

Submitter: Randall Blazak
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB238

I teach sociology at Portland Community College. This spring I assigned George Orwell's classic 1949 novel, 1984. My hope is that students would make the connections between Orwell's dystopian world of Oceania and America's rapid slide into authoritarianism. A large part of that vision is the role surveillance by the "Thought Police" plays in tracking civilians. SB 238A looks like it was plucked from the pages of Orwell's novel and lawmakers must take a stand against this authoritarian creep.

I oppose SB 238A. It is a flawed proposal that would dangerously expand law enforcement's authority to use drones in Oregon without sufficient safeguards for civil liberties, privacy, or democratic oversight. The bill is being promoted as a "public safety" measure, but in reality, it opens the door to warrantless spying that is likely to be used to target Black, Indigenous, and Communities of Color, as well as activists, protestors, and dissenters. SB 238A gives law enforcement more surveillance power with few checks and balances. That's not just overreach - it's a serious threat to our rights.