

**From:** [Eliza Yurkov](#)  
**To:** [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)  
**Subject:** Written Testimony for Agenda Item 340  
**Date:** Wednesday, April 27, 2022 1:46:31 PM

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Hello to whom it may concern,

My name is Eliza Yurkov and I would like to submit a written testimony for the Portland City Council meeting on Thursday April 28, 2022 at 2:00 pm. I have written my testimony below. Please let me know if there is any more information I need to provide for my testimony to be shared with Council and included as a part of the official record.

Testimony:

My name is Eliza and I reject the OIR report and demand a thorough, exhaustive report to uncover the systemic biases that exist in the Portland Police Bureau. This costly report done by an outside firm from Southern California was nothing more than a collection of gentle musings from current police members detailing their need for more funding. The report failed to acknowledge that denial of racial bias can be a sign of racial bias and recommends recruiting more officers through social media. Instead of polling community members about their needs, this firm based their entire report on the opinions of police members. The OIR report and its recommendations should be rejected. We need research on effective measures of safety based on the input of community members most impacted by police brutality. We need local organizations re-investigating and centering those who have been harmed by the police. We need recommendations for reform and action that is based on the needs of the community, not the needs of the racist system as it currently exists. Portland City Council, I urge you to pour money and energy into actually effective emergency systems, like Portland Street Response, instead of into recruitment or training for police officers. No amount of police officers will keep someone safe in the event of a mental health crisis. No amount of “diversity” will resolve the insidious racist nature of the police system. No amount of training will undo the murder of Patrick Kimmons. I urge you to reject this report and conduct another that deeply examines the systemic racism so obviously present in the police force.

Thank you,  
All the best,  
Eliza Yurkov  
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**From:** [Beatrix Li](#)  
**To:** [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)  
**Subject:** Testimony for 4/28 on item 340  
**Date:** Thursday, April 28, 2022 1:43:49 PM

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The City of Portland has a unique opportunity to take a hard look at our police department and tell the truth about their ongoing harm to marginalized communities. After Portland Police Association President Brian Hunzeker and multiple other officers violated PPB directives and accused a critical city councilwoman of a crime, Portland City Council once again hired outside group OIR to review PPB's racial and political biases. A summer of protests and a sharp rise in police brutality pulled back the curtain on the police bureau's resistance to change. The report cost the city \$150,000 and failed to meet its objectives. Although OIR was hired to examine the extent and root causes of biases with the Portland Police Bureau, their final report offered no definitive findings. If the City accepts this report and its recommendations, future policy decisions may maintain the status quo and/or worsen current policing practices.

Portlanders experience racism and politically motivated biases from Portland police; these issues have existed for decades. The protests of 2020 in Portland merely shined a brighter light on them. Sadly, the OIR report focused on only a few high-profile cases featured in the media and failed to interview the overwhelming number of community members who experienced police bias.

OIR polled 277 of the 1,040 police members. OIR met with six people from the community, five initiated that contact. There was no poll or listening session extended to families of those killed or harmed by police. Nor was a general poll sent to randomly selected members of the community or posted for community input. OIR representatives never came to Portland. An investigation like this must center the community, including those who have been subjected to disparaging treatment, harm, and violence. Instead, OIR's investigation centered the Portland Police Bureau, an entity that is concerned with its perception and public image rather than taking ownership and changing the harm it has engaged in. Echoing failed reforms, the report calls for more resources and solely focuses on perception.

The report centered the officers' voice over the community and found PPB employees rejected the "narrative that framed the agency as racially discriminatory." While officers denied their peers were influenced by "racial views," the report failed to acknowledge that **denial of racial bias can be a sign of racial bias**. Rarely do participants admit to having biases.

Moreover, the report's recommendations are not based on current or efficacious research on policing. Recommendations included hiring "a more diverse field of officers" and recruiting new officers via social media like Tik Tok. However, these recommendations do not take into account studies that suggest that there is no relationship between officer race and policing outcomes, as well as this truth: if the City does not make fundamental changes to the culture at the Portland Police Bureau, adding new police officers simply means there will be more police officers acculturated into a system and culture of policing that harms our communities. Another recommendation asked PPB to "express formal contrition for prior episodes of racially discriminatory conduct." While acknowledging the past is necessary, apologizing for harms without changing behavior is performative and reprehensible. As well, echoing failed reforms, the report calls for more resources and solely focuses on perception. As PDX NAACP Committee Chair Mac Smiff stated, "If you want to change perception, change behavior." Unfortunately for Portland communities, OIR's report does not set out the ways in which Portland Police can and must change their

behavior.

In summary, **our concerns and recommendations** are:

The investigation and subsequent report prioritized the police bureau's voice over the community's. The report was not informed by those harmed or impacted by police brutality, nor by racial and political biases.

- An investigation this important cannot be completed remotely and should not be accepted.
- A local organization should be hired to re-investigate and center impacted communities.

The report, either by accident or intent, overlooked incidents that illustrate the bureau's biases in action. While the murder of George Floyd sparked many to action, local issues and the work of local groups are mostly ignored.

- We recommend a secondary review be required and meet with local organizations like the Urban League, PDX NAACP, Don't Shoot Portland, Albina Ministerial Alliance Coalition for Justice and Police Reform, Pacific Northwest Family Circle, Oregon Justice Resource Center, ACLU of Oregon, and local historians and archivists.

The recommendations are not grounded in research. Reform and action should be informed by research, the impacted community, and trauma-informed transformative justice.

- We recommend the report include citations of research and input from researchers and psychologists specializing in racism and trauma.
- We recommend the subsequent investigation contemplate more thoroughly the feasibility and benefits of community-based response and safety programs.

**Our community deserves honest reports that tell the truth and recommendations that can result in real change.** This report by OIR was merely an analysis of police reputation. Portland City Council and our communities should reject this report and demand a thorough, exhaustive report to uncover the systemic biases that exist in the Portland Police Bureau and what must be done for real change with the policing system in Portland.

### **Signatories:**

ACLU - OR

OJRC

PDX NAACP

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Pronouns: she/they

**City Council Meeting -Thursday April 28, 2022 2:00 p.m.**

<b>Agenda No.</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>
340.1	Liani	Reyna
340.2	Dan	Handelman
340.3	Jake	DOCKTER
349.4	Javier	Reyes