

Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

Please vote YES for SJR 203 – A Constitutional Amendment for NO SECRET POLICE

I am the mother of an Oregon State Police Trooper and member of the OSP SWAT team. I'm extremely proud of my son (and also my daughter who is an Oregon State Police Forensic Scientist). As you might expect, I'm about as supportive of law enforcement as anyone could be.

I am also pretty familiar with the way GOOD law enforcement officers behave. There is no universe in which I can imagine my son or his colleagues acting the way federal agents have been acting here in Oregon, in Minnesota, and in other states as well. They would be fired. They would very likely face criminal charges. Our local and state police officers in Oregon have months of intensive training, they understand their role as public protectors and officers of the peace, they get proper search warrants, those arrested get due process, and our local and state police officers treat Oregon residents with respect and dignity.

Nor can I imagine our state and local police agencies acting the way DHS has acted after officer-involved shootings: immediately and publicly defending officers before any investigation, and in fact, refusing to even investigate. My son, as a member of the SWAT team, was part of an officer-involved shooting incident last year. There was an extensive investigation that took several weeks, and until it was completed, no public statement was made by OSP as to the officers' justification or lack thereof. The way DHS has behaved following the shooting deaths of a number of people is simply appalling. DHS is showing us all what a "police state" looks like, and we don't like it.

I know several local law enforcement officers as well. I have heard them express deep frustration about the fact that they have spent years working to build a relationship of trust with their communities, and in a few short weeks, federal agents have completely undermined trust in law enforcement. Federal agents have, at least in some cases, not informed local police of their presence in this jurisdiction, as they are supposed to do.

I am deeply saddened that anyone would think this is okay. No matter where you stand on the topic of deportation of undocumented people, federal agents have no business breaking the law or terrorizing our communities to do their job. And the first step to holding them accountable is to know who they are! We must not allow masked agents to roam our streets. We must demand they wear identifying information indicating which agency they are part of along with a name or badge number.

SJR 203 alone is not enough, but it's one piece of the package that the Oregon legislature must pass this session to protect the people of our communities from the chaos and cruelty of our current federal government. Please pass this bill out of your committee with a resounding YES vote and keep it moving forward.

Thank you Senator Manning Jr, Senator Patterson, Representative Evans and Representative Andersen for sponsoring this critical legislation.

Sincerely,

Deborah Ferrer
The Dalles