

Submitter: Suzanne Thorson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB238
May 8, 2025

Dear Chair Kropf and Esteemed Members of the Committee,
I strongly oppose SB 238A.

SB 238A would allow law enforcement agencies to deploy drones in a wide variety of situations without a court warrant, and in large numbers.

Of particular concern is the fact that SB 238A will leave the decision to violate the privacy of Oregonians entirely in the hands of police and sheriffs. This means that law enforcement could use drones to surveil the lawful activities and everyday life of our communities with absolutely no judicial accountability.

We know that unchecked surveillance powers inevitably lead to its abuse: like monitoring, intimidating and silencing dissent - in particular targeting protestors, activists, and communities that are already over-policed.

In addition, there are no safeguards against drone data being shared with federal authorities. It could therefore be used by the Trump administration to target the very people he is increasingly harassing - including immigrants, refugees, people seeking reproductive or gender-affirming healthcare, and people speaking out against fascism.

At this moment, we are experiencing a rise in overt authoritarianism which seems poised to veer into outright fascism. SB 238A is the LAST thing Oregonians need right now.

Thank you,
Suzanne Thorson