

Submitter: Sarah Gilbert
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure: HB4131

Police have long abused and misused the weapons provided them, applying them indiscriminately in an effort to “control” crowds that only enrages those participating in what they perceive as lawful free speech. These indiscriminate applications of toxins hurt everyone: those engaging in legal speech, those who are unwittingly and often unwillingly in the vicinity, those downstream and downwind, animals and children. The effects of tear gas are carcinogenic and roundly destructive for humans and the environment, and have been banned by the Geneva Convention for use in wars. Doing what amounts to war crimes indiscriminately is no search for calm, no de-escalation, no quest for order. It is meant purely, simply, and in many cases statedly, to chill speech. It is unconstitutional and inhumane. No advanced society should conscience allowing the spread of poison crowd control agents in any context on its citizens or any human. That a supposedly progressive state seeks to allow it is proof of how unconscionably backward we are.