



PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY

Athul K. Acharya
Executive Director

Public Accountability
PO Box 14672
Portland, OR 97293
503-383-9492

athul@pubaccountability.org

February 22, 2022

House Committee on Rules
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Testimony in Opposition to HB 4131

Chair Warner, Vice-Chairs Breese-Iverson and Fahey, and Committee Members,

My name is Athul Acharya, and I am the executive director of Public Accountability, a national nonprofit that advocates increased accountability for law enforcement and other public officials. I am also counsel of record in *Index Newspapers v. City of Portland*, in which a federal judge had to order Portland police to stop intentionally targeting journalists and legal observers with rubber bullets and chemical weapons.

I write to urge you to oppose HB 4131. My oral testimony will further explain why I think expanding the criteria under which police may use chemical weapons and rubber bullets is a bad idea. This written testimony is to provide the Committee with some videos and photos that mostly speak for themselves:

- Here's a video of Portland police intentionally hitting KATU reporter Ric Peavyhouse with a rubber bullet as he records them with a large video camera:
<https://twitter.com/RPeavyhouse/status/1027012439714410496>.
Here's the injury that caused:
<https://twitter.com/RPeavyhouse/status/1026219809552224256>.
- Here's a video of Portland police firing two flash-bang grenades directly at ACLU legal observer Doug Brown (at 4:15 and 9:04):
<https://tinyurl.com/BrownAttacked>. He was clearly marked with a high-visibility vest that said "Legal Observer."

- Here's a video of Portland police officer blasting journalist Donovan Farley with pepper spray as he's trying to walk away from them:
<https://twitter.com/TVAYyyy/status/1269526590456643584>.
- Here's a video of a Portland police officer blasting KBOO reporter Cory Elia in the face with pepper spray (at 3:45):
<https://twitter.com/Human42LM/status/1269683012515409921/>.
- Here's a video of a Portland police officer hitting *The Oregonian* reporter Zane Sparling in the heel with an impact round:
<https://twitter.com/PDXzane/status/1272058454799028226>.
- Here's a photo taken by photojournalist Mathieu Lewis-Rolland of a Portland police officer aiming a crowd-control weapon directly at him, right before the officer shot him with it:



April 21, 2021
Page 3

After the world saw officers beat protesters bloody on the Edmund Pettus Bridge in 1965, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act. After the world saw Portland police blanket the streets in tear gas and indiscriminately beat, gas, and fire upon protesters in 2020, the Legislature passed HB 2898. I urge you not to lose sight of the wisdom that animated the Legislature then. Please oppose HB 4131.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Athul K. Acharya', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Athul K. Acharya