

TRAVIS NELSON
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
HOUSE DISTRICT 44
NORTH/NORTHEAST PORTLAND



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Testimony in Support of SJR 203

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

My Name is Travis Nelson, and I am the State Representative for House District 44 - North and Northeast Portland. I am testifying in overwhelming support of SJR 203. This resolution is about transparency and accountability and a fundamental value I, and we as Oregonians hold dear.

Before stepping into public office, I worked as a nurse for over twenty years. In healthcare, transparency is not optional nor is accountability political. When something goes wrong, we document it. We review it and we improve it. People's lives depend on that honesty and that foresight.

That same standard should apply to any authority operating in our communities, this is especially true for federal agents whose actions will significantly impact the lives of Oregonians.

Over the past several months, my office has received an overwhelming number of calls and emails from constituents deeply concerned about the lack of clarity and accountability surrounding ICE operations in our communities. These are parents worried about dropping their children off at school. Community members concerned for their neighbors. Families unsure of their rights and Nurses trying to protect their patients.

The country is in a polarized political environment. Unfortunately, federal agents do operate under the umbrella of federal politics and partisan administrations, and so it becomes even more important that states exercise their constitutional rights and responsibilities. Regardless of who occupies the White House, Oregon owes it to its communities to expect transparency and accountability. Transparency is not tied to one administration or one ideology. It is enduring and it is foundational.

Oregonians deserve due process. They deserve to know that when authority is exercised in their neighborhoods, it is done lawfully, and that they get to see who is exercising that authority. This legislation still provides adequate exceptions for necessary masking to protect officers, but otherwise, we need to know who is in coming in our communities, taking people, and sadly – at times – shooting them as well.

If the people of Oregon ultimately decide that this approach does not reflect our state's values, then that is their right. It is our responsibility to ensure that voters have the opportunity to weigh in on the questions of accountability and transparency that are directly impacting their communities in a serious way.

This resolution does not inflame. It does not seek conflict. It simply affirms that Oregon values oversight, constitutional principles, and public trust. When systems operate clearly and openly, people feel safer. You in the committee have an opportunity to grant voters a voice at the table on how we should respond.

I urge your support of SJR 203.

Sincerely,

State Representative Travis Nelson
House District 44, North/NE Portland