

ANNA WILLIAMS
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 52



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

June 26, 2020

Timothy G. Sekerak
Chief Clerk of the House
State Capitol Building, H271
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Vote Explanation on House Bill 4205

Dear Chief Clerk Sekerak,

I am writing to submit an explanation for my vote on House Bill 4205, the bill to impose a duty on law enforcement officers to intervene to prevent or stop another officer from engaging in an act they know, or should reasonably know is misconduct, and also a duty to report that misconduct.

I was proud to stand in solidarity with my colleagues on the People of Color Caucus of the Oregon Legislature when they first proposed a bill to impose this duty. I was also proud to cast my vote in favor of this symbolic measure, despite the fact that it falls far short of a meaningful duty to intervene and report, which would have been my preference.

The act makes a failure to intervene or report “grounds for disciplinary action” against the officer, yet falls short of requiring that the law enforcement agency charged with disciplining that officer actually do so. Insofar as the legislature seeks to regulate the behavior of individual officers and legislate a duty for that officer to intervene and report, I am proud to have voted in favor of this measure. Insofar as we seek to reform the institution of policing in Oregon, though, this measure leaves open the possibility that any law enforcement agency that chooses not to prioritize intervention and reporting may choose not to discipline an officer for failing to live up to this new statutory duty.

Acknowledging their important role in our state, it is critical that we reform both the institution of policing and the individual officers therein. This bill only accomplishes one of those two goals.

Sincerely,

Representative Anna Williams

