



The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 100-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

July 24, 2020

To: Senator James Manning and Representative Janelle Bynum, Co-chairs
Members of the Committee on Transparent Policing and Use of Force Reform
Email: itpufr.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov

Re: Transparent Policing and Use of Force – Comments

I am writing on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Oregon. This spring, the LWV of the US passed a resolution addressing racism and use of force in law enforcement organizations.

The resolution reads in part: Motion #2020-136: We resolve first: That the League advocates against systemic racism in the justice system and at a minimum, for preventing excessive force and brutality by law enforcement. We also call for the prompt actions by all League members to advocate within every level of government to eradicate systemic racism and the harm that it causes.

We want to commend you for the quality and the depth of the research and recommendations that were covered in the last two weeks of informational hearings by your committee. Problems of racism and excessive use of force were repeatedly examined from various perspectives. We were particularly impressed with the testimony of Dr. Danny Jacobs, OHSU President, Alisha Mooreland Capula, and Michael German. Their discussion of racism in law enforcement organizations highlighted the many aspects of this complex issue. They stressed that the approach needs to be organization wide, with a focus on a culture shift. Staff need to know what they are being asked to do and why. It is critical that Police organizations have clear policies so that unacceptable behavior is defined, and supervisors can hold staff accountable. It is also essential that management be alert to identifying staff who have organizational ties to white supremacist groups. These three experts brought a number of practical strategies for implementing change that would be accepted by staff and that would have lasting impact.

We know that reducing racial discrimination within law enforcement is not easily done by passing state legislation. Local organizations need to review the research you have brought forward and consider which ideas and recommendations might benefit their own organizations. The League is interested in the effective techniques for managing protests in ways that keep them peaceful, minimizes unlawful behavior and avoids tactics that lead to more confrontation.

The League is grateful for all you did to facilitate the passage of the group of bills that were approved in the first special session. We support your efforts to take a statewide approach to improving the performance of law enforcement organizations in Oregon, particularly in addressing racism and excessive use of force. We will be looking forward to reviewing the legislative concepts that you are considering for passage in the August special session.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Becky Gladstone in black ink.

Becky Gladstone
LWVOR President

Handwritten signature of Barbara Ross in black ink.

Barbara Ross
LWVOR Public Safety Portfolio