



RE: Oppose SB 238A

June 11, 2025

Chair Bowman, Vice-Chairs Drazan and Pham H., and members of the committee,

My name is Sol Mora, and I am the Advocacy Director at Next Up Action Fund. Our nonprofit organization strives to engage the next generation of young leaders to build political power to fight for a more just and equitable Oregon. Our work centers on civic engagement, advancing racial justice, strengthening our democracy, and much more.

At a time in which our democracy and constitutional rights are under threat across the country, Oregonians are depending on our state lawmakers and leaders to create safeguards that protect our communities in this place we call home. SB 238A does the exact opposite – the bill promotes fear, uncertainty, and a real and tangible risk of targeted violence against vulnerable populations.

This bill would allow police to use drones, without a warrant, in an excessively wide range of circumstances. Not only can this vague language lead to unintended consequences such as illegitimate use, but it will also disproportionately affect communities that are already criminalized in higher numbers and in more aggressive and violent ways. These communities include people of color, immigrants, activists of all backgrounds (especially students, working-class people, disabled people), and so many others.

Picture this: a Latino family is hosting a gathering in their own backyard to celebrate Mother's Day—children running about, music playing, community members basking in the joy of the place they feel safe in—only to be interrupted by a drone surveilling their ordinary moment. Or, picture a group of college students gathered at a local May Day protest, exercising their right to freedom of speech and freedom of assembly, only to find out that their attendance was being surveilled and recorded the whole time. These are exactly the kinds of scenarios that SB 238A could result in: everyday people being surveilled when they are doing nothing wrong *and* everyday people being targeted for simply supporting or speaking out about the issues they care about.

Heightened surveillance discourages people from ordinary gatherings, from expressing their viewpoints on an issue, or from engaging in democratic activities in their community.

As members of the House Committee on Rules, you have the responsibility to interrogate the ways in which increased aerial surveillance, without court oversight, puts all Oregonians at risk. This bill will only foster more distrust with our government and endanger the foundation of our democracy.

We urge you to listen to Oregonians by honoring people's autonomy, privacy, and constitutional rights.

Thank you for your time,

Sol Mora

Advocacy Director

Next Up Action Fund