



May 9, 2025

RE: Please vote no on SB 238 A

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

I am writing on behalf of the Consolidated Oregon Indivisible Network - COIN - to ask you to vote no on SB 238 A. COIN is a nonpartisan organization made up of Indivisible groups from across Oregon. COIN works to protect democracy, and nothing is more fundamental to our democracy than the individual rights and protections against intrusive government that are set out in our federal and Oregon constitutions.

SB 238 A allows law enforcement to conduct aerial surveillance of Oregonians with ill-defined and loose limitations; the bill even as amended is at odds with the constitutional protections of Article I, Sections 8, 9 of our constitution. The warrant requirements of ORS 837.320 already provide law enforcement with the ability to act to protect public safety and enforce the law including in exigent circumstances. There is no evidence the current statute is insufficient. There is no basis and certainly no authority for the legislature to jeopardize constitutional protections and rights with the widespread surveillance permitted by this bill.

In fact, this bill is shocking in the scope of power ceded to law enforcement to monitor the public in the course of "lawful police activity", which is undefined and open to broad interpretation; the bill would allow unlimited use of drones simply because law enforcement is "[r]esponding to any call" or in a situation where injury or damage "could" occur. Note also the bill requires no transparency, no reporting at all, by law enforcement, on their proposed extraordinary use of drones to spy on Oregonians.

This means Oregonians could be subjected to drone surveillance, e.g., in their own homes or in any gathering or protest without the requisites of probable cause. It is a dramatic erosion of our rights of privacy and certainly at best a chill on the exercise of the rights to free speech and assembly including the right to protest. In this time of encroaching authoritarianism at the federal level, it is disturbing that our legislature would even consider a bill that so undermines our individual rights and protections and ultimately the role of the judiciary and the rule of law.

Please vote no on SB 238 A. Thank you.

Laura Allen, on behalf of the Consolidated Oregon Indivisible Network - COIN