

Submitter:

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On Behalf Of:

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Especially in a time of such separation and dehumanization, we need to see each other as humans. Masks take away the humanity of law enforcement in the eyes of the public, and reduce inhibitions on the part of the wearer. In combination, this escalates tensions and the likelihood of violence, rather than improving safety, which should be the primary intent of law enforcement. Law enforcement officers have always had the risk of being targeted personally, and have chosen to accept that risk in order to serve their communities, typically only using masks for SWAT teams/tactical units or undercover activities. Under healthier circumstances individual officers have been protected by the belief of their community in the overall positive impact of their law enforcement agency. That belief is being shaken by many things right now, one of them being the use of masks in inappropriate situations. Now when I see a law enforcement officer wearing a mask, I see someone preparing to do something that they know most people would consider wrong. I see quickly-recruited, poorly trained, and fearful people who I cannot trust to enact justice. Oregon has not needed this law in the past, but when trust is broken boundaries must be drawn. I'm sorry to the Oregon law enforcement officers who already only use masks in appropriate situations, I agree that I shouldn't be telling you how to do your job, and I wouldn't do it if federal law enforcement weren't already demonstrating that they do not have the same training, experience, and goodwill. I hope you can see this as an opportunity to separate yourself from the federal agents escalating tensions in your communities. I hope you can support this as something that will keep your community safer.