life) via [depositing heavy metals into the water cycle](#). For all these reasons, I strongly believe that limiting police use of tear gas is essential for the health and wellbeing of everyone in our state.

I want to live in a city and a state where everyone can thrive, and where police do not terrorize the population. Therefore, I strongly urge you to vote no on HB 4131.

Thank you.

Natalie Lerner