

COUNCIL SEAT #2 / TOPICS & BACKGROUND	Question (note: answers cut to meet 150 word limit)	Loretta Smith	Dan Ryan
<p>1) Deadly force</p> <p>Despite almost a decade of review from the US Department of Justice, Portland Police have continued to use deadly force against people of color and people experiencing mental health crises at disproportionate rates. Since the DOJ Agreement was proposed in 2012, Portland Police officers have shot, shot at, or led to the death in custody of 33 people, with a total of 18 deaths. At least half of the people were experiencing mental health crises, and 8 of them were people of color.</p>	<p>How do you see City Council taking steps to meaningfully reduce these disparities and move towards the reduction or elimination of deadly force as a tactic?</p>	<p>The very first thing we must do is change PPB's use of force to an extraordinary measure instead of their first response. One of the main problems with policing in our local community is that interactions between law enforcement and the public are often escalated from the onset, with police officers approaching situations from an authoritarian vantage point. We need to revamp bureau directives, policies, and trainings that create a culture and practice of de-escalation and peacekeeping instead of militarized uses of force. If we don't address these matters from a systems perspective, then we will continue to see a widespread mismatch of use of force with situations that don't warrant them.</p>	<p>Portland City Council action on this issue is long overdue. For decades our city council has allowed the Portland Police Association to protect bad actors within the ranks. We are promised reforms when people are running for office but then most elected officials bow to the will of the PPA. Change must come now.</p> <p>[W]e must pass Commissioner Hardesty's ballot measure to create a fully independent Community Police Oversight Board. Our current political and social time of reckoning creates a unique opportunity to enact substantive change.</p> <p>Important additional steps are to begin conducting rigorous and ongoing implicit bias training and that psychological evaluations are implemented in an updated fashion and used as a tool to assist in making sure that every Portland Police officer sees BIPOC folks as valued as integral members of our community.</p> <p>We must also focus on de-militarizing our police force and prioritize community guardians</p>
<p>2) Force at protests</p> <p>The Portland Police have made national news for their violent crackdowns on political protests. The PPB's Use of Force Reports separate force used on demonstrators from other types of force.</p>	<p>What is your position on police use of weapons including chemicals, mini-explosives and grenade launchers, particularly when they affect bystanders not suspected of any criminal activity?</p>	<p>I have, from the very beginning of the latest protests, been vehemently opposed to the use of force we're seeing at protests throughout the city. I don't believe we need any additional studies to come to the conclusion that the use of military grade weapons, both by Portland Police and by agencies the city calls in for assistance, threatens the health of our community, has no place in our streets, and has undoubtedly made the relationship between local law enforcement and the public worse. I have called on Portland City Council to immediately ban all uses of chemical weapons, mini-explosives, and other military grade weapons as methods of crowd control or dispersement. I have also called on a state level ban on these tactics during the most recent special session.</p>	<p>These tactics are unacceptable and must be stopped.</p> <p>The events that have taken place since the horrific murders of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd and the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement have grown into what is the single most important political moment since the Civil Rights Movement. It is incredibly encouraging to see so much grassroots pressure to affect real change within the Portland Police Bureau; at the same time, it is incredibly disheartening to see PPB consistently use violent tactics against protesters, especially cs gas and flashbang grenades. While I am grateful to the State Legislature for their work to limit the use of chemical weapons except in the case of riots, PPB has shamefully chosen to sidestep this rule through liberally labeling demonstrations "riots" on a consistent basis. PPB's tactics have served to escalate tensions and sow further distrust within the community-- distrust that has been eroded</p>
<p>3) Joint Terrorism Task Force</p> <p>In 2019, the City voted for a second time to remove officers from the FBI's secretive Joint Terrorism Task Force. Oregon law restricts conducting investigations with no reasonable suspicion of criminal conduct, while the FBI can open investigations based on speculation.</p>	<p>Do you support staying out of the JTTF, and what are your thoughts on the City's current policy which allows cooperation on a case by case basis?</p>	<p>Any continued partnership with the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force is the wrong direction for our city to be headed in. I believe we should end collaboration with the JTTF in all aspects, especially under the current Administration. We have seen peaceful protestors surveilled, journalists attacked and arrested, the targeting of activists and community leaders -- all seemingly done in conjunction with the federal government through partnerships with the U.S. Attorney's Office, the U.S. Marshal's Office, Homeland Security, and the FBI. I believe we can deal with any real credible threats of criminal conduct without engaging in the highly speculative and political work of the JTTF.</p>	<p>I strongly support staying out of the JTTF. The concept of cooperation on a case by case basis may sound appealing, but it is critical that a concrete rubric is used and that mechanisms to ensure transparency and accountability are built into the process.</p> <p>Unless systems are in place that hold the head of the PPB accountable with community transparency, there's no path to collaborate with the JTTF. We are currently experiencing interrogation and kidnapping based on speculation by federal agents in current protests against police violence. Portlanders must be bold about our stance on civil rights and civil liberties for everyone in our city; our values must not be compromised.</p>

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<p>4) Houseless persons and police</p> <p>Portland Police are frequently used to enforce anti-houseless policies and ordinances such as the Sidewalk Use (aka Sit/Lie) Ordinance, leading to use of force and loss of belongings. The City stopped publishing statistics about who is cited/warned/arrested under Sit/Lie in 2013. In 2017, the Oregonian reported people experiencing houselessness accounted for 52% of arrests. The City has responded in part by conducting sweeps of houseless camps, while also creating programs like the pilot "Portland Street Response" project.</p>	<p>What policies do you support that will reduce the disparities in police attention?</p>	<p>The very first thing we have to do is top sending police officers to deal with issues around homelessness, as people experiencing homelessness is not a crime. I believe that the continued sweeps of homeless camps presents both a moral and legal issue for the city that we will be on the wrong side of history on. I believe that pilot programs like the Portland Street Response are a move in the right direction, but we can't allow unjust activities, like sweeps, to continue just because we're creating new programs that are actually addressing social service issues with social service solutions. It was disheartening to learn that even in the midst of a global pandemic, the city is slated to begin camp sweeps again this month.</p>	<p>This issue is very personal to me. My brother died on the streets of Portland because, despite being triple diagnosed, he could not get the treatment he needed. Creating the support systems and pathways to housing and jobs has to be a top priority for the city moving forward.</p> <p>First, as we build forward we have to shelter those who are homeless now, and I want to see how the CARES act money for such efforts, totalling \$39 million, will increase the number of people sheltered. Many economists predict that the current economic devastation is forecast to lead to something comparable to the Great Depression. The status quo's embarrassing results over the past decade have me lacking faith that they will lead us through this grim moment in time. We can and must find radical new ways to provide shelter and food delivery systems; we began to consider innovation</p>
<p>5) Oversight</p> <p>The civilian oversight system, including the Independent Police Review, its Citizen Review Committee, and the Police Review Board, is not adequately holding officers accountable to community standards, and PRB hearings are closed to all but one or two community members uninformed in the incident being considered.</p>	<p>a) City Council heard an appeal in 2017 illustrating that the standard of review for the CRC which requires them to defer to the Bureau (the "reasonable person" standard asking them to consider whether the officer's commander made a reasonable decision) is not working. Would you support changing the standard to "preponderance of the evidence" (seeing if it is more likely than not that misconduct occurred, a standard used by most review boards, juries, and by the reviewing commander), which could result in more complaints being sustained? Why or why not?</p>	<p>In regard to both of these issues, we haven't built a system that is actually about accountability -- we've built a system that is about being able to voice a grievance without any real recourse for resolution. I believe that the entire system needs an overhaul, and that the mechanism for oversight must find its home within the city's charter so that it is not subject to changing political winds. This is why I asked the Portland City Council to refer a measure to the ballot this November that would do just that. I am delighted that the work to accomplish that is moving full steam ahead and look forward to championing the measure as a Portland City Commissioner.</p>	<p>I am strongly supportive of making the change to "preponderance of evidence." This standard is used in Title IX guidance as it pertains to sexual assault investigations in all public education institutions across the country, which has led to progress in addressing the epidemic of student sexual assault. Leaders draw upon best practices within these spaces to implement an investigatory process that is judicious and that also leads to more results for complainants that have legitimate grievances against PPB officers. I will proudly lead this effort.</p>
	<p>b) What changes would you support to the PRB to help make the review process more transparent to the public?</p>	<p>(see answer above)</p>	<p>As mentioned earlier, I am strongly supportive of Commissioner Hardesty's ballot measure to create an independent review board, and as a City Commissioner I will enthusiastically work to ensure it's passage. We need oversight from individuals with lived experiences from within communities that have experienced police injustice.</p> <p>I will also fight for increased access to relevant data and evidence, as justice cannot be decided and served behind closed doors. It is also necessary to provide video evidence and that means body cameras. While the pandemic has brought budget constraints to our city, it is unacceptable that the implementation of body cameras within the PPB have been delayed yet again. In my mind, this is the only line-item in the PPB budget that must be increased at this time.</p>

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<p>6) Profiling</p> <p>State law prohibits profiling based on a number of characteristics including but not limited to race, gender identity and housing status. Of all agencies reporting to the state, analysts found the Police Bureau's stops and searches of African Americans to be the most disproportionate. While the PPB acknowledges some disparity in searches, they insist the stops of African American Portlanders should be compared to crime victimization rates (18.4%) rather than either population (6%) or driver accident rates (11%). Before there was talk of defunding it, the Gun Violence Reduction Team, formerly known as the Gang Enforcement Team, had even higher stop rates of over 60%, which the Bureau compares to gang crime victimization (63% in the 2017 report).</p>	<p>What guidelines do you believe specialty teams and the Bureau as a whole should use to determine whether police are disproportionately targeting the black community?</p>	<p>I believe the only guidelines we can depend on are the actual numbers of who is being engaged by these "specialty teams". It doesn't matter if the intention is race neutral, if the impact is that certain demographics are over-represented then the impact is that we have groups that are being profiled. We have for too long argued to maintain systems that have an impact of profiling because the intention was to accomplish some "greater public good". This must stop, and every policy, training, and directive must be analyzed in both policy and practice to determine if profiling is occurring or likely to occur. Where we find it does, we must immediately do away with those policies and practices.</p>	<p>First, I applaud Mayor Wheeler's move to disband the GVRT. Now that it has been disbanded, it needs to be replaced with a pragmatic operational system that focuses intensively on community support with a strong equity lens. Moreover, it's mission, vision and values must be based on community input and clear data to ensure transparency fuels effectiveness. Building trust within the black community, and all BIPOC communities, is essential in moving toward a successful system of policing.</p> <p>Accountability and transparency are needed in ensuring public trust and in building relationships that reduce violence while simultaneously improving outcomes within traditionally marginalized communities. We must always keep our focus on system change and dismantling oppressive structures.</p> <p>This work will not happen overnight, and will require hiring a leader with a proven career history in this work. The current people at the PPB table have shown they will not get this done.</p>
<p>7) Collective Bargaining and Accountability</p> <p>The City is in the process of negotiating a new contract with the Portland Police Association. Community organizations have emphasized this as one opportunity to enhance accountability, transparency, and justice with respect to the Police Bureau.</p>	<p>Will you support these goals in the current contract and what other strategies will you pursue to advance these values in our city's criminal justice system?*</p> <p>***- See the two community letters sent to the Council about the Police Association Contract at: https://www.uniteoregon.org/ppa_contract_letter and https://www.uniteoregon.org/ppa_side_letter</p>	<p>I will support the goals of enhanced accountability, transparency, and justice within the next contract with the Portland Police Association. I don't believe that accountability and transparency are counterproductive to community safety and policing. I believe opening the bargaining sessions up to the public is a very strong step in the right direction. As I've stated before, I believe that we have to fundamentally reimagine and rebuild our approach to public safety and criminal justice in a way that is free from racism, state sponsored violence, and institutional bias. Due to the fact that the system, as currently designed, is working exactly as it was built to work, we have to do a complete overhaul in order to build a system that reflects our community's values.</p>	<p>I am in support of the stated goals for the contract, but given the current climate I strongly believe that stronger action is needed. Next year's contract is an opportunity for us to radically change the status quo. Currently, the PPA contract is treated like a labor/management negotiation, except the officers of the PPA don't just work for the Mayor or whomever is assigned to be the Police Commissioner. The officers of the PPA work for us, the citizens of Portland, and we need seats at the table to provide community insight and oversight in this process. The new contract must reflect our shared vision for what true community safety looks like.</p> <p>As a member of the Portland City Commission, I will work with Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty, Commissioner-elect Carmen Rubio, to make sure those conversations start now and include more than just lawyers, labor negotiators and career politicians.</p>