

Submitter: Austin Sumpter

Committee: House Committee On Judiciary

Measure, Appointment or Topic: Opposition to Senate Bill 238-A

Chair Kropf, Vice Chair Wallan, Vice Chair Chotzen, and members of the House Committee on Judiciary,

My name is Austin Sumpter. I am a resident living just in the outskirts of Canby, and I am here to voice my stalwart opposition to Senate Bill 238-A. Although this bill was amended and did pass the State Senate on a bipartisan 23-3 vote, neither is a valid reason to bring this bill to the House of Representatives. No matter how it's written, Senate Bill 238 would drastically expand the ability of law enforcement to surveil our communities with drones, and it would enable them to do so without the input or approval of a judge.

Across the United States and including in Oregon, Donald Trump and his closest cronies are weaponizing all kinds of laws regarding terrorism, policing, and war as a means to silence dissent, to crack down on protests, and to destroy democracy as we know it. For example, Trump has invoked the 1798 *Alien Enemies Act* as a justification to disappear hundreds of immigrants and refugees to a cruel and unusual El Salvador. He has also weaponized ICE and the U.S. Department of State to crack down on international students, revoking student visas and detaining them for weeks to months on end. All of these arrests and disappearances were done in direct violation of these peoples' Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Amendment rights to due process of the law. And to top it off, Trump was caught on a microphone telling the dictatorial president of El Salvador, Nayib Bukele, that, "homegrown are next," and to, "build about five more prisons." It's not a stretch to imagine that if he can get away with arresting and disappearing hundreds of innocent immigrants and students, then he'll do it with *anyone* who dares to protest against his agenda.

The Oregon Legislature has been working on laws to protect Oregon's most vulnerable communities from these unjust crackdowns. And it is my belief that at least most of the lawmakers in Salem do not wish to leave Oregonians in harm's way. But Senate Bill 238 would be a big step in the wrong direction. The bill would provide law enforcement agencies a blank check to begin deploying unlimited quantities of

drones in a variety of situations with no need for a judicial warrant. This bill would give police and county sheriffs the power to make decisions about the use of drones. That means they could use them to monitor protests against the federal government, to monitor peaceful gatherings, or even to intrude on peoples' personal lives with no accountability. Unchecked surveillance will not make our communities safer. On the contrary, these kinds of powers are used as weapons to monitor, intimidate, and silence dissent – particularly among activists, peaceful protesters and historically over-policed communities. And if this data is shared with the federal government, it would allow Trump to identify and track the people he is targeting, including immigrants, people seeking reproductive healthcare, nonprofits working on causes he opposes, people protesting the undermining of democracy, and much more.

As federal crackdowns on the First Amendment rights of speech, dissent and peaceful assembly grow in frequency, the members of the House Committee of Judiciary have a duty to ensure Oregonians are kept safe and are allowed to express their rights to speak freely and protest without undue surveillance. Please fulfill your duty and leave Senate Bill 238-A to die in Committee. Thank you.