



PRESS RELEASE

OREGON HOUSE DEMOCRATS

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House Democrats Vote to Protect Oregonians from Unjustifiable Arrests

HB 3164 A aims to prevent unjustifiable arrests that disproportionately impact BIPOC communities and people experiencing homelessness

SALEM, OR—Today House Democrats passed [House Bill 3164 A](#), which would limit the circumstances under which a person could be charged with interfering with an officer. The bill aims to prevent unjustifiable arrests for all Oregonians, but especially BIPOC communities and people experiencing homelessness who are disproportionately impacted. The bill, brought to the floor at the request of the ACLU, will also protect reporters who are simply trying to do their job.

Current statute, ORS 162.247, establishes the misdemeanor offense of interfering with a peace officer (IPO). As written, the law is overly broad and has been [misused](#) by law enforcement, resulting in arrests for non-criminal behavior. These arrests stifle Oregonians' first amendment rights and damage public trust in policing.

“When our law enforcement has the authority to commit non-criminal arrests, this opens the door for an abuse of power. The cornerstone of every democracy is at stake: freedom of speech and expression,” said [Rep. Andrea Valderrama](#) (D- NE Portland), a sponsor of the bill. “This bill safeguards our constitutional rights as people exercise their right to protest and reexamine how we approach public safety. This is especially important to the safety and the dignity of BIPOC communities, who are disproportionately and unjustifiably arrested for non-criminal behavior.”

HB 3164 A prohibits a person from intentionally or knowingly acting in a manner that prevents an officer from performing their lawful duties with regard to another person or a criminal investigation. This change removes the opportunity for confusing an officer's authority to give an order and instead focuses on deterring behavior that actually prevents an officer from doing their job. “Knowingly” means a person is acting with “an awareness” that their behavior is of the kind that would prevent an officer from performing their duties. Simply frustrating an officer by failing to adhere to or comply with their direction is not criminal behavior.

“We all know law enforcement officers have tough jobs,” said chief sponsor of the bill, [Speaker Tina Kotek](#) (D- N/NE Portland). “By clarifying the original intent of the law, we are providing officers with the clarity they need to enforce the law, while protecting the public and ensuring trust is not eroded.”

The bill passed 48-10 and will now move to the Senate for consideration.

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