

FLOYD PROZANSKI
STATE SENATOR

DISTRICT 4
503-986-1704 - Capitol
sen.floydprozanski@oregonlegislature.gov



OREGON STATE SENATE
900 COURT ST NE
SALEM, OREGON 97301

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Vote Explanation
HB 4201

I voted for HB 4201 even though it was amended to just create a joint committee to study the issues involved more thoroughly before making changes to existing policy. (I will serve on the joint committee.)

HB 4201 was originally drafted to turn over all investigations and prosecutions of use of force (UOF) cases to the state Attorney General's office (AG). Knowing that this approach would have been extremely ineffective, expensive and would have resulted in unintended consequences, I recommended that we maintain the current policy – a multi-agency task force, not including the agency involved in the UOF incident – to handle the investigation under the control of the district attorney and give the attorney general's office dual jurisdiction in final decision making regarding whether criminal charges would be brought against the officer(s). It's worth noting that this model has been used since 2008 and has successfully isolated involved agencies from being part of the UOF investigation.

Such a hybrid approach would have ensured that the investigation wasn't delayed while waiting for another set of detectives to arrive on scene from elsewhere in Oregon. The AG's office would have been kept informed during the investigation and would have had final say over whether any criminal charges were brought against the officer. This model as recommended would have ensured accountability and oversight, as well as integrity of investigations.

Instead of making a simple change to the existing procedure to immediately increase accountability, the Legislature chose to pursue consensus among the joint committee members to develop legislation for introduction before the 2021 regular session.

HB 4201 is one of five police accountability bills brought forward by the Legislative People of Color Caucus (POC). According to members of POC, they want to bring forward legislation to address issues many people of color have faced with law enforcement officers.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "F. Prozanski", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Floyd Prozanski